

*National Defence Act Amendment*

improvising a policy to fit that vague word. This is a trial-and-error proposition. This is what disturbed General Foulkes, and what has disturbed most of the senior officers who were heartily in favour of integration but who have retired prematurely or were fired by the minister because they did not agree with this vague, and ill-defined concept of unification. Judging from their comments it would seem to me that the fact which concerned them most was the thought that we were proceeding at such a hectic pace to achieve the propaganda goal of unification without policy guide lines that we were placing our present defence structure in jeopardy, so far as the maintenance of the basic responsibilities of a defence force of any country is concerned, and that is the security of our nation.

Unfortunately the senior officers who are now advising the minister are ardent exponents of unification, and have been active promoting it in defence establishments across the country and in making public statements in support of this vague concept. I suggest that ultimately those who have the good fortune to be serving on the defence committee will have a chance to come face to face with the experts on both sides of the question. It is tragic that we have arrived at a stage of the debate at which the rapid process of unification is irreversible. The very propaganda activities of the upper echelons of the officer corps have so saturated the thinking of some of the members of the armed forces that the process has become irreversible, and the pace has been so fast that confusion, uncertainty and misunderstanding amounting to demoralization have become rampant in the armed forces.

As General Foulkes intimated in the introduction to his series of articles, the proposed unification has brought about the exodus of highly responsible and most experienced members of Canada's armed forces, as well as the premature exodus of a large number of service personnel.

I must say that I have tried to understand what the minister means by unification. As I have intimated, I can understand integration. Integration was designed to streamline the Canadian armed forces, to gear it to the demands of defence in the technological and military situation of today. However, unification is a change for the sake of change. This afternoon the hon. member for Swift Current (Mr. McIntosh) dealt with this in some detail. In carefully analysing the minister's speech

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

he pointed out the contradictions it contains. At one point the minister said that there will be a single service and at another he said that the services in their respective environments will preserve their individual identities. No wonder we are confused on these matters and, no wonder many members of the armed forces have retired in confusion.

I question the minister's claim that unification will produce greater economies and greater efficiency in the armed forces. No less a defence critic than Mr. John Gellner, writing in the *Globe and Mail* last November, expressed the same anxieties as we have expressed in the course of the debate.

The following is a quotation from his article:

The defence debate over the past months has been conducted on a distressingly low level—lower, if anything, than the last one, in early 1963, which brought down the Diefenbaker government. Then, it was nuclear weapons; now it is service unification. But the point at issue is the same in both cases: What is the purpose, the mission, of the Canadian armed forces?

Unfortunately, this fundamental question was not posed then, let alone answered. It is not being posed now. Four years ago, Canada had largely irrelevant discussions about such matters as the value, if any, of Bomarc missiles, with or without nuclear warheads.

At present, Canada is having an equally irrelevant debate about the virtue of maintaining service traditions. Yet it should be clear that unless it is first determined what the Canadian armed forces are for, the problem of unification and whether it will help or hinder Canada's military effort, it cannot be tackled intelligently.

● (9:20 p.m.)

I have tried to determine what policy decisions might be behind the minister's break-neck pace toward the mystical goal of unification. The only conclusion to which I have come, and others have come to the same conclusion, is that there is a fundamental policy change to convert the Canadian armed forces to an international police force. This, as I read the white paper, was the lowest priority back in 1964. Unification, it seems to me, is reversing the priorities and placing this peace keeping role into a position of priority ahead of the basic function of defence forces, that is the security of the nation, and ahead of the other priorities of commitments to the alliances and the military responsibilities that are ours.

I know the Prime Minister has long had in mind the goal of the peace keeping role. This goes back I believe to about 1956, at the time of the Suez crisis when the United Nations first put a peace keeping force on the Gaza