

*National Defence Act Amendment*

many cases the best defence is offence. You have to be trained therefore to last, as well as to retain your temper and to keep quiet. There is a time for fighting and there is a time for talking peace. The role of the defence department is not that of talking peace. They have one job, and one job only, and that is to make sure that in time of danger Canada and Canadians can give a good account of themselves.

Are the days of 1914 when Winston Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty forgotten? In the first days of August the cabinet met and decided it was inauspicious—that is the kind of word we use in peacetime—for the British parliament to mobilize the British fleet. However, during the 48 hours before war was declared Churchill mobilized the British fleet on his own initiative. This was not very democratic but is was common sense. This type of common sense has not been bettered in 53 years. This is the kind of leadership we need, but we cannot legislate that kind of leadership.

I could not agree more with the hon. member who just spoke when he said that you need character at the top. Character at the top will sift down right to the last serving man, to the last taxpayer in Canada. When you get this kind of dedication, this type of character, then the battle is half won. I have nothing to say about the character of the defence minister except perhaps to suggest he should take a good look at this bill to make sure the idea behind it is based on this one, clear fact, that this change is the best change he could make at this time for the future of our country. He has to be able to do that, perhaps against the will of his own leader. His own leader has the job of being a world statesman; he has to go to the peace tables around the world to try to make deals. The defence minister in Canada cannot make a deal with anybody, except his own conscience, before God, because the life of every man, woman and child in Canada is on the table.

Personally, I do not believe anything short of some definite move toward national service is any good at all. I do not expect there will be general agreement with this idea. We are in between two wars and we see no enemy. Certainly, I know that the survival of Britain depended on the fact that four out of five in England had seen some service. It was the home guard of England which held her together in the darkest days of the blitz. Thousands and thousands of men, some of them as old as 70, knew what to do. They knew where to go and how to take orders.

The whole nation, at least mentally, was geared for war. It was the brass that let the people down then. The generals and the admirals did not speak out strongly but allowed the government to go to sleep. It was a miracle of character, a miracle of training, that held the British nation together. I unhesitatingly, therefore, believe it would be good for every young man in Canada to have a reasonable period of back straightening.

I have thought a lot about this matter. It would be a wonderful thing if every young man in Canada between the ages of 18 and 25 had an opportunity to put in, say, 18 months of national service. He could get out in the fresh air, meet friends from every corner of Canada and develop a little bit of physical fitness. He could get a little bit of discipline and be introduced to a pair of shears. You could clean him up and give him some soap and water. Who knows, he may get used to it. By the way, I am not pointing the finger and saying that I believe all young Canadians are long-haired slobs. They are not; but we should give every man, and today perhaps the women as well, not only an opportunity to do his or her duty but should give them the opportunity to undertake a national obligation by putting themselves at the service of their country for a short time. They should be given an opportunity, while they are young and active, not only to know themselves but to know other young people in Canada, who I know are basically just as good as we ever were, and perhaps in many cases a good deal better.

**The Chairman:** Order. I wish to advise the hon. member that the time allotted to him has expired.

**Mr. Horner (Acadia):** Finish your remarks.

**Mr. Bigg:** Thank you. I have spoken to thousands of people in Canada and I know that this sounds like a politically hot issue. However, if we can get together to give our young people in Canada an opportunity to do this, I think it would be a nine day wonder. Before the turn of the century, people would look back and say that in centennial year we did some planning, that we gave up talking about the meaning of words like "unification", "standardization" and "morale", and all these other things and took some positive, sensible steps to see that when our test comes our young men will not be sitting in the streets playing with dice but will be manning Canada's walls.