

Therefore in this debate we need more than just this bill. We need a decisive declaration of policy from the minister and an explanation of the reasons behind the major changes he has made since he took over this department. Again I think it is high time that a member of this government, and preferably the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), made a statement to the country as to what is the duty of the Canadian people toward the maintenance of our armed forces. In my opinion, service in the Canadian forces is no longer the kind of hobby it was before the war. We have had from the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes) cogent reasons why the first purpose of our defence forces is for the defence of our own soil. I am sure that, if the minister were to agree with him and were in this debate to tell the people that Canadians have a duty of service to their country, either in the active force or in the reserve, he would get all the men he would ever need for this or an even larger army. I have talked to people who are concerned with getting recruits, particularly for the reserve forces. I am sure that, without a statement of that duty, we shall not get recruits in the numbers in which we could so easily get them if an appeal were made to young Canadians in the name of Canada.

I wish to say something more as to what should be the purpose behind Canada's armed forces. We have had it several times from the previous minister of national defence and, I believe, from the present minister, that no great decisions can be made until a decision has been made by the security council as to what forces will be required from Canada. That policy of awaiting the decision of the security council will just perpetuate the uncertainty which has dogged our forces ever since the end of the war and will make the minister's problems very much more difficult indeed. Interestingly enough, I have in my hand a Canadian press report of January 30, according to which the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin), who has been in New York, of course, made some comments about the security council. The minister apparently said this:

Mr. Martin reiterated Canada's view that the security council had failed to do the task entrusted to it. "The security council has been used as a propaganda agency. Our stand was that it should be a means for promoting settlement of disputes as well as a means to reduce the occasions for such disputes."

If the Minister of National Health and Welfare feels that the security council has failed to carry out the task which was allotted to it, are we to await further action by that body before deciding what kind of defence force

we should have in Canada? I say we should not. I say that the defence of Canada, the defence of Canadian shores against outside attack until our friends can come to our aid, has always been and always will be the first responsibility of the military forces of this country, and that no obligation to the united nations or to anyone else can supersede that responsibility, which is as old as history. I should like to refer to what the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) said in this house yesterday, as reported at page 360 of *Hansard*, when he quoted what he said in reply to President Roosevelt in 1938, in these words:

We, too, have our obligations as a good friendly neighbour, and one of these is to see that, at our own instance, our country is made as immune from attack or possible invasion as we can reasonably be expected to make it, and that, should the occasion ever arise, enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way, either by land, sea or air, to the United States across Canadian territory.

The right hon. gentleman repeated that thought yesterday, on the same page of *Hansard*, where he said:

Each nation must therefore consider what steps it should take in the meantime to defend itself against aggression . . .

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is no longer any need to await any decision of the security council, but that the purpose of our force is clear now and can be announced by the minister.

This very discussion I have been presenting to the house, as to where lies the dividing line between economy and military necessity, brings into clear relief one of the problems I think we should resolve before this debate is concluded. That is, what is the line of division between the military and political command of our forces. If we have a clear statement of that division of responsibility and a clear statement of the purposes of our forces, together with the assurance of at least a minimum fund for a certain period of years so that the soldiers can plan with some certainty in view of what is required of them, then I am sure that the armed forces can get away to a good start; but the time has come when we must have that statement of policy.

All those matters can perhaps be gone into in more detail when we come to the sections of the bill in committee; but I must raise one point now, a point of much more fundamental importance even than what I have been talking about heretofore. In this bill a constitutional issue of first magnitude is raised. The present section 22 of the Militia Act, which this bill proposes to amend, places a limit on the total number of the permanent force which may be maintained. That total number is 10,000 men. In the amendment proposed