

National Defence Act Amendment

At the time I wondered why the minister had dropped the word "royal" from the names of the navy and the air force. However, that is incidental. I read further in his speech and discovered that he said, as recorded at page 10834 of *Hansard*:

Although a unified personnel management system will be introduced, the separate units and elements of naval, field and air forces will continue to exist... personnel in the combat forces will continue to be identified as sailors, soldiers and airmen—

And then, Mr. Speaker, the roof fell in on me because the minister ended his sentence with these words:

—until the force structure within the unified force is developed.

Just what do you mean by that, Mr. Minister? Do you mean that there is a limitation to everything you have said throughout your speech about there being no change, or do you mean that you as minister have no idea what the word "unification" actually means? These are the questions we want answered. In fact, Mr. Minister, you are saying yes and no at the same time. No doubt at some future date, no matter how the tide turns or the wind blows, you will be able to say that you clearly indicated in your speech introducing Bill No. C-243 that you had said yes there and no here—take your choice.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. Churchill: That is right. It is completely misleading.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows he should address the Chair and that he should not address the minister or another member directly.

Mr. McIntosh: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I direct my remarks through you to the minister. I should like the house to remember the only definition of the word "unification" which appears in the whole of the minister's speech. I repeat, as I said last night, that the definition which appears in his speech is that unification is the end object of a logical and evolutionary progression. I admit that that is a very lofty statement, but it does not convince me that the minister knows what he is doing; in fact, it actually has the opposite effect. I now agree that the senior officers who have been referred to so many times during this debate were right in the action they took even if it accomplished nothing more than to focus public attention on what is happening in the Department of National Defence. I would say that they have served their country well by

retiring and refusing to accept such an explanation as the minister is attempting to give the house at the present time.

How many staff officers who are now serving in the forces can say that they understand what the minister has in mind for the future of the services? It is beyond me. Perhaps I should enlarge the term "staff officer" and say that I cannot understand how any officer serving in the armed forces today knows what the minister means unless he is gifted, as the minister seems to be, with inner sight. I defy any one of these officers to give a coherent and rational explanation of unification as outlined by the minister. The onus is now on members of parliament, particularly those on that side of the house, not this, to stop this farce of unification, as the minister has attempted to explain it, before he destroys not only our defence forces but Canadian pride and sovereignty as well.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that when the minister refers so often to a single service he really means a funeral service for the armed forces of Canada if he is allowed to remain in his present office. I should like to read the last paragraph of the minister's speech under the heading "Bill No. C-243" as found on page 10832 of *Hansard*:

The three services under the provisions of the bill become one service to be called the Canadian Armed Forces. It is understandable that proud and gallant men may read this with heavy hearts. Those who do, I hope, will on reflection see that the single service is born with the great heritages of the three services that give it its life blood. These are not lost but brought together into one service, the strength of three to meet the challenges of the future and to add to the glories of the past.

Such hypocrisy for one who holds the axe. I could continue to read other ambiguous statements contained in the minister's speech. Under the heading, "The Influence of Rising Costs", he had this to say, dealing with finance:

The conclusion is sometimes reached because the figures are approximately the same that there have been no reductions in costs in the defence department.

Let me repeat that:

The conclusion is sometimes reached because the figures are approximately the same that there have been no reductions in costs in the defence department.

Although I am not an auditor, it would seem to me that if the figures are the same the cost is the same and there is no reduction. How ambiguous can the minister be?

There are other problems which appear from the minister's speech. In fact he has