

Interim Supply

money, and the minister knows that perfectly well.

Mr. Hellyer: Would you say it is difficult to transfer a pilot from one service to another, or a navigator?

Mr. Hees: I say it is impossible to transfer a man from one service to another, and I stand by what I have said and you know perfectly well it is true.

Mr. Hellyer: You just said it would require a waste of time and money.

Mr. Hees: A perfect example of what I am talking about, and there are hundreds of others, is a man who is a gunner on a battleship. This man cannot be shifted to operate a gun on a bomber or a tank without a lot of retraining which would require time and money, resulting in a waste of the time and money originally expended in his training. The minister knows that quite well. This statement applies to every field of combat activity. Our forces have become far too specialized and complicated to make possible or easy an interchange of personnel. If men are shifted from one service to another today they will require months of retraining to become proficient in the new line of combat duty. This will require a new start from scratch, with a resultant loss of time, effort and money.

The minister said, when speaking to the defence committee on May 12, that there were certain anomalies between the services and that an important objective of the government unification plan would be the correction of those anomalies through unification. He listed them as, different terms of services, different trade structures, different promotional opportunities, different commissioning procedures from ranks, and different retirement ages.

This minister knows perfectly well that all ranks in each service have their equivalents in the other two. All he needs to do to correct this anomaly is to specify the regulations which will apply to equivalent ranks in all three services. This kind of thing applies to the whole field, and the minister knows perfectly well that these things cannot be done better by unification. As I will point out in a few minutes, it will create a great deal of difficulty.

Let us examine the disadvantages which unification will bring about if it is applied to our armed forces. Let us first of all consider our combat services; the crews of our fighting ships; those who fly our fighters and bombers, and those who comprise our battle formations

[Mr. Hees.]

in the field. These men face extreme dangers time and time again in the performance of their duties. If they fail to face adequately those dangers, their objectives, the objectives of their units, and the objectives of our whole armed effort will not be achieved.

Everything in our armed services is pitched to one operation; that is, we must make sure that when these men are in battle it is possible for them to achieve their objectives. If men under fire do not come up to scratch, and are not able to do that because they do not have what it takes at the time, our whole armed effort is completely wasted. The members of this house who have been members of combat units in wartime, and there are many of them here today, know very well that the men must have a great deal going for them if they are to face danger under enemy fire and do so satisfactorily. These men must have pride of country, pride of service, pride of unit and pride of self, all of which add up to morale. A considerable part of morale comes from the uniform the men wear, the history and tradition of the service and the unit. If you take these things away, as this minister proposes to do by this legislation, you will take away some of those things which are essential to that extra effort which so often makes the difference between failure and success.

Let us remember that if our combat units do not achieve their objectives, the whole effort of our armed forces is doomed to failure. The billion and a half dollars that we are spending each year might just as well not be spent if we are not going to train our armed forces in a way which makes it possible for these men to carry out their duties proficiently.

We all hope that these men will not have to face another war, and the best way of preventing that from happening is to let our potential enemies know that we are ready, poised, and capable of striking a much harder blow than they are capable of striking. In case this minister is still under the misapprehension, and I am afraid he is, that the 1966 purpose—the Paul Hellyer purpose—of our armed forces is that they should in future be parade ground soldiers or soldiers engaged in peace-keeping operations, then I say we should examine this situation to see just exactly what the role of our armed forces must continue to be.

Mr. Hellyer: Do you believe that if you repeat a lie often enough people will believe it?