

*The Address—Mr. McKinnon*

Privy Council office system and ministers were apparently invited to append their signatures to documents which they had perhaps only a few minutes to read before they were submitted for formal consideration and ratification by cabinet.

Perhaps no other evidence of this Prime Minister's efforts to usurp the role of departmental ministers is needed than this so-called cabinet system of bureaucratic committees and endless paper flow which he had developed by 1979, in which a departmental minister's role was largely reduced to that of a glorified correspondence secretary.

The new Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne)—I am sorry that he is not in the House but I feel certain that his duties elsewhere require him to be absent—has already begun to make statements and behave in a manner that should disturb all those who believe that the Department of National Defence deserves a minister who makes policy and takes decisions for himself, not simply acting as the mouth-piece for whomever the Prime Minister has entrusted in his inner circle with the role of making defence policy.

For example, in a recent interview the Minister of National Defence was reported to see no need for a new white paper on defence and stated that such studies were "complicated" and, yes, "boring". Furthermore, the minister was reported to believe that there was no need for a new white paper because he had been presented with so many excellent briefing papers by his officials. Let me say that if these papers of his are so good, the minister should offer to share them with other interested people, namely the taxpayers of this country and their elected representatives in Parliament.

As a member of the previous government I had pledged that we would write a new defence white paper by this fall, and I would challenge the present minister to name the date when he will reveal his government's policy concerning defence—if, of course, they have one.

Given the attitude of the minister toward a new white paper, which amounts really to an abdication of his responsibilities as the effective head of his department, it seems we are likely to be treated to a rerun of the last days of the previous Trudeau administration. I might point out that in the National Defence Act, I believe section 2 says that the Minister of National Defence is responsible for the Department of National Defence for its control and of the armed forces.

Some journalists have already detected a shift of the real power from the Department of External Affairs to the Prime Minister's office. Press releases are emanating from the PMO on foreign policy matters, and when journalists call the Department of External Affairs for details, the spokesmen for the department do not know anything about such policy decisions and have to phone the Prime Minister's office to learn what foreign policy is that day.

We are not so much assessing what the new Ministers of National Defence and External Affairs are now doing or are capable of doing in the future, but how the Prime Minister and his selected acolytes will handle defence and foreign policy.

For a good evaluation of the Prime Minister's early views one can turn to a recent book by journalist Peter Stursberg called "Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma". In this book some of the present Prime Minister's errors of omission and commission are recalled and the full betrayal of the Pearsonian legacy in foreign and defence policy is documented. In interviews with former Liberal ministers such as the Hon. Mitchell Sharp, the Hon. Paul Hellyer and the Hon. Leo Cadieux, it clearly points out the attitude the Prime Minister has toward cabinet government. When he first became Prime Minister he moved to initiate his review—the one that he thinks is still current—on both foreign and defence policy. He began his technique of using the Privy Council office and his own close advisers in the PMO to make policy rather than leaving this to the cabinet and the responsible departmental ministers.

The Hon. Paul Hellyer recalls the technique as quoted in Mr. Stursberg's book as follows:

In the early stages of the cabinet debates certainly the preponderant point of view was the status quo: Why change, we've got our troops there, they're doing a good job—

This is when he was speaking of the likelihood of cutting down on NATO. He went on:

Little by little, however, opinion changed, or at least it appeared to change, as the Prime Minister's views became privately known to more and more ministers—

—But in the event, as the days went by, you could see more and more of the leaners in cabinet lining up on the side of change and this was, in my opinion, the whole purpose of the exercise.

—It was rather interesting that the departmental view was just once again tossed aside, and it was after that, or at least, in so far as discussion was concerned, it was after that, the Ivan Head version, probably prepared in co-operation with the Prime Minister, was brought into the discussion. Ivan Head was Trudeau's adviser on foreign affairs. It's an interesting technique.

Normally, the person who writes a cabinet document has a 90 per cent edge over anyone else, and the way that they got around it on two or three occasions—and it was an entirely new technique of the Trudeau government—was just to have someone else write a paper; then they would switch gently from one paper to the other.

The one from the department was in effect rejected and the one written to be more coincident with the Prime Minister's views was the one that was ultimately incorporated into the policy decision.

Not only did the Prime Minister choose to attack Mr. Pearson's foreign and defence policy on the grounds that it was dominated by the military, but Mr. Stursberg shows that his real aim was not just to bring all Canadians forces back to Canada from Europe, but in effect to withdraw from the NATO alliance into a form of neutralism. That he did not succeed was largely due to the strong opposition of the Hon. Leo Cadieux, and no doubt to the many true Liberals, who like Lester Pearson himself, were outraged by this pseudo-NDP policy which took so little account of the real world in which Canada has to live.

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If Canada reviews its policy for the 1980s, all members of this House should avail themselves of an opportunity to read some of Mr. Stursberg's work, taken from live tapes and