

*National Defence Act Amendment*

Air Chief Marshal Miller: Unification is just a word and it has come to be associated with the uniform. It has come to be associated with a single uniform, but it is more than that—a lot more than a single uniform.

Are the people of the forces going to be compelled to switch from their present uniforms to this new uniform and, if so, when? Under what conditions are they going to amalgamate the people in the various trades in the various services? Are there going to be strictures on staying in one force or are the people going to be compelled to go into employment in what used to be the old force? I do not know.

Obviously he did not know because he had not read the bill, Clause 7 of which provides:

Except in an emergency, no officer or man who was a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army or the Royal Canadian Air Force immediately prior to the coming into force of this part shall, without his consent, be required to perform any duty in the Canadian forces that he could not have been required to perform as a member of such service.

Air Chief Marshal Miller showed some concern, as did members of the committee, that units and elements of the forces were to be eliminated. Clause 5 (2) of the bill puts everyone straight in this regard. It provides:

The units and other elements of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force existing at the coming into force of this part shall, subject to the provisions of the National Defence Act, continue to be the units and elements of the Canadian forces.

• (8:40 p.m.)

We have heard much about the many witnesses who appeared before the committee and spoke in opposition to the bill. It has been said that most of the witnesses who appeared before the committee were in opposition to the bill. I think this can be very easily understood. If one goes back to the proceedings of the committee he can find that on three occasions at least the steering committee recommended for adoption by the committee that no more witnesses be heard. However, upon the insistence of those who were opposed to the bill that more witnesses be heard, there was a disposition on the part of the chairman, whom I want to congratulate for his very fair and understanding conduct of the committee, to go back to the steering committee and return with the proposal that another witness chosen by those opposing the bill be heard. I believe this happened on three occasions at least. Those of us who are not opposed to the bill did not insist on further witnesses, although many could have been called and, as everyone knows, pressure was put upon us to report to the house before the Easter recess.

[Mr. Byrne.]

Surely if the witnesses who were in opposition to the bill were credible witnesses—and we do not doubt their credibility—then the serving officers who spoke in support of unification must not be doubted either. Obviously the serving officers and the witnesses who appeared in support of unification are as convinced as those who are opposed that the matter of unification is important and that it should be dealt with at this time. So in the words of General Allard, let us get on with it.

While the hon. member for Bow River and other members of the opposition feel that the questioning in the committee did not elicit substantial information to assist them, I am sure that at least one member of the opposition was quite satisfied with the replies he received from General Allard. I should like to refer for a moment to the proceedings of the committee meeting of March 2, 1967 at which time the hon. member for Vegreville was questioning the general. The members of the opposition had expressed considerable concern about the loss of identity in the services and, following a series of questions, the hon. member for Vegreville said:

You remarked, I believe it was today sometime, that you had considered placing an air force officer in charge of a brigade and you had also considered placing a navy officer in charge of a brigade.

General Allard: Not in charge of a brigade in the case of the navy officer, but in the case of the air force officer, yes. I considered this because it became very important for one role. If you have an air mobile group, there is no reason why it should not be commanded by an airman, but unfortunately the difficulty at the moment is that our staff duties are so different and the methods of employment are so different that he would have had some difficulties had he been deployed in some exercise, and he would have had difficulties in co-ordinating some part.

Further on General Allard went on to say:

I think he would have done a good job just the same, but this only highlights the point that we have a great number of officers in the air force today who could have a much broader employment field than they have now. The fact that they are restricted after a certain rank in the air force means they cannot benefit by the possibilities and, in fact, some of them if they were trained are excellent people—good fighters, excellent people—who could do a magnificent job, but this is impossible at the moment. It is impossible, but I considered this very carefully and discussed it with the man concerned. He would have been prepared to accept it, but I think it would have been just a wee bit premature for him, so we think we should take a younger officer, train him through our staff college system and then bring him along; give him a staff job somewhere, because there is such a requirement. The blending of the two is getting to be so great that there is an absolute