

National Defence Act Amendment

cannot be solved, there are some questions which cannot be answered, until we know the intention of parliament in respect of this bill and whether or not the ultimate goal is a single service.

We have here an over-all cycle of eight years, each stage planned by the military after authority had been given to do the planning. Headquarters were designed by the military following the passage of Bill C-90. The command structure was designed by the military and approved in accordance with our constitutional practices by the minister and his staff in conjunction with the headquarters that were required in order to complete the whole and give meaning to the whole.

Once again there is the desire now on the part of the people involved to know the intent of the parliament of Canada so that they can plan toward the ultimate goal, know what it is and get on with the job. As was stated before the committee, some preliminary planning can be done but much cannot be done until this bill is passed and the will of parliament is known. I would therefore request and urge members of this committee to give serious consideration to all the points of view that have been put forward and to all the steps that have been taken, and then consider the steps that remain to be taken.

I hope that hon. members will then come to the conclusion that authority should be given now to the military to plan for the balance of the cycle, because that is what this bill is for, that is what this bill will provide, namely, the clear indication of the final goal and the authority to prepare the Queen's Regulations and Orders and all the other things that are necessary in order to take full advantage of the miracle, as Lieutenant General Moncel described it, and the tremendous progress that has been made, to bring it to full fruition and get on with the job in the most orderly and efficient manner.

Mr. Lambert: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be wrong for me to begin my remarks without expressing on behalf of the members of this house a warm welcome to you after your illness.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lambert: We expect that you will be with us until the end of this parliament, at least—I will not go any further—but in any case I assure you that we are happy to welcome you back today.

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[*English*]

The minister has made the best possible case to this house to buy a pig in a poke. He has asked us to give the Department of National Defence, himself, the associate minister and their officers carte blanche to organize something. They are not too sure how it is going to go over a period of years. The minister is forgetting that in coming to this house to seek permission to make this most fundamental change he must prove his case. It is not up to the opposition and those who do not like unification to prove their case. I wish the minister had spent 50 minutes speaking on unification and 10 minutes on integration rather than the reverse. The onus is not on those who do not believe in the values of unification as demonstrated, and poorly demonstrated, I may say, by the minister and those who testified before the committee with regard to unification or the single service concept, to prove their case.

I do not for one moment dispute that many of the witnesses who appeared before the committee were able to indicate the values of an integration of command and an integration of functions. That is all we have had from the minister this afternoon, namely, a repetition, a rehash of a number of things that he said in 1964 when he was advocating Bill C-90, in December when he was talking on the resolution stage of Bill C-243, and again on second reading. This was the cardinal theme and it was so apparent in the testimony of so many of the serving officers. Everything dealt with integration. It was pointed out to us that these were the advantages of integration. But when they came to the question of unification the situation was different. They said, "we believe that," "we feel that," "we think that," and anything that was demonstrable, such as declining enrolment and an obvious and regrettable decline in morale, was brushed aside. A sort of airy-fairy optimism was breathed and in so far as these questions were concerned it was said, "Well, this might be changed."

Those are preliminary remarks, Mr. Chairman. Today in my objection to the Chair to proceeding with this bill I wanted to make sure of establishing a principle. It was not that I was not ready to debate this question, nor that my colleagues were not ready to do so. It was a question of establishing the principle that the government in making its case must come before this house with the complete case. That was not done. We have seen this nonsense of a technical compliance by having