

National Defence Act Amendment

considered, even though we have inquired. The minister has simply gone ahead arbitrarily and said that this will be their new role, their new look. I suggest to the minister that what he will wind up with is a lot of men and officers who will work from nine till five or from eight till four and then return home and do some gardening.

In the old days a job was a job and a task was a task, and they were performed by men who had some pride in what they were doing. One day next week those days will disappear. There will be a quiet transition. But in the implementation of the regulations and in the meaningful day by day detail that is implied in this bill, the minister and those responsible for the furtherance of this measure will find a lot of disinterest on the part of the middle ranking officers and men. He will find a lot of nine to five men who will return home at the end of the working day and forget about their work until the following day.

I suggest to the minister that there is an opportunity for him here. We should not have to ask him to withdraw a clause such as this. We should not have to ask him to relax the compulsory aspects of this measure at all. The minister should see the dangers of such a provision. I am sorry that the amendment will not be introduced, because I would have supported it vigorously.

● (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Chairman, I had undertaken to move an amendment to clause 5, which seeks to abolish the word "Royal" from "Royal Canadian Navy" and "Royal Canadian Air Force." The three forces, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force are to become known as the Canadian Forces. The point is that as my amendment was not procedurally sound, I beg leave to withdraw it. I shall be content to vote against the clause at the appropriate time.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Chairman, I have a few remarks to make on this clause. Having served in the Royal Canadian Navy for over four years and being still in the reserve ranks, I feel on this unhappy occasion that a few remarks might be in order.

It has been said that a nation with no past has no future. The real meaning of that expression is that a nation does not live by bread and resources alone, but that it builds its history on its traditions, and the events which have taken place to build it. To forget all these traditions and events is to forget that we have a country.

The government has done a quite commendable job through its parks branch in commemorating historical events, and with the centennial celebrations. For that reason I am puzzled why there is this attempt to remove some of our background and traditions, and particularly those of our armed services. It is particularly necessary for the armed services to have traditions. Traditions are not tangible; yet they build something known as morale, which the psychologists have a difficult time explaining. Without morale—and I expect the hon. member for Victoria (B.C.) knows what I mean—you can have all the ships, aircraft and tanks in the world and they will not be worth their metal. If the people in the forces have no will to fight or have no fighting spirit, they may as well have no weapons.

Factors other than tradition contribute to fighting morale, of course; but one of the most important factors in building morale is tradition. That is why the services emphasize the background of a regiment, or of a ship particularly if the ship has been in service for some time. The navy is proud of naval traditions and naval battles; and the same applies to the air force. Psychologists tell us that people joining a service associate themselves with the traditions of their service. Those traditions are not to be let down. That is why one of the most important elements of fighting spirit is morale.

I hope the minister and some of his bright eyed, bushy tailed flannel suited computer experts remember my words. The minister may acquire fine equipment; he may obtain his answers from computers, but he will not have a fighting service that is fit even for peace keeping operations for the United Nations. I hope he bears that in mind.

Does the hon. member for Victoria (B.C.) wish to ask a question?

Mr. Groos: No thank you.

Mr. Nesbitt: I am always interested in the hon. member's remarks.

Removing the word "Royal" from "Royal Canadian Navy" and "Royal Canadian Air Force" will not save the taxpayers any money. That will not accomplish anything except to destroy the morale that is necessary for any fighting force. One wonders why the minister and his colleagues are so dead set on abolishing the word "Royal". It has been suggested by other members that this is part of the government's plan to destroy Anglo-Saxon traditions. I do not know whether that