

National Defence Act Amendment

come before the house. I think therefore we are entitled to know whether this concept of unification was a matter thought up by some people with a great deal of military expertise, or was it thought up by persons lacking this expertise, however well intentioned they may be? I am not suggesting that it was thought up by persons lacking military expertise, but we would like to know who was the author of the plan.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. gentleman agree that Lieutenant General Weeks, a former vice chief of general staff in the United Kingdom, would be a good author for this kind of program?

Mr. Nesbitt: The minister is telling us that he is the author of this program.

Mr. Hellyer: I did not say that, but I would like to know whether the hon. gentleman would have confidence in his judgment, in view of his experience in the second world war and the fact that he conceived a plan which is almost identical to the one we are proposing for this country. Would the hon. gentleman, in view of those facts, consider him to be a proper authority?

Mr. Churchill: I thought Terence Robertson was the author.

Mr. Nesbitt: I would be very interested to see the plan of the gentleman mentioned by the minister. I should also like to see the general's qualifications. But again, Mr. Chairman, I ask the minister, who was the author of this unification plan? In reply to what the minister said earlier, Earl Mountbatten does not seem to have the same view as General Weeks. I take it that General Weeks was one of the indirect authors of the plan, but we would be very glad to hear from the minister who else he got the idea from. The next question concerns the purpose of this unified force. Unfortunately we have heard various explanations on the functions of the force.

Mr. Hellyer: I told you in my speech on second reading.

Mr. Nesbitt: Yes, and I will be coming to that shortly, if the minister will contain himself for a minute. The Secretary of State for External Affairs said in effect that the purpose of the force was to fulfil more effectively our present military commitments. Unfortunately the Secretary of State for External Affairs did not place before us one whif of

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

evidence of how this was to be done. In his customary genial, bland manner he said that is what the force was going to do and he was satisfied that it would more adequately and effectively fulfil our present commitments to NORAD, NATO and the United Nations. He did not say how, of course, but he said the force would fulfil these commitments.

The Minister of National Defence has denied categorically in this house—this is one thing about which the minister has been very specific—that the new, unified force is designed only for service with the United Nations. This matter has been raised on many occasions by many hon. members, and the minister has categorically denied that this is the purpose of the force. Newspaper comment and editorials have been to the effect that the force is intended to fulfil more adequately our commitments to that organization. However, somebody very close to the minister, who I think is really in a position to throw some light on this point is the present chief of staff, General Allard. I have read part of the evidence he gave before the defence committee and I shall put it on the record again. His evidence was quite contrary to what the minister told us. The question with which we are faced is, whose evidence are we to accept? We should accept the minister's explanation, of course, because he is in charge of this department; but his own chief of staff says something different. Where do we go from there?

I again put on the record General Allard's evidence given to the defence committee on Tuesday, February 28:

Canada now wants, while remaining faithful to its existing commitments, to decide itself on the part it wishes to play in the new international society. This is not only its right, it is also its duty. It is its duty to participate, to the best of its ability, in keeping the peace by supporting the organization which has made itself the champion of the smaller nations, the United Nations organization.

In short, that is the transformation proposed by the white paper. That is what we are trying to do. My duty is to organize the military forces in accordance with government policy.

When you read that statement and the minister's statement, you find that the two are as far apart as the north and south poles. This makes it very difficult for members of the house to decide just what the answer is to the question as to what is the purpose of the force. I hope the minister will make a further attempt to clarify this matter, or perhaps he will get his chief of staff to give a further explanation of what he meant when he gave that evidence to the defence committee. It is