

National Defence Act Amendment

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to have to inform the hon. member that the time allotted to him is expired.

An hon. Member: Let him speak.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I have a considerable amount of material and I wonder if I have the unanimous consent of the house to continue.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I will just finish the particular point which I was making and I will then resume my seat. As I said, a few lines further on there is a complete contradiction of what appears above, if those lines meant what I did not think they were intended to mean at the time. As a result of what was said here, there was complete confusion in everyone's mind with regard to the minister's intention, and I do not know whether or not he did have that intention. If the minister intended a unification of the forces, why did he state in the white paper that competition will not be lost but will be contained at the service level? If there are no services there can be no service level at which to contain them. He also said that there will be sailors, soldiers and airmen.

Therefore it has been absolutely clear ever since the white paper came out that the minister's contention that there will be a single unified force will not stand up to examination. In fact the reverse is true, as can be proved by some of the statements in the minister's own speech. However, this is a different point into which I will not go at this time because I think I will have other opportunities to deal with it further.

The other point which I should like to make at this time, and to which I briefly referred earlier, is that I think that these contradictions were part of a continued attempt to confuse people as to what is meant by integration and unification. I am sorry to say that to a large extent it has succeeded in that purpose. The result of the contradictory statements made by the minister and his spokesmen from time to time is that there are very few people in Canada at the present time who understand the difference between integration and unification. The minister has never given us a specific definition of the terms, and he continually makes statements which confuse the issue even more. One thing

disappearing and one service taking their place. This is another very good reason, if you examine what the minister stated in his own words, why unification should not take place at the present time, even if you admit that unification as a final goal is desirable, which I do not and which not many other people who have studied the matter admit, except for supporters of the present government; and a large number of them do not admit it either. Even if you admit that it is desirable in three to five years, it is certainly not desirable at the present time when you do not have the supply service equipped or able to do anything to supply the three separate services.

My next point, Mr. Speaker, is concerned with page 10827 of *Hansard* and what was said in regard to the aim of the reorganization. The minister stated:

The aim of the reorganization of the Canadian forces was clearly stated in the white paper—

Then he goes on to state that aim. If we turn to the white paper we find that the only reference in its entire 30 pages is the one statement to be found on page 19:

Following the most careful and thoughtful consideration, the government has decided that there is only one adequate solution. It is the integration of the armed forces of Canada under a single chief of defence staff. This will be the first step toward a single unified defence force for Canada.

That is the only statement there is in regard to a single unified defence force. The minister has tried to maintain in the last year, and in recent months in particular, that this policy was completely clear. But in the same paragraph, just below those few lines you have this statement, which is a complete contradiction:

● (9:10 p.m.)

Similarly, there will be no lack of competition. The sailors will press for more ships, the soldiers for more tanks and the airmen for more planes. This is as natural as breathing. Competition will not be lost but it will be contained at the service level.

This was a definite indication to me, and I think to nearly all the senior officers in the services, that the use of the words "service level" meant that the services will be retained. When I read this statement in the white paper and heard the statement which I quoted previously, namely the single line about a unified defence staff for Canada, I did not think for a moment that these two statements meant that the three services would disappear. It did not cross my mind that this was the minister's intention.