

*National Defence Act Amendment*

Last evening I stated that the minister's use of the word "unification" was the most gigantic hoax ever perpetrated on the Canadian public by a minister of the crown, and I repeat that statement today. The basis of my charge is documented by the minister's own words in his speech in moving second reading of Bill No. C-243. As recorded at page 10828 of *Hansard* for December 7 last, under the heading "Advantages of the Single Service" the minister said:

The principle of the bill to create a single service is very simple.

Under the heading "Aim of the Re-organization" the minister stated:

However, the end objective of a single service is firm.

Under the heading "The Single Service Concept" the minister said:

—the three services would no longer retain their status as individual entities with the Canadian forces.

He also said:

The concept of three separate service entities was thereby abandoned in favour of one. Comprehension of the concept of a single service will be assisted by an understanding of the structure of the force.

In that speech the minister attempted to tell us what the force structure is. In brief, he told us that it is the army, the navy and the air force as we know them at the present time. In the same paragraph he also said:

None of these will be changed in moving to a single service from three separate services. They will continue to be trained and equipped for their particular roles. Moreover, a single service will involve no change in the organization of these force units into formations such as brigades, air wings, or squadrons of ships.

Last night the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Matheson) seemed to be under the impression that the Minister of National Defence has a very sharp mind and is rational enough to become prime minister of Canada some day. Well, Mr. Speaker, we in the official opposition want these questions answered by the minister:

1. How can the services be different and still be identical?

2. How can the three separate service entities be abandoned in favour of one and there still be no change in the three services?

3. What does the minister mean by his statement, "None of these will be changed in moving to a single service from three separate services"?

[Mr. McIntosh.]

These are ambiguous statements. I do not mind revealing to the house that having read the minister's speech that far I was very confused as to his intentions with regard to the present services. I had hoped that I had found a declaration by him that he was going to retain the three services as we know them—the army, the navy and the air force. However, I was not too sure so I read on and discovered another paragraph in his speech under the heading "Careers" as recorded at page 10829 of *Hansard*, in which he said:

One general principle should be underlined again. The combat units will retain their identity, and their specialized functions and training. It is important to state that it is not and never has been any part of the plan associated with unification to convert our servicemen to "jacks-of-all-trades".

I repeat that quotation:

It is important to state that it is not and never has been any part of the plan associated with unification to convert our servicemen to "jacks-of-all-trades".

An infantry soldier will not be asked to do the job of a sailor in a fighting ship; a sailor will not be asked to fight in an infantry platoon; and a fighter pilot will not be required to drive a tank.

Under the heading "Continuation of Units and Elements" the minister said:

At the time the new force comes into being, its units and elements shall be those which then exist in the navy, army and air force.

Units and elements of the force are the command entities—for example, in the navy, ships and squadrons; in the army, battalions of infantry, regiments of artillery, armoured regiment, brigades; in the air force, squadrons, wings and groups. All of these will remain unchanged.

I read that last sentence three times and I reflected on the minister's previous words, "None of these will be changed in moving to a single service," and "no change in the organization of these force units." I began to wonder why we had been so concerned about the minister's coined word, "unification". I began to wonder why a large number of senior officers had resigned or taken early retirement.

The minister had stated that there would be no change in the three separate services. I was beginning to understand him. What he meant was integrate at the top, in administration, in supply, and possibly in training. We would support such a move. I was further elated when I read in the same paragraph of the minister's speech:

This system will not be changed by reason of unification. Certainly, we will continue to have infantry regiments as well as the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps and the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery.