

The Address—Mr. Richardson

men in uniform committed to preserving peace than there are men in uniform committed to war, but that is the distant goal we must work toward. I believe it is a goal that is attainable by an enlightened people.

We should realize that because of what the Canadian armed forces are doing in a practical way and because of the moral leadership that Canada is giving to the idea and concept of peacekeeping, we could now be on the early part of mankind's long journey toward the end of war.

It is against this background of my belief in the peacekeeping concept, and my respect for what our personnel are doing in Cyprus and the Middle East, that I am looking forward to being there in just three weeks from now. I have visited our troops in Cyprus once before.

Mr. Forrestall: Why don't you take the committee with you so they too can see?

Mr. Richardson: When there is an opportunity to do that, we will take the committee. I expect to be questioned by the committee on my return. I hope to see firsthand the living and working conditions being experienced by our personnel. In particular, I want to be able to make some judgment about the number of personnel we should have in the Middle East working with the United Nations, especially in Cyprus. As the House knows, we doubled the number of personnel in Cyprus this summer on the understanding that this was a temporary commitment.

● (2030)

Mr. Forrestall: It has been temporary for ten years or more.

Mr. Richardson: Important as peacekeeping is, it is, of course, by no means all that we have to do in the Canadian Armed Forces. Our first task and our central responsibility are nothing less than to defend Canadian independence and sovereignty. Just as one example, a few days ago in this House the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc) spoke in glowing terms of the assistance that he had received from the Canadian Armed Forces in identifying foreign fishing vessels.

Mr. Forrestall: Don't get off on that nonsense. How are they going to do it now with no fuel and no money to buy fuel?

Mr. Richardson: I will come to that in the course of what I have to say.

Mr. Forrestall: Tell us about fuel costs and money for next year.

Mr. Richardson: Next to the defence of our sovereignty, our second important task is to participate with the United States in the air defence of North America. This is a vital duty, and I am certain that the hon. member knows that some of our most highly trained personnel are involved in this task, using some of our best equipment. Here again, when we think of Canadian sovereignty, if it were not for Air Defence Command, if an unidentified aircraft flew into Canadian air space we would have to call on the Americans to locate and identify it. That would clearly be, I believe, a loss of sovereignty and independence on the part of Canada.

[Mr. Richardson.]

Mr. Forrestall: Are you getting the 104's replaced?

Mr. Richardson: In the fullness of time we will have everything replaced.

Mr. Crouse: Even the government.

Mr. Richardson: But some of our equipment does not need replacing. I do not know whether the hon. member has had the privilege of flying in a 104.

Mr. Forrestall: You know damn well I have.

Mr. Richardson: Then he knows it is a great aeroplane and he should be proud of the fact that it is flown by Canadians.

The third clear responsibility and important task of the Canadian Armed Forces arise out of our belief in the concept of collective security and our commitment to play a useful and important part in the NATO alliance. I have visited our troops in Europe, and I am personally convinced that if the occasion arose they would give a very good account of themselves on the ground and in the air, an account of themselves well above their numbers because of their capability and individual training. They are career soldiers who cannot be measured just by the numbers that are in place.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Richardson: These, Madam Speaker, are the four essential, central tasks of national defence. The serious question that is facing the government and the Armed Forces is how we can perform all of these important tasks effectively and adequately in times of rapidly rising costs. All of our costs, particularly our aviation fuel and heating fuel, have risen so substantially that we are really not able to carry out all of the tasks even within the increased budget under which we are operating this year.

There is sometimes talk about the way that the government has cut the defence budget. I think the first thing that should be made clear—and I started to make it clear in response to a question a short time ago—is that the defence budget is not being cut.

Mr. Forrestall: What nonsense.

Mr. Richardson: It is being increased.

Mr. Forrestall: What is the real increase in goods and services last year over the previous year?

Mr. Richardson: Let me give the hon. member the facts. Last year, fiscal 1973-74, our expenditures were \$2,231 million, just more than 10 per cent of all the money that the federal government spends. This year, fiscal 1974-75, the national defence budget will be increased by more than \$275 million, for a total of more than \$2,500 million. This means that we will have more than \$100 million of supplementary expenditure over and above the 7 per cent annual increase that was approved in the formula last year.

In light of these figures it is simply not true to say that the government is reducing the defence budget. I want to tell the House that it is not the government that is cutting