

*Interim Supply*

denied to members of this house prior to their being called upon to decide on the principle of a bill. As I have said, there is no other source from which we can obtain this necessary information except from the minister and his advisers. The only place in which we can obtain this information from his advisers is in the committee, when they are called before it as witnesses. We reject outright this kind of arrogance, and we demand we be given the information to which we, as representatives of the people of Canada, have a right before we are asked to vote on the principle of a bill—a principle based on the information, for which we are asking.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the principle of this bill is a very important one; that is, either unification is good or bad according to whether it will improve or reduce the effectiveness of the Canadian armed forces. How can anyone decide whether unification will improve or reduce the effectiveness of the armed forces until we are given the information concerning how it is intended to be brought in; what it will do; and what it will not do. Until we have the details which we need, it is absolutely impossible for us to make an intelligent decision.

We can only be sure whether unification is good in principle or bad in principle after the minister and his advisers give us the information we, as representatives in this parliament of the people of this country, have a right to request. The only explanation any of us on this side of the house can find for the minister's refusal to make the information available by calling together the committee and letting us hear the witnesses before we make our decision on second reading, is that this minister and this government are afraid that the minister's advisers, under cross-examination by the members of the committee, will demonstrate clearly that unification is impractical, is costly, and will reduce, rather than improve, the effectiveness of our armed forces. If this were not so, Mr. Chairman, this minister, who does not shy away from good publicity, would be the first to call together the committee so that he could surround himself with a little more of the aura of greatness which he so desires at this particular time and which he feels is so important to him during the next twelve months. I do not need to go into that any more deeply than I have. I think it is obvious to all of us what I am talking about.

The only way in which we have been able to obtain information is by discussing this

matter with active service personnel. Let us forget the people who have retired, for the moment. Most of us have been able to discuss this matter with active personnel, in all parts of this country, and in all services. We have been able in this way to gather a fair amount of information concerning how this matter of unification is progressing. Therefore I suggest that we examine for a moment the facts as we find them. We might start by differentiating—and this is something about which the public seems to have been strangely misled—between unification and integration. Integration is something which has been going on in the Canadian armed forces for at least 25 years. Those who were in the last world war know very well that this was the basis of the combined operations in world war II. Integration is the combining together of the three services to form a more effective fighting team, although leaving those three services with their separate identities.

• (4:10 p.m.)

This unification process has been proceeding for the past 25 years. It is not something that this minister of this government started; it has been going along and improving steadily over that period. I believe, as I think we all do, that it can be improved even more. Integration should proceed to the highest possible degree, but let me make it clear that integration is something quite different from unification. Unification is simply no more or no less than the loss of identity of our three armed forces by the adoption of a common uniform, a common name, and a common rank structure with the resultant complete disregard for the history, traditions and pride of our armed services which have meant so much to this country, and will mean so much in the future. If these things are left alone, these services will be able to carry on the excellent job they performed in the past during two world wars and the Korean operation.

This minister, for reasons best known to himself, has decided to mutilate our armed forces and change them into something of which he alone knows the form. What are the benefits that are claimed will be brought about by unification? The principal one is that it will be easy to transfer men from one service to another if casualties or other reasons make that desirable. With the high degree of complexity which exists in our modern weapons systems, it is essential that a man today be trained in a specialty. It is impossible to transfer a man from one service to another without a great waste of time and