

*Supply—National Defence*

usually achieved by reconstructing ourselves into one organization as one unit with one system of operations, logistics and all the rest of the paraphernalia. We must have sufficient diversity of background and approach to provide the greatest number of solutions to meet our problems lest, to use a famous quotation, one good custom corrupts the whole world. This sort of regimentation toward solidarity and uniformity is bound to destroy the high morale and spirit of the armed forces. I think this is the major difficulty which is of concern to Canada's forces at the present time. I am not going to pursue that matter further, but I should like to mention one other point very briefly.

By the program that is under way are we not tending to reduce the Canadian defence forces to the role of a glorified police force? I know the minister is aware of this danger because I recall reading an article which appeared in the armed forces magazine in 1964 regarding the minister's approach to greater efficiency and reorganization in the armed forces. At page 54 of that publication the minister is quoted as stating:

The surest way to lose our sovereignty is to have someone else do our fighting for us.

I understand from that statement that the minister is fully aware of Canada's unique position which established Canada historically and geographically as a nation. It is almost trite to say that we are a nation because of a freak of history, because of an accident of history and circumstance. As we look at the pattern that has unfolded in the past three years during the administration of the department by the present minister and the Liberal government we get the impression that even though he uttered that warning not to have someone else do our fighting for us, he is unwittingly falling into that very error.

● (5:20 p.m.)

It is obvious to everyone that there are strong American overtones within Canadian defence policy not only in terms of equipment, to which reference has been made by at least two previous speakers, but also on major policy matters. For example, Mr. Chairman, there has been kite flying recently about the possibility of organizing a marine corps along American lines in the Canadian forces. I think it would not be boasting on my part to indicate that the Canadian armed forces in world war I and world war II achieved fame and established a reputation that would be equal to if not beyond that

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

established by the famous United States marine corps. I could refer to many incidents in this regard from world war II, such as Dieppe and the various campaigns of that most recent conflict.

The minister when in opposition was aware of this problem because, as the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre pointed out in his remarks he criticized the Conservative government for its tendency to accept the obsolete hardware—that is the word the minister likes to use—of the American armed forces.

This is not the time to resurrect the famous nuclear arms question, but I have always regarded the essence of the nuclear arms controversy of 1963 as being whether Canada should maintain its important posture of sovereignty or knuckle under to the dictates of another nation, in this instance the United States government.

I believe that the stand the Conservative government took at that time was in the best interests of preserving Canada's sovereignty and national identity in the face of the pressures that are constantly pushing in on us from the south.

So, as we move toward armed forces solidarity, as we move forward to create this highly trained, mobile, air-portable striking force, I believe serious second thought should be given to whether Canada is not abandoning completely its role of defence forces and substituting rather a role of a glorified police force. It seems to me that while we must have a bit of both, the fact that morale in the armed forces has declined in recent years would suggest that the defence and fighting role is diminishing at the expense of the glorified police force role.

I should like to make just one more observation, Mr. Chairman, in reference to the air force. As a former member of that service I should like to point out to the minister that integration in the R.C.A.F. can only be achieved to a limited degree. Certainly you can have integration at the training level. This of course was demonstrated in the early reorganization which took place back in 1957, 1958 and 1959, I believe it was, when all military flying training was taken over by the R.C.A.F., even to the extent of removing the training of air observer pilots from the various Royal Canadian Flying Clubs which had done an excellent job up to that point. But beyond this level the problem becomes rather complicated.