

National Defence Act Amendment

a rule against repetition, of which I am sure the hon. member has heard.

● (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Fairweather: If the rule of repetition were enforced in this parliament we would have been home four years ago.

Mr. Hellyer: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fairweather: I think that if we all had to plead guilty to the breach of such a rule the place would be emptied forthwith.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): The truth is always the truth, no matter how many times repeated.

Mr. Fairweather: Quoting the editorial:

In Mr. Hellyer's white paper on the subject of integration two years ago, he forecast that it was experimental, that we would have to feel our way, that errors might be made. Surely the time has come for honest acceptance of the fact that it would be a major error to force 'complete unification' and destroy all service and unit identifications.

In his initial position on 'integration,' Mr. Hellyer's statement indicated both wisdom and a broad-minded approach.

That is an historic statement, part of the history of the development of this bill, and I am sorry that part of its history has been forgotten.

Seemingly when he raised the matter of total unification, however, he was unable to accept the fact that his most experienced officers, both outside and within the service, advised strongly against it. This qualified and considered advice was interpreted by Mr. Hellyer as interference and personal opposition to his will, an attempt to obstruct and thwart his own ambitions. In this context, Mr. Hellyer has apparently determined to plunge blindly ahead regardless of any harm done to himself, the services, his government, or the nation.

It has been said, and I must admit there is truth in this statement, that the country is bored by this debate, and that the issue is not one which interests the majority of Canadians. Mr. Chairman, I want to suggest that this fact, if it is true, makes it even more important that we here, as representatives of the public, reach a right conclusion after careful and exhaustive consideration of this proposal.

As Air Vice Marshal Miller told the defence committee—and by the way, I am sure the minister will be disappointed that I shall be quoting him for a paragraph or two, because undoubtedly others have come across his evidence and placed portions of it on the record—

—that unification, while it might well be the end result of integration, would not at present be timely, that more time was needed for the orderly development of the integration process. "I felt

that a lot of careful planning was necessary and probably time to educate people was required before the next step of unification."

He said that he saw no significant financial or military advantage in unification over integration.

What I have quoted, Mr. Chairman, is part of an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* of Wednesday, March 22.

Surely if there are neither military nor financial justifications for this measure, then there is no other reason for it.

Presumably the charge will be made that we who are in the opposition should have some alternative proposals, and because I like to dabble in the somewhat cloudy ideals of defence and international affairs I am going to dare to make a suggestion or two to the minister. Where we should use the word integration is in the formation of our defence and foreign policies. Here we need an integrated if not a unified approach. As I said a minute or two ago, our relationship with the United States is crucial.

We have been warned recently through a very interesting series of articles in Canadian newspapers about the build-up of the debate in the United States concerning a program costing \$30 billion for antiballistic missiles. The debate is going on between the Secretary of Defence in the United States and his military advisers, and will soon be joined by the United States Congress. Mr. Chairman, Canada cannot be drawn into this arms race under any pretext and I assume that we—"we" meaning the government of Canada and the country—have already served notice on Washington to this effect.

The west can continue on its present course of repression of social problems and effective action on them through global military commitments and continuing "far off wars"—to use an expression from that interesting book titled "1984". These will involve a direct racial conflict and will keep the world precariously on the edge of an arms race and nuclear war, and will involve a continuing drain on men and the morality of the empire to maintain the frontiers—that, of course, is the empire of the west—or the west can embark on a full program of dealing with the root problems of developing areas in a "helping the people to help themselves" manner which will promote international co-operation and intercultural exchange, eventually bringing about world law, if not world government.

Perhaps I will be accused of idealism, but perhaps it is time, in a debate that has gone on for 10 days, for a few minutes of idealism.