

Supply—National Defence

my compliments to the author who has produced a very valuable work, one of great importance to anyone studying the art of warfare or concerned with the subject of national defence. That is what I was talking about the other night. It was on that subject I was questioning the minister.

With all his paper work, the minister's function is to provide an effective fighting force for this country, and that effective fighting force must be commanded by people who have knowledge of the conditions under which men have to fight.

Mr. Hellyer: Hear, hear.

Mr. Churchill: Otherwise thousands of lives may be endangered. I am not going to recount and stir up the embers of past discontent by mentioning things which happened in the second world war, which in my opinion should not have happened, and similarly things which happened in the first world war. But I do know that if the high command is not ignorant of conditions under which troops fight, then the lives of those troops are in less danger. But if they are ignorant of the conditions, then lives are wasted. That is why I am so concerned that this minister, who so boastfully talks about what he is doing, fails to see this particular aspect of the problem.

Where are we going to be in just a few years time? Of course we will have good men in the services. Canadians make good servicemen, but what about the high command, the senior officers and senior N.C.O.'s? Will they know how to lead their troops in time of difficulty? We have to guard against times of difficulty. We do not know what will happen in this world, whether we will remain at peace or be plunged into war. Let us not sacrifice the young men of this country.

As I say, Mr. Chairman, the minister left unanswered a great many questions, and some of my colleagues will deal with them. He has given us another one of his bombastic accounts, pretending that everything is wonderful, but I think that things in national defence are at a lower ebb than they have ever been during my time here, and it is due to the attitude of the minister.

His policies do not stand up under examination. If his policies are good, he is not getting the results that he pretends he is getting across the country. There has been too much propaganda and not enough action. What the minister should do now is act as a subdued individual for a little while, and let

him produce results rather than just talk about what is going to happen in the future.

On the subject of integration I am not going to say that some of the things that were done were not all right. I think they have been. I think in some of the services you can integrate, especially the supply factors, and you can change the commands around. This is not new. But to talk about a mobile command is a little ridiculous—a command which is charged with responsibility that any command in the past has been charged with—having the troops fighting fit and ready to move.

The minister has not dealt with the subject of unification. Is there anyone in the country who knows what he means by unification? He has never answered that question. Is he going to put everybody into the same uniform? Is he going to cut out the traditions behind the fighting men of this country? He may say, "This is all right; this can be done", but I tell him it is a dangerous course he is following. If he is being advised to do this, then I do not know who his advisers are or what their experience was in the second world war. Quite a bit depends on experience.

If the minister is going to wipe out regiments, if he is going to wipe out the navy and put the navy in the same uniform as the army, and do the same with the air force, then he is headed for trouble. This fear in the minds of many people now in the services has been affecting their morale. I don't mind giving the minister advice. I wish he would take some of the advice that is given him.

Mr. Hellyer: I do.

Mr. Churchill: Once you interfere with these historic traditions behind fighting troops you are causing damage. I know what some people on that side of the chamber say about tradition. They want to wipe it all out, but I am telling you that from the standpoint of fighting troops the tradition of a regiment means a great deal to them. It inspires new men joining a regiment to know the history of the past. Then they say, "We can do the same thing. We will uphold the honour of the regiment. We won't let it down. If this regiment can look back to three of its former members winning the V.C., then we are going to see what we can do to maintain the honour of the regiment." Is the minister going to wipe out all this and, if so, for what purpose?

An effective fighting force is what is required.

Mr. Hellyer: Hear, hear.