

National Defence Act Amendment

good sense of humour. In this regard let me refer to a headline which appeared in the *Brandon Sun* on April 3. The headline is "Greene in city to open fair today". The sub-heading is "Bull judging first big item". I think this speaks for itself, having regard to the comments made later by the minister for agriculture. I am not sure whether he got first prize or not because the story does not go on to deal with that aspect of the matter.

Mr. Baldwin: Would the minister qualify as an expert in this field?

Mr. Dinsdale: I should not like to express an opinion because in a democracy we do not deal with absolutes. In a democracy we move forward slowly in order to avoid making great mistakes, such as those made by totalitarian states within recent tragic memory. Keeping this in mind I ask again why we are pressing forward with this measure regardless of consequences.

I have read clause 2 and the explanatory notes. I have searched the records of the committee, I have been in the house during most of the debate on this bill, and I have come to the conclusion that the amalgamation of the navy, army and air force, as a matter of practical organization, cannot be successful. No matter what we call these forces, we still have one operating on the land, one in the air and one on the sea. Three separate environments are involved. No matter how you bang your head against the wall you cannot amalgamate, unify or bring these three environments together, into one.

I was very interested in the remarks of the hon. member for St. Ann, one of the few government spokesmen thus far. He assured the members of this committee that combat units will retain their identity. In my lexicon that means there is not going to be unification or amalgamation. This whole matter is very confusing. The hon. member for St. Ann also said the men would not be jacks-of-all-trades. Surely that is gobbledegook or double talk of the most confusing kind.

If these forces or units are going to retain their operational identities, why should we go through this charade of amalgamation or unification? Why should we continue to push forward unnecessary legislation? A democracy should try to get by with a minimum of legislation, yet this government insists on a maximum amount camouflaged as positive action. All we can do is change the names of these forces, and a rose by any other name will smell as sweet.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre dealt in detail with this whole matter of name change. Like that hon. member, the only logical explanation I can discover for supposed unification or amalgamation is that this is an attempt to change the name, because unification or amalgamation is an operational or organizational impossibility. If the minister wants to change the names why does he not do so in a forthright and direct manner rather than by this subterfuge?

Clause 2 of this bill states in part:

The Canadian forces are the armed forces of Her Majesty raised by Canada and consist of one service called the Canadian Armed Forces.

If this one force is to be Her Majesty's armed forces why should we not call it the Royal Canadian Armed Forces? There seems to be something in this whole business that is not according to Hoyle. There have been some other contradictions in the minister's statements, some of which have been pointed out. He suggests that we must have civilian control of the armed forces and that he had to take severe disciplinary action against insubordination in the military ranks. His treatment of those who have spoken out against unification and amalgamation is quite different from the treatment of those who spoke out in favour of it. Those in favour of amalgamation and unification are the latter day experts who have come to positions of prominence because they have supported the minister.

• (3:40 p.m.)

This is totalitarianism; this is not democracy in action. This is authoritarianism. The principle is: You agree with me, or off comes your head. This prevents the possibility of debate. It prevents the possibility of any difference of opinion, if you are going to listen only to those to whom you want to listen. There are none so blind as those who will not see, or so deaf as those who will not hear. As the *Globe and Mail* editorial of Wednesday, March 22 put it, "Does Mr. Hellyer hear only what he chooses to hear?"

We have military leaders at the moment verging perilously close to participating in political discussion while this debate is continuing, yet they are praised by the minister for their great sense of responsibility and public duty. Here is confusion and contradiction beyond all comprehension. The other day the minister criticized the right hon. Leader of the Opposition because that gentleman when he was prime minister had the temerity to exert civilian control over the military with