

*National Defence Act Amendment*

Lieutenant General Finn Clark, chief of the general staff, that the surplus army men, who had been trained in the same skills, should be taken into the air force jobs. The "brass" pushed the idea, but it still foundered on the basic rivalries and vested interests of the different services.

I can see the same thing happening in the near future to hundreds of skilled men in the R.C.A.F., unless the services are unified in time. The Canadian air division in Europe has 12 squadrons flying F86's and CF100's, which are now becoming obsolescent. They were designed to intercept enemy bombers. Eight of these R.C.A.F. squadrons in NATO are to be re-equipped during the next two years with the Lockheed Starfighter, known as the F104G, which is now being built by Canadair Ltd. and numerous Canadian subcontractors. The new plane is called a "strike fighter" and it is designed to help ground troops by carrying a small atomic bomb to drop on enemy concentrations. It looks as though the R.C.A.F.'s switch to this new role in NATO will leave at least one-third of the pilots and ground crews of the present air division without a job.

At the same time both the navy and the army need men of just these skills. They are now advertising for new recruits whom they will have to train. Will they save the expense of training and absorb the R.C.A.F. men who already have the necessary skills? Not on the present basis, because it would upset their ladder of seniority.

The set-up of navy, army and air force is really a hangover from the two world wars. It was spiced up to meet the demands of NATO and Korea, but it's still basically a miniature model of the old British forces. This always meant keeping enough "brass" and pen-pushing "office wallahs" to look after four or five times as many active troops as Canada had. They were supposed to be ready with paper plans to mobilize the reserves and auxiliaries after war started. But today's strategy leaves no place for reserves and wartime mobilization. We are no longer trying to win the last battle. Our only object is to prevent war starting by making aggression too dangerous. The only troops which can contribute to this deterrent are those already trained, equipped and in position.

As it is now, navy, army and air force each has a separate establishment and each has different methods of administering it. Their manpower ceilings, laid down by the government, stand at 20,000 for the navy and 50,000 each for the army and air force. Naturally each tries to get as many men as it can into the higher ranks. When I was chairman of the chiefs of staff, we tried to rationalize the ranks through a three-man committee consisting of myself, the Deputy Minister of National Defence (C. M. Drury first, then Frank Miller, who succeeded me as C.C.O.S.), and the Secretary of the Treasury Board (originally R. B. Bryce, who has now gone on to be Secretary of the Cabinet). The one thing we learned was that the three services were organized so differently that we couldn't impose a single standard of rank requirements.

I consider that this is very unfair to the men in the services. There should be a single list for all promotions, appointments and retirements. Men should be posted to the various task forces according to their training, experience and seniority regardless of the colour of their uniform.

Although we can't turn over our whole forces to the United Nations—which doesn't want them, anyway—we ought to be able to go on providing

contingents suitable for police duties as we did in Egypt and the Congo. But it shouldn't be as difficult to pick out the appropriate tradesmen as it was when the Congo force was being assembled last year.

You may ask why no one has tried to cut down the "brass" and unify the three services long ago. The answer is that we did. The late Brooke Claxton was made Minister of National Defence in 1946 with precisely this object. Until then there had been separate ministers and departments for each service. Brooke Claxton made a good start. The civilian side of the administration was unified under one Deputy Minister. "Bud" Drury, a former Brigadier, and later Frank Miller, an Air Marshal who went back into civies for the job, did all they could. The chiefs of staff were lumped together in one building around the one minister. Innumerable inter-service committees were set up. It seemed that one single Canadian armed service was about to be born at any time.

Then suddenly it was all dropped. I can't be sure why the idea of a single service vanished so suddenly, but the story at the time was that Mackenzie King had persuaded Claxton to become Minister of National Defence by promising him that he could move to another department as soon as he had "banged the heads" of the three services together and unified our defence effort. This promise gave him a chance to be quite ruthless in overruling inter-service jealousies and cutting out duplication. He got as far as amalgamating the civilian administration. Then, the story goes, Mackenzie King was so pleased with this success that he told Claxton to stay in national defence and continue the good work. Whether that's the reason or not, the attempt to unify the three services came to a grinding halt and we were left with innumerable, ineffective inter-service committees on every conceivable subject.

Let me quote one example of the way over-zealous service loyalty at an earlier stage resisted common sense attempts at uniformity and economy. When the war ended, Dr. C. J. Mackenzie, president of the National Research Council, wanted to give up the military research which N.R.C. had been doing during the war, and asked the chiefs of staff to take it over. The army staff had prepared a plan, at my direction, to centralize all military research for the three services in one research organization. It was bitterly opposed by the air force, which insisted on keeping sole control of all military air research. The chief of the air staff, Air Marshal Leckie, happened to be chairman of the chiefs of staff committee at that time and we made no progress. Finally I put the problem to my minister, then Douglas Abbott; and he put it to C. D. Howe. The air force, which still had a separate minister, Colin Gibson, got his support, and it took a cabinet level decision to overrule the air force and establish the Defence Research Board.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Brooke Claxton's new organization—more or less integrated on the civilian side with committee government on the service side—barely survived the challenges of 1950 and 1951, when we had to raise the special force for Korea and make our contribution to NATO in Europe and the North Atlantic. I was still C.G.S., with responsibility for raising and training the new army brigades. I had also become chairman of the chiefs of staff, which meant frequent visits to Washington, London and