

Abandonment of Defence Projects

To fulfil any of these roles will require flexible, highly mobile, well trained, lightly equipped forces at high states of readiness and efficiency. This kind of requirement suits Canadian aptitudes and aspirations. It allows Canadian industry an opportunity to provide the equipment and avoids the needs for heavy imported items such as tanks, armoured carriers and nuclear support weapons.

Another very distinguished soldier gave evidence before our committee, Lieutenant General Simonds. I am going to refer only briefly to his evidence. As found on page 453 of the evidence before the committee he acceded to this proposition which he had written some time before:

In the first place, Canada has been muddling along on defence, in the second place, it has been too much influenced by the Pentagon.

He went on to make it clear it was his view that if Canada applied independent thinking to the problem it would undoubtedly determine that Canada's role, the role we would come up with, would be a conventionally armed tri-service, highly mobile force adapted to deal with brush fire wars in support of the United Nations or our allies, and that this would be our most useful role within the alliance.

By the same token, Mr. Speaker, he indicated his agreement with General Foulkes and other witnesses that our present strike reconnaissance role with CF-104's equipped with nuclear weapons, which has already cost this country half a billion dollars, was based on the misconception that tactical nuclear war could be undertaken in Europe without escalating into all-out nuclear war. At page 442 of his evidence he summed up the matter as follows:

We should not be in the nuclear field at all. The most useful contribution we can make to any coalition or alliance of which we become a partner is in the field of being able to make a contribution to preventing a situation developing which would lead to thermonuclear exchange.

The author of this statement that we should not be in the nuclear field at all is one of the most distinguished generals and military men that Canada has ever produced. Another witness was Mr. John Gellner, a distinguished military writer and analyst. He came to similar conclusions. His evidence has not yet been printed but it parallels an article he wrote for *Saturday Night* in 1962 to which I should like to refer. In his view the \$18 billion we have spent since 1951 on defence has produced nothing adequate or useful. He says that as a result of this expenditure all we now have is:

An air defence organization with very limited capability for the one task which North American air defence can possibly have today: that of deterring a bombing attack against this continent.

Overseas forces designed and trained to deter, and fight if need be, a type of war (limited nuclear) which will not occur, or will not last as such if it does.

Intervention forces of the Canadian army at home, whose effectiveness is greatly reduced by lack of transport, and partly of air transport ability, and tactical air support.

A civil defence set-up which appears to have deliberately stopped short of the most important, the crucial measure of protection: the training of all citizens to help themselves in case of nuclear war.

Then he proceeds to say:

If these are facts—and we believe they are—then much of the Canadian defence effort in the last seven of the 11 years since 1951 has been to no good purpose. The questions now are: how and why did it happen? There is little doubt that the main reason was that we swallowed, hook, line and sinker, the American defence policy that grew out of the frustrations of the Korean war.

So Mr. Gellner and these other witnesses who have appeared before this committee have made it clear that before we can discuss intelligently what contribution we can make to defence we have to determine the role which we have to play. I believe that the discussions of the committee, which have been conducted on a non-partisan basis, and the evidence presented to it can lead to a sane, a practical and a nationally chosen role that will enable Canada to make the maximum contribution to the security and peace of Canada and the world. For this reason I believe that the amendment we have before us today is very premature in that we are asked to declare that this committee of the house cannot perform the task that has been put before it.

I seem to have caught the ear of the minister for a moment. I regret that he has found it necessary to make piecemeal announcements about policy, but I am prepared to accept his statement and those of other members of the government that they will pay attention to the decisions and conclusions of the defence committee on the major strategy which should be applied to Canadian defence. If it turns out that he or the government are unwilling to do that, I will then be prepared to criticize them for failing to do so.

Before I part with the general question of the role which Canada should play I should like to refer to what I believe is the most useful contribution that has been made by any Liberal member of the house on the subject of defence. I have reference to a speech made by the present Minister of Defence Production (Mr. Drury) on December 14, 1962, when he was a private member. I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) to reread what his colleague said at that time, because it made excellent sense in determining the role that Canada should play and because it is quite inconsistent with what the minister said in the house yesterday, namely that there was some good purpose to be served apparently by our continuing to