

National Defence Act Amendment

There has been no advantage whatsoever, from that point of view, as far as the members of the present defence council are concerned. In fact, it is not nearly as effective a body because it has now really only one military adviser, whereas formerly it had four, the chairman of the chiefs of staff and the chiefs of staff of the navy, army and air force. As was put very forcibly to the defence committee by Brigadier Malone, and has been dealt with by a considerable number of other people of experience, a defence council which has the advantage of the detailed and expert knowledge of the heads of the three different services which operate in three different environments serves to give the Minister of National Defence a very much better and more adequate picture of what the situation is, and puts him in a much better position to come to a proper conclusion than the present set-up, where you really have only one source of military information, as far as the minister is concerned, on the defence council. So much for that point, Mr. Speaker.

On the same page of *Hansard* there is a statement about the 4th Canadian infantry brigade group which reads:

For its currently assigned role in the central European front the brigade group has today far greater fire power, mobility and protection than at any time since its formation. Man for man it is unsurpassed by any other unit in NATO.

That has been the case from the inception of the brigade group in Europe. I think it has been admitted by all the successive supreme commanders of NATO that this brigade group, for its size, was perhaps the most effective army unit they had. The minister tries to assign to himself and to his integration policy, presumably, and so forth, the fact that this is an exceptionally fine fighting unit.

Mr. Hellyer: There is no armoured protection at all for the infantry, and you know it.

Mr. Harkness: The minister talks about armoured protection. He knows full well that all the plans for the provision of armoured personnel carriers, for improved anti-tank weapons, for improved fire power in the brigade generally were made long before he became Minister of National Defence. This is part of the deception he tries to practise on the Canadian people. He tries to take all the credit for the fact that this group is now better equipped than it was five, 10 or 15 years ago, and if it was not better equipped the then minister of national defence should be very, very seriously condemned. Naturally it is better equipped and has more fire power

[Mr. Harkness.]

today, because there has been constant technological improvement. But all the plans and original arrangements in that respect were made long before the minister became Minister of National Defence. I notice that at one time he made the statement that this brigade group now has more fire power than had the whole Canadian army during the last war. That is true. But he did not mention the fact that practically all that fire power was due to the Honest John battery which was bought and delivered to the division while I was minister of national defence, and not afterwards. I say, Mr. Speaker, this is part of the picture which the minister attempts to present and which—

Mr. Churchill: The Hellyer myth.

Mr. Harkness: —is really disgusting. I would think the minister would attempt, as I did and as I think all previous ministers of national defence did, to present a reasonable and fair picture as far as our defence forces and our defence effort were concerned. But unfortunately that time seems to have passed.

The next matter upon which I should like to comment is materiel command. This passage is to be found on page 10826 of *Hansard* for December 7, 1966:

Because of the complexity and magnitude of the project, however, it will take from three to five years to implement fully the single automated system. In the meantime, the three existing systems are being operated by materiel command and the logistic support to the forces has not in any way been diminished.

The hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) referred to this matter this afternoon. What does this mean? It means that the supply of goods of all kinds to the services is being carried on by the navy, army and air force supply systems which existed and have existed for many years. As General Fleury stated before the committee, it will take at least three to five years to weld this into one system. So the minister is doing something completely illogical; he is going to form immediately one unified service, and that unified service will have to be supplied by the supply components of three separate services. You will have as a result the most horrible type of confusion; there is no question about that at all.

An hon. Member: We have it now.

Mr. Harkness: We have it now, as an hon. member has said. I think there is no doubt that we have it now, but it will be worse when you have the three services completely