

*Supply—National Defence*

minister. I say to the minister that before we complete this discussion he will have to have some serious answers to questions that have been put by my colleagues, the hon. member for Calgary North and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. Other members have raised questions but they particularly have raised some very difficult questions which go to the whole root of the administration and policies of the Department of National Defence.

I must confess I was disappointed in the minister's statement. We were given a very brief general outline of the purposes of mobile command. Much more has to be said about this. There has not been an opportunity to discuss it in the committee because the decision to form mobile command, if I am correct, was announced on June 7 of last year. The minister indicated that the command was only formed on October 19 last. This is the first opportunity we have had to examine it. If we look at *Hansard*, page 1417, second column, second paragraph, we find the following:

The formation of mobile command is basic to the philosophy of Canada's new defence policy.

• (4:30 p.m.)

If we fail to discuss the philosophy of that formation and the principles behind it, if there is no explanation given to the country, then the whole set-up of national defence is kept within the breast of the minister. We know he loves to approach us from some great Olympian height. All we have to do is read his speeches in the past. I would commend them to him today, and he would certainly change his attitude.

We also get a great number of laudatory articles about this subject. I picked up one this week end in the magazine "Air Force and Space Digest", the most recent issue. It contains an article entitled "Canadian Air Space, a Tightened Belt and a Clear Eye", and alongside is a picture of the minister. This is a well prepared piece by a Canadian newspaper man. I am not going to put his name on the record. This is a "flack" piece, if I may use the term.

There have also been other articles. I have a great deal of respect for Mr. John Gellner and some of his ideas. I do not agree with him all the time, and I would hope he would not fall into this category of "flack" writers. I have before me an article in the February number of the "Executive" which frankly is again in a similar vein.

[Mr. Lambert.]

It produces the same result. This is the sort of reputation that is being spread around, an invincible minister with invincible policies.

Quite frankly, in many instances the only people who do not agree with him are the people under him. If he thinks his policies have been sold to the people in the Department of National Defence, then I think he has a second think or even a third think coming to him. Far from it. Certain sectors of the armed services have not had explained to them and fail to see the principles behind a lot of the policies which are being put before them.

I should like to come back to the reference I made to the statement of the minister. As recorded on page 1417 of *Hansard* he said:

The largest of the new functional commands, its task is to operationally train and maintain the land elements of the Canadian force and its tactical air support, and to keep this force in a state of combat readiness which will enable it to be deployed in units of the required size to meet Canadian commitments and undertakings anywhere in the world.

How innocuous can one get, Mr. Chairman? There is nothing new in that; this has always prevailed. The only thing that is new is the reference to tactical air support, but there is really nothing further in the minister's statement requiring elaboration.

In connection with the return to tactical air support by the Canadian armed forces, if the minister is serious about this and intends to go through with it then some explanation must be provided. This is a radical departure from what has been the case now for some time and it is certainly a significant departure so far as I can see from the whole concept of an integrated force.

We next come to this fine phrase:

The prime ingredients in the force are quick reaction-time, the ability to go where required with dispatch, and to perform its tasks with maximum effectiveness.

This has been a requirement of our defence forces from time immemorial. There is nothing peculiar about it. So far as "quick reaction-time" is concerned, any force commander, any army, any navy, any air force must have a quick reaction time. All that "the ability to go where required with dispatch" means is that the forces are to get to a certain place in the quickest way possible. That has always been a prime requisite. The reference to "to perform its tasks with maximum effectiveness" is again an underlying