

*National Defence Act Amendment*

● (8:30 p.m.)

this, but perhaps in the context of my argument I ought to say that I am not particularly interested in Canada's strength as a military power. I am, however, interested in Canada's capacity to assist in keeping world peace.

If we agree that Canada's major role in international politics is to have available men and equipment to be used anywhere in the world to extinguish small wars or disputes, we must examine our armed forces to see if they have the capabilities to perform those functions.

There is good reason for our role in the world today. Canada's troops are accepted by other nations for this purpose. For example in many parts of the world the troops of the U.S.S.R., the United States, France or Britain would not be accepted. I do not think United States troops would be accepted in some Asiatic or African countries. I doubt if those countries would accept Soviet Union troops. Were those troops to come in, the countries concerned would be apprehensive. They would be afraid that there would be an extension of Soviet power and influence, were the troops of that powerful country allowed to come in. Also in the middle east, the far east and other places in the world United States troops and military equipment would not be acceptable. The outstanding example of that might be Viet Nam, although I shall not discuss that now.

I suggest that the troops of the United Kingdom and France, former colonial powers, would not be accepted in countries that were colonized by Britain and France in times gone by. I have attended international meetings from time to time, some in the United Nations and some in our own parliamentary associations. If there is one thing that is obvious, it is that these new countries, these developing countries which were formerly colonies of Britain or France simply will not accept troops in their territories for any purpose. They do not want them. There is an obsession in many of these countries to rid themselves of all traces of former influence so that they can concentrate on governing themselves. There is no doubt in my mind that at this stage the forces of former occupying powers would not be allowed back if border disputes broke out between any of those nations. So I think Canada ought to accept this role. I recognize we have done so in a number of areas, even though we were perhaps not well prepared from a military point of view to fulfil this function.

Another reason for my thinking that Canada is well suited to this task is that among the smaller nations of the world—and I am thinking in terms of population—there is not one which is in a better position, because of the extent of its material resources, to support a peace keeping force.

This is an important consideration since we know that if the major powers, the major contributors to the United Nations, fail to agree on whether a peace keeping force should be sent, it is the practice for those who do not agree to withhold financial contributions in respect to such a force. This happened in the case of the Congo, to mention one example. I am thinking of circumstances where the security council has authorized a peace keeping force to begin operations, but where the assessment levied in connection with the force has been withheld. The need therefore is for a nation which is willing to provide a service of this kind, and whose material resources are sufficient to support such a force. The presence of the peace keeping force in Cyprus is an example of a service of this kind, and there are other examples. If there is wrangling in the United Nations about whether a force should be sent or not, great damage might be done while these arguments or discussions were going on, and the situation might deteriorate to the point at which no useful purpose would be served by sending in a small peace keeping force such as Canada can provide.

Having agreed that Canada ought to accept a peace keeping role and having drawn attention to Canada's unique position in being able to assume a role of this kind in international affairs, I come to the next logical step, namely how to design our armed forces in such a way as to make the greatest possible contribution to this concept. I said I do not pretend to be an expert on military matters. It might be possible using separate armed services to provide the forces and the equipment required. I am not sure. I know that these forces have been provided on several occasions in the past, though I suspect not without difficulty. It seems to me that acceptance of the concept which I and other hon. members have outlined is a quite different matter from devising the best possible means of carrying it out.

My hon. friend from Fraser Valley has pointed out, as reported on page 12423 of *Hansard* of January 30, that we in this party