

National Defence Act Amendment

their heads on the chopping block. There is something very wrong when this happens.

We find the chief of the defence staff saying "halt". The vice-chief said "I am leaving". The chief of personnel said "I am leaving". The comptroller general said "I am leaving". The director of technical services, who retired a couple of months earlier, came to us and said "I was sick with frustration". What does this leave the house to consider? That they were all wrong? I have not spoken about those below who left the services and in whose case the doors clanged somewhat more loudly. The minister must think long about his actions with regard to those men.

It is said of Mr. McNamara that he ignores his military advisers. It has been strongly suggested that the present minister has patterned himself after Mr. McNamara. The difficulty with the minister is that he will have few military advisers left or will have none if this continues.

● (6:20 p.m.)

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Chairman, what we in Canada need in the field of defence is a clear defence policy. In all the mass of words spoken by the minister and his aides on the subject of unification there has been a complete failure to clarify or justify our defence roles, a failure to say what the future of the armed services is to be, what purposes they are to serve, what sort of hostilities we expect to be involved in. We have continued to put the cart of organization before the horse. We are presented with a cart; we are not told what sort of horse we are to have, what direction it is to go, and what sort of load it is to carry. We are bogged down in discussing organization, and organization without a clearcut statement of the contemplated future and roles of our armed forces is a waste of time and totally illogical.

On second reading of this bill the hon. member for Vancouver East and myself made clear what we thought were the basic and, indeed, vitally important questions underlying the issue of unification and involved, in our view, with the whole future of our armed services. In our view, as we expressed it then, unification would make sense only if we made a radical review of our defence commitments and decided to concentrate on a mobile intervention force. It was our considered conviction that this course ought in fact to be taken, that we should concentrate on such a role, that it would enable us to take an effective part in peace keeping and peace enforcing, and that it would do much more than that.

The opponents of unification have tried to present the alternative of carrying on our present roles, or the alternative of doing nothing but peace keeping. This is not what we envisage would be the purposes of a unified mobile intervention force. True, it would be available for peace keeping and peace enforcing, and we put the highest possible value on that. Of all the contributions that can be made by Canada to the security of the world there is none higher in our estimation than the importance of having available peace keeping or peace enforcing units ready to act for the United Nations, but it is a total error that such a mobile intervention force as we think should be the major defence effort of Canada would be confined to that.

Such a force would be available in the unlikely event of some invasion on the soil of Canada. It would be available quickly to deal with it. Now, this is a most unlikely occurrence in any event as, Mr. Chairman, we are part of the North American continent and share this continent with the most powerful nation that the world has ever known, armed with colossal destructive power, but if there should be some invasion of Canadian soil then a mobile intervention force that could get to the scene quickly would be the most effective type to have available.

It would also enable us to contribute, if we saw fit to do so for political or other reasons, to a mobile reserve for NATO. It is not a choice, as is sometimes said, between getting out of NATO and continuing to do what we are doing at the present time. The choice is whether we will continue to make useless contributions that make no sense and are obsolete or whether we are prepared to look toward a contribution of a mobile force that is needed and would be available if we decided to continue in NATO, or indeed in any other military alliance.

We believe that the present roles carried out by the Canadian armed services are no longer useful or needed. A great many of them are militarily useless. What are we doing in NATO? As hon. members well know, we contribute an army division, part of a massive tactical nuclear means of response to a full scale Russian attack on western Europe. There is no more improbable contingency in the judgment of any informed or sensible person than that such an attack would take place. If it did take place we have been told by no less a person than U.S. Secretary of