

Supply—National Defence

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the same spirit of co-operation will continue as we resume discussion of the defence estimates. At five o'clock I was indicating that because of the frantic haste generated by the slogan "60 days of decision", the changes that were taking place in the armed forces over the past seven or eight years reached such a speed that the difficulties already referred to by previous speakers were inevitable. I refer, of course, to problems of morale and problems of confusion.

It is difficult, both for hon. members and the press, to receive concrete information on the changes taking place in the department as a result of the stepped up program of integration and the secrecy that must prevail. As a consequence it is necessary for ordinary members to get the information, as it were, through the back door. One of the sources of information I find most useful and helpful with respect to this problem of morale, and the uncertainty and confusion in the armed forces, is to attend receptions. When the conversation becomes animated, when the inhibitions are lowered, then in talking to people who are closely associated with our defence forces we discover all is not as rosy as the picture painted by the minister in his speeches both here and across the country.

● (5:10 p.m.)

As I have pointed out, we in the Conservative party believe in orderly change. Certainly as a result of the confusion in the early 1950's a change was long overdue. However, if you are going to have orderly change it cannot take place overnight but should be done on the basis of long term planning. For instance, you might map out a five or ten year plan, particularly when there is going to be a comprehensive program of reorganization. From talking to people closely identified with Canada's forces I have the impression that there has been a slamming together—even a knocking of heads together—which has left some of the persons involved somewhat stunned.

I think the minister has given us a clue to this situation in that every statement he makes is full of optimism. There seem never to be any problems to be confronted or solved; everybody is moving smoothly toward the ultimate purposes the minister has in mind. In other words all is for the best in the best of possible worlds. When things move as smoothly as that we are reminded of the words of Shakespeare when he said: *Me-thinks he doth protest too much*. In no field

of human endeavour, particularly in public, political and military life is it possible to conceive of a situation where everything is ideal and no problems exist. The minister is like a salesman who talks beyond the sale. In attempting to make a sale he keeps on extolling the virtues of the product. I think because he is so importunate in this matter there is reason to be suspicious of what goes on behind the façade that has been erected.

Perhaps I may use another simile, Mr. Chairman, and go back in Greek mythology to Procrustes, who tried to make every traveller fit his magic bed, with the loss of course of a few limbs, heads and lives. The minister in attempting to make everybody fit into the pattern he has devised in reorganizing the armed forces has not lost any limbs, heads or lives, but obviously he has lost a considerable number of personnel. I suggest, as others have suggested, that this is indicative of problems of morale, confusion and frustration resulting from the 60 days of blazing decision atmosphere that has prevailed in the Department of National Defence.

Psychologists carry on tests with animals and have found that one sure way of creating disorientation is to subject these animals in experiments to constant and rapid change. I think that is the difficulty which prevails in the armed forces at the present time.

We are not sure even after the White Paper and the deliberations of the committee, on which I have not been privileged to serve in recent years, how far the minister intends to go in his reorganization; whether he is going beyond integration to unification. This is still a matter of debate, although I noticed in his statement yesterday that he did use this phrase, as it appears on page 1417 of *Hansard*, that the various services—

—would be integrated on a functional basis as a first step toward a single unified defence force for Canada.

We will be able to consider these matters later in the committee, but I question whether complete unification is in the best interests of Canada's armed forces. What is needed is unity of purpose and motivation. That must be a requisite to the maintenance of morale in the armed forces. If you try to press, by force, every branch of the armed forces into one common mould you are going to get monotony and frustration rather than strong morale and motivation.

We do not need similarity of colour and structure to meet Canada's defence requirements, we need flexibility. Flexibility is not