

*National Defence Act Amendment*

time, but I think we must agree that in the final analysis it has served a very useful purpose in endeavouring to substitute the conference table for the battlefield. It has not always succeeded but I believe it has succeeded in a number of instances.

When we think of one of the most important operations of the United Nations organization—I refer to peace-keeping operations—we can all be proud of the contributions our men have made in various areas of the world. Moving in without any massive organization and without any large amount of military force, they have established a presence which has contributed greatly to the maintenance of at least a semblance of peace in troubled regions. All members of the house recognize this and agree that we must support Canadian policy with regard to at least some of these areas of activity.

Furthermore, I believe there is general agreement that we should provide for the protection and surveillance of our territory, our air space and our coastal waters. It is this aspect which is causing the greatest concern to those who have been speaking and writing about the proposed unification program. Doubt has been raised as to the effectiveness of such a force in fulfilling these important obligations—the protection and surveillance of our territory, our air space and our coastal waters.

While I do not agree completely with the submissions of Rear Admiral Landymore, I believe one of his main fears is that the proposed unified force would be unable to carry out effectively the protection and surveillance of our coastal waters in particular. There will be fairly general agreement that the three objectives of policy to which I have referred are to be commended. But though general agreement may be reached as to objectives there are wide discrepancies of opinion as to how these objects can best be achieved. One of the reasons for this lack of agreement may be differences of opinion as to the type of military challenge which may confront us in the future.

Will we be faced by a nuclear threat? There are many people who have come to the conclusion that as far as Canada is concerned this is not a very serious prospect at the present time. A few years ago there was a great deal of discussion about the degree of probability of a nuclear attack in which Canada would be involved, and we have gone to considerable expense in order to meet that

[Mr. Patterson.]

challenge. Whether or not that expense was justified is open to question.

In the course of the hearings before the defence committee shortly after it had been set up, a former military officer, now a military analyst, appeared before the committee. This gentleman, Mr. John Gellner, wrote an article which appeared in the magazine *Executive*, of February, 1966. Referring to the cut-off date of 1964, he said:

Until then, Canada had followed the American lead and concentrated almost entirely on means of deterring the big, i.e. the nuclear, war, and if it came to the worst, possibly fighting a limited kind of such a war.

Later in the article he states: "It all resulted in a fantastic waste of effort and money". I think there are a great many people who would agree with Mr. Gellner's observation.

So there are those who envisage a nuclear war in which we must participate and there are others, in my estimation by far the larger group, who suggest that Canada is more likely to find itself engaged in wars of a conventional or local type.

The question raised by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) is most important. What is Canada's role to be in any future conflict? If the minister could outline for us in some detail the role Canada is likely to play in the event of such a conflict, I believe it would help the members of this house as well as the public in general and those serving in the forces to understand his policy better.

• (6:20 p.m.)

In order to meet the challenge, whatever it may be, there are those who would like to hold to the status quo. They contend that what we have at the present time has served us admirably in the past and will continue to serve us effectively in the future.

Without question, Mr. Speaker, Canada's armed forces have proven themselves in the last two world conflicts adequate for any and every situation. Those of us who had the opportunity of going overseas with the veterans affairs committee some months ago to visit various countries and meet the people there who came to participate in the memorial services which were held can testify to the fact that these people stated very clearly and definitely their appreciation of the role that Canada played in those two major conflicts. One man asked members of the committee on one occasion to convey to Canada the thanks and appreciation of his countrymen for the contribution that the Canadian forces