

*Supply—National Defence*

vehicles for the infantry, and equipped with transport aeroplanes and helicopters, if those are found to be satisfactory for use in the field, equipped in this way, brought up to date, modernized, the Canadian army would be something of which we would be prouder than we are at the present time, although we are very proud of it.

That was my statement on May 20, 1954 as reported in *Hansard* at page 4931. I happened to be the person who used those words in the House of Commons—mobility, tracked vehicles, air supported, supply columns with track vehicles; and so on. Yet the minister now thinks he has conceived a new idea. He talks about the philosophy of mobility. I do not know of any idea which has a longer history than this question of mobility. And the minister has not yet achieved it. This is the philosophy, but what has he done? Our brigade in Europe just recently acquired the armoured personnel carriers which I have advocated for 15 years in this chamber. It is still not equipped with tracked supply vehicles; it is still not equipped with air support or air supply facilities. So it is not mobile. The minister pretends he suddenly came up with a brand new idea. His lack of experience shows, of course, in so much of what he says to us here.

As I have said, the minister has left unanswered more questions than he answered. I suggested to him in a question the other day that in order to have an effective fighting force now and in the future he should make sure that our senior officers and, if possible, our senior N.C.O's, should get some experience of what is going on elsewhere in the world. I suggested he should have observers from our forces in Viet Nam to study what is going on there. Had he taken this course we might have had a first hand report about the F-5 as used in South Viet Nam, and not a second, third or fifth hand report from the minister with regard to that plane. Why did we not have senior air force officers there to examine the effectiveness of this plane? Why did we not have senior army officers there to examine the effectiveness of the air cavalry division and the methods now being employed in that war which has been going on for a year with increasing intensity?

I am not suggesting that young Canadian soldiers be sent to South Viet Nam. I never used that expression. I was talking about younger officers and N.C.O's who within a few years are going to succeed the veterans of the second world war. As the minister said himself, second world war veterans are now getting on toward their late forties and fifties

[Mr. Churchill.]

and will soon be retiring. The men who were 15, 16 and 17 in 1945 are now approaching the age of 38 and will soon be in their forties. They are inexperienced with regard to warfare and the way to get experience is by attaching observers to formations in areas where the struggle is going on.

I will use the minister's own expression. One has to be realistic about national defence. Much as we are doing in peace keeping and observer corps work, developing a kind of police force, this is not the primary purpose of our national defence forces, as the hon. member for Brandon-Souris pointed out the other night.

• (9:40 p.m.)

The primary purpose is to be effective in case of war, and you must have a high command that is effective in case of war. I pointed this out 12 years ago, dealing with the same subject:

If we do not train the senior officers, we face a serious situation in time of war. I stood in awe of senior officers for a large portion of my life; but with the passing of the years that awe has diminished very considerably . . . . It is essential for the high command, for divisional and corps commanders, to understand the use of all arms within the army. We had many experiences in the second world war of that, where people unfamiliar with armoured formations were not able to use them effectively. Repeatedly I told men under my command when we were engaged in exercises in England at which they grumbled: "Put up with it; do anything that you are told to do under these conditions because we are training the high command, and you may live a bit longer if the high command gets trained."

I take this very seriously indeed because I have seen enough of warfare to know that the high command can make mistakes. Of course, they are not the only ones who can make mistakes. Junior officers can also make mistakes, but the troops are in the hands of the high command. Let me just indicate what Lloyd George said about this during the first world war. I quote:

No amount of circumspection can prevent war leading to the death of multitudes of brave men, but now that generals are not partaking in the personal hazards of a fight, they ought to take greater personal risks in satisfying themselves as to the feasibility of their plans and as to whether the objectives they wish to attain are worth the sacrifice entailed, and whether there is no better way of achieving the same result at less cost of gallant lives.

That was based on experience. The quotation is from page 123 of a book called, "To Seize the Victory" by John Swettenham, covering the Canadian Corps in world war I. I commend it to every hon. member and I pay