

Interim Supply

that time I asked the minister not to abandon the volunteer militia system which has served us so well since 1812. But he disagreed and said he wished to save money. His department abandoned the system and in some cases had the local armories torn down. The militia units are gone; they sold their furniture, their prize mementos and also their loose property. It is a shame to walk through the empty armories which are left. Even the training has been discontinued. Instead of having the reliable old system whereby young men could train so many nights per week, we see them now standing around the street corners with nothing to do. Whatever they might be doing now, it cannot equal the character and physique building program offered them by the volunteer militia.

It is enough to bring tears to one's eyes to see these armouries now. It is sad to walk the deserted drill floor and through the empty rooms of the still well preserved, first class armoury in my home town of Napanee and to think of the thousands of men who trained there ever since 1915 when it was built. These were the men who defended Canada and who made it possible for the minister and his department to obliterate and abandon the time honoured militia system without which he would not be here at the present time. What a travesty of justice and defence this is. The minister said that this move would save money and that the saving would amount to some \$8 million. He said that abolition of armouries all across Canada would be a big saving. Mr. Chairman, I submit the government is penny wise and pound foolish. The saving which they can realize from this action does not even equal the price of one aeroplane, as is shown in the new budget. I am sure the minister will admit that in the event of a war, even a nuclear war, it will be the trained and equipped infantrymen who will be the important factor not only in our defence but in the work of survival and restoration in the aftermath of war, if there are any survivors. The minister has abandoned these men.

The minister seems to be thinking only in automated terms. Is this what the half million dollar computer has told him? Certainly, I will admit we need equipment. It should be the objective of any administration to see that our army, navy and air force are equipped in the best possible way, but the prime requisite is trained men who take an interest in their work and whose morale is high.

This brings us to the question of integration and unification. In answer to my inquiries, I was told by men of experience that integration is a good thing but that absolute unification is not. Integration results in greater efficiency and better economics in the armed forces. If money can be saved through the avoidance of duplication and through the integration of headquarters and general staff, so much the better. This could apply to the integration of the three services. However, to remove, obliterate and abandon the identity of these services and of the battalions, the regiments, the squadrons and the units which form them is a mistake. In this way the minister undermines a basic and vital human trait and virtue. He disregards the virtues of teamwork and the individual pride in collective accomplishment.

This impalpable but perceptible quality has been carried down through generations of mankind. It was present among the forces of the ancient city states of Greece and in ancient Rome. It was present at Waterloo and Trafalgar, at Vimy Ridge and Paaschendale, at Tobruk and the Battle of Britain. Pride in teamwork is an attribute without which the armed forces of any free people cannot properly function or exist.

● (5:40 p.m.)

I remind the minister that, despite his present actions, Canada is not a dictatorship. Canada is not Russia or Red China. I remind the minister that in dealing with our armed forces, or what is left of them, he is dealing with free men, and he can get more out of free men if they are allowed to function and thrive in an environment of healthy, creative accomplishment.

So, I say to the minister that which is being said all across Canada by the majority of Canadians in this country: integration in all its economic meaning, yes; but unification in the meaning that it would have a stultifying effect upon the units of our armed forces, no. I also ask him to send this important question to the committee before the second reading stage of the bill.

Now in reference to transport, I wish to protest the applications, several in number, of the Canadian Pacific Railway to close and remove the station building and agent operator at Roblindale, Ontario, in the constituency of Prince Edward-Lennox. Also, similar applications by the same railway company have been made to accomplish the same end at the stations at Tichborne, Ontario, Sharbot Lake,