

*National Defence Act Amendment*

Let me paraphrase what Gibbon wrote in "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". He said that Rome fell when the young men would rather wear silk pants and play with dice in the streets than defend the walls of Rome. I appeal to everyone within the sound of my voice or who takes the trouble to read *Hansard*—and I know that I will not be quoted by the press—to realize that we are dealing with a very basic principle of survival. Surely we should all listen to anyone who wants to make some contribution to this debate.

The role of the defence department is unique and defence should not in any way be based on politics. This department should serve Canada. That is its only job and only reason for existence. If you will pardon my rather stilted French, it is the *raison d'être*. I assure the minister and the defence department that I am not afraid of revolutionary changes which increase the efficiency of our armed forces.

• (5:00 p.m.)

As I said before, I do not think these things depend on the colour of the uniform. We have listened to many emotional appeals with regard to these wonderful uniforms, but I think any real soldier would serve Canada regardless of the colour of the uniform. If there is a policy, whether it is in the mind of the minister, the Department of National Defence as a whole, a political party or leaders in this country, no matter how eminent they may be, of looking forward with confidence to the peaceful existence of mankind on this planet, and that policy with regard to our defence is predicated on this wonderful dream, I say those who have devised the policy are self-condemned and self-disqualified in respect of this very important job.

I believe the revolutionary ideas of the minister are pale, compared with some of my own. I am not the minister of national defence. Rather than the emphasis being put on unification and doing away with regimental mottos and regimental dress, I would like to see a standardization of defence for the North American continent. I would like to see our defence units interchangeable with those of the Americans, because nobody but a blind man, nobody but a deaf man would suggest that we can survive in the next 25 years on this planet unless we stand shoulder to shoulder with our American allies. I say "American allies" because we are allies of theirs in two great theatres; I do not think you could call us allies of theirs in the Pacific theatre at

[Mr. Bigg.]

the present time. I believe very sincere efforts are being made by Canada to be a mediator in this conflict. I would like to see Canada able to mediate and be instrumental in bringing peace to Viet Nam, peace with honour, in the name of humanity. But I do not think a red herring should be dragged into this defence debate and that because we are trying to do something worth while in Viet Nam, Cyprus or the Gaza strip we should close our eyes to the need for taking a very, very hard look at establishing a fully effective armed force for Canada.

I believe it is not necessary to unify our forces in the way put forward in this bill. I would like to see this money spent in standardization, because I believe that standardization between us and the Americans on land, sea, in the air and even in space, would in the end result save us money; and who is there so base that they would not try to save us money—with apologies to Shakespeare.

The standardizing of training is extremely important. I cannot conceive of our taking part in another world war without our American cousins there to supply men at the ratio of 10 to 1, and probably 20 to 1 in dollars. It would be a sensible move on our part if, when we needed ammunition, we could get it from our allies; if when we needed spare parts for our tanks, the assembly lines in the United States were able to supply them; if when we needed shells, we could get them from our allies. We should be able to call upon our allies to help us when help is needed. In a total war, which we can visualize, the whole potential of Canada's manufacturing industry could be knocked out with one blow. With about three atom bombs you could knock out Canada's effectiveness in manufacturing.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we should go for standardization rather than unification. In my opinion it will not help Canada one bit to establish a small, very ineffective, unified force as envisaged by this bill. The colour of the uniform of this unified force will not help in the defence of Canada. I doubt very much whether changing the uniform to that of one solid colour, whatever colour it may be, will encourage us to stand together man for man and carry our burden man for man. We would all go for a standardization of uniform if it meant there would be no such thing in the future as a hyphenated Canadian and we were all just Canadians. Would the previous speaker have me believe that standardizing the uniform will mean we will get more volunteers from all the ethnic groups in