

Supply—National Defence

With the establishment of a permanent standing committee on national defence, this principle has been formalized and I am sure it will continue to do the same kind of good work performed by the members of the special committee.

In my statement today I have not included statistical information in respect of manpower, or details in respect of individual items of hardware. The estimates for 1966-67 will be referred for early consideration by the standing committee, and it would seem appropriate to defer consideration of detail to that occasion when witnesses can be called and when full statistical information can be made available.

I hope that this suggestion will meet general approval, and once again I would like to express my appreciation of the co-operation I have received from hon. gentlemen on both sides of the chamber.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, the first impression most members will have received from the minister's speech is that he has slowed down considerably. I think it took him twice as much time to read the same amount of material on this occasion as he did when he last presented his estimates nearly two years ago. I do not know whether that was the effect of having listened so long to the debate on the Department of Transport estimates, or perhaps it was just due to the particular hour on the clock.

The outline which the minister gave of the jobs that our servicemen are carrying out overseas, of the command structure, of the development work being carried on, and of the work of the Defence Research Board was all very interesting, but it did not get down to the crux of the situation in the Department of National Defence. I would say the minister's speech was designed to give the committee and the country the impression that all is well in that department, whereas everyone who has any knowledge of the defence situation in Canada today knows that the reverse is the case.

I would first like to point out that we are considering these estimates at a time when all of the evidence indicates that the morale of our defence forces is the lowest it has been since before world war II, and probably the lowest it has ever been in our history. All the evidence I have had from conversations with and letters from a large number of ex-service personnel, conversations with and letters from presently serving personnel and members of their families, is to that effect. The

[Mr. Hellyer.]

actual evidence in regard to recruiting, loss of men from the services, the situation in regard to the effectiveness of units, and the ability to keep units operating, all points in this direction. I shall be outlining a considerable number of these things in the course of my remarks.

I would like to put more emphasis on this matter of morale. Everyone with any military experience, particularly with experience in war, knows that the most important single requirement for efficient and effective individual fighting men, units and formations, is high morale. Without it you cannot have efficiency and effectiveness in any military organization.

An article which bears on this, and which appeared in the *Victoria Colonist* of January 26, is something I would like to put on the record at this time. It is headed "Confidence" and reads:

In a recent address to the directors of Victoria's Armed Service Centre one of Canada's outstanding seamen, Rear Admiral J. C. Hibbard, discussed the meaning of morale in a military organization.

To the individual serviceman—regardless of his ranks—morale is the result of a combination of many factors, the admiral said.

• (9:50 p.m.)

But, he added, these factors could all be summed up in one word: Confidence—confidence in his leadership, confidence in his training, confidence in himself, confidence in his unit and his weapons, confidence in his support from his home, and confidence in the belief that he is necessary and that his sacrifices are of benefit to his country.

By outlining this simple definition at a time when our national defence policies present such a confused picture both at home and to the outside world, Admiral Hibbard might have done a great service to Canada.

Perhaps his carefully spelled out words might cause Defence Minister Paul Hellyer to pause for a moment in his politically-oriented direction of Canada's defence program to give at least some small thought to the men behind the guns.

I think one of the difficulties as far as the minister is concerned results from his thinking and talking constantly about cost effectiveness, about computerizing systems and things of that sort. He has missed the most important single factor of any effective defence organization, which is the attitude of the men, their morale and their confidence in their leadership and themselves. The actual fact is that the confidence of most servicemen in their leadership and the policies of the Minister of National Defence has been destroyed during the past two years.

During the past two years more and more servicemen have lost the essential belief that