

National Defence Act Amendment

senior officers have given evidence and declared, practically to the last man, that they have grave doubts as to the need for unification or where unification will take Canada? This is made clear in an editorial which appears in today's *Gazette*—an article by Mr. Arthur Blakely. The author says the minister agrees the chiefs of staff are predominantly opposed to unification of the armed forces. And the minister is quoted as saying "Chiefs of staff all over the world are opposed to unification of the armed forces."

The evidence before the committee has made this abundantly clear. Senior military advisers who have spent years and years in the forces and who know the military art, are opposed to unification and wonder where it is taking them. In the light of their views and the hope expressed by General Allard that after the bill is passed it will not be proclaimed for four months, during which time no action could be taken toward unification, what need is there for haste? The minister himself said on Monday that integration will only be achieved as a result of a series of steps and may not be complete for seven or eight years. We live in a democracy where we cherish freedom of speech. Why then, should we have to read in the papers that the guillotine will fall unless we pass this legislation immediately? What is the urgency?

It was once commonly thought that the minister of defence wanted to pass this unification measure, believing he could do so without any great difficulty, in order to improve his own position as a contestant for leadership of the Liberal party. It was his idea that if he could effect savings in the Department of National Defence, the public would believe him capable of realizing savings in every department of government.

Most of those serving in our armed forces firmly believe that this was the idea in the minister's mind when he began this process of amalgamating the three services into one unified force—a force for which he has not yet found a name other than the one given it by the chief of staff, General Allard—Finks, that is, fighting infantrymen with naval knowledge. I am sure this name does not well suit the men in the forces today.

One could talk a good deal about esprit de corps—how it arises, and how it is maintained. It is interesting to note the minister's statement that putting our forces into the same type of uniform would not affect their morale or fighting spirit in any way. Yet what is happening throughout the world? In the

present conflict in Viet Nam we are witnessing the creation, shall I say, of the Green Berets. What is significant about that? It is significant because it is a move to add something, an article of headgear, to the uniform which part of the force is wearing—to provide something which is just a little extra in order to enhance esprit de corps. This is important. Songs have been written about it. Books have been written about the special training these men must take.

The significant point is that these men are proud of having taken these courses and passed these examinations. They are proud to wear this particular piece of uniform. So here is a nation that has fought in many wars throughout its history, coming up with something new to maintain or build up esprit de corps among their servicemen. On the other hand, we in Canada are proclaiming that the generals and the vice marshals are all wrong and that uniform does little for esprit de corps. The minister says our forces can be dressed in green sacks, if necessary, as long as whatever they wear has some sex appeal about it. The associate minister agrees with this. Well, it is not enough. It is not enough to call them Finks and say they must be fighting infantrymen with naval knowledge. This is borne out by the fact that even today United States is creating special distinctions in uniforms to build up the esprit de corps of its fighting forces.

The whole question of the unification of the armed services was considered by the Russians shortly after the second world war. They carried out the initial steps and for all I know they may have gone as far as integration. But they did not go the whole way. They shrank from taking that particular step because they found it was not workable and would not provide for the best possible defence of their country.

Mr. Knowles: Six o'clock.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): This is really what we are concerned about, and this is why taxpayers contribute toward a fighting force. They want it to defend Canada first of all, and then to play a role in keeping peace throughout the world.

May I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Churchill: So that there may be no further delay imposed by hon. members such as the hon. member for Saint-Denis and the hon. member for Villeneuve, I propose we let clause 2 stand and go on with clause 3 the