

Supply—National Defence

concept is to be expanded. It is to be hoped that not only the concept will be expanded but the actual ability to perform this function. It is reassuring to hear the minister say that current plans call for two brigades to be converted to the concept of air transportability. I should like to hear more from the minister about how and when these current plans are to be carried out.

The minister told us in his statement about the purchase of 20 additional C-130 Hercules aircraft to provide strategic airlift for the Canadian armed forces. This is welcome news to us. I note the statement of the minister that the capability of this command must be further examined in the years ahead in order to meet adequately the philosophy of mobility set out in the White Paper. Studies, he tells us, of the best cost-effective equipment for this expansion are under way. With these proposals for greater transportability we agree; we believe this to be vital, but we are anxious to obtain the details of these plans. After all, it is nearly two years since the White Paper was published which contained this promise. How long are the cost-effective studies going to take? What are the plans for the further expansion of the capability of Air Transport Command? What is the size of the forces that it could transport by air at the present time, and to what parts of the world could it transport these forces?

The philosophy of mobility as set out in the White Paper is all very well; in fact in my view it is the best part of the White Paper. But philosophy must be translated into action. While we continue to try to maintain obsolete roles within the financial ceiling of roughly \$1½ billion, is there a danger that the steps necessary to transform the philosophy of mobility into actuality may be starved? We fear this may be the case.

This party believes that these are questions which require answers. It is our conviction—this has often enough been said but not so often practised—that defence policy must fit into political objectives. The political objectives that Canada, as a result of her membership in the alliance, is best able to fulfil through her defence services is the provision of peace keeping forces, highly mobile conventional forces. In our view we should concentrate on this role and move with far greater speed and determination than the minister has shown away from the obsolete roles of the past.

[Mr. Brewin.]

• (3:10 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): Mr. Chairman, I would be remiss if I failed to take this opportunity of telling the house about the gratifying experience I have had in the year since I have been appointed to the Department of National Defence. More specifically, in this last year I have had the opportunity of visiting many units of the Canadian Army. I feel duty bound to bear witness not only to the good will the forces have shown in accepting the integration program put forward by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer), but also to their understanding of the essential part they are currently playing in the future, the security and the stability of our country.

The debate on National Defence estimates has just begun, yet a number of opinions have already been heard, some contradictory, some favourable and others hostile to the integration of our armed forces. In certain circles, the opinion seems to be that the Minister of National Defence, myself and the personnel concerned with national defence do not realize the problems connected with implementing the integration program.

This is quite wrong, Mr. Chairman. We know the problems involved, and we also know that sometimes they are very hard to solve. On the other hand, that is no reason to stop and fail to carry out a project which seems likely, even at this early stage, to bring about so many advantages, and which also allows us to look forward to armed forces designed for the future rather than for 50 years ago. Through this experiment, we had the satisfaction of finding also that many foreign countries envy us for the very reason that we are of the stature needed to try such an experiment.

During the past year I met several representatives from foreign countries, from friendly and commonwealth countries, who came here to inquire about the progress made in the development of the integration of our forces and every one of them told us that, in their own country, the implementation of such a program had already been considered, sometimes quite often.

In certain countries, it was found that the armed forces were perhaps too numerous to arrive at such a clear integration, and they wanted to know how it had been achieved.