

*National Defence Act Amendment*

which made those troops who were able to benefit from it very happy indeed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, having said those more pleasant things, I should like to discuss unification and integration. There are a few criticisms I should like to make and I hope that they will be considered as constructive. I feel that is the only type of criticism which is of any value. Otherwise we would be wasting our time. I should like to raise the matter of the militia of this country. The militia has been affected greatly by this matter of unification. Unfortunately it seems to have been very much downgraded. A few years ago the role of the militia was changed, and it was given a more active role in the whole vital field of civil defence. I have had considerable correspondence from serving officers in militia units, especially in eastern Canada. Those letters indicate that the officers and senior N.C.O.'s especially are very unhappy. Now, what is the trouble? I suppose most of the troubles are those which the Minister of National Defence has heard many times before. There is the lack of proper equipment to do a job, and specifically the lack of vehicles.

When you have a militia unit which is spread over a distance of several hundred miles with four, five or six companies—infantry regiments normally have six companies—the only way in which stores and personnel can be moved is with road transport. With many units, the vehicles are old and not functioning properly. When a vehicle breaks down, that is the end of it; they do not get a replacement. I believe the militia still has a very definite role to play in this nation. Some of us, from our experience, know that in 1939 and 1940 the Canadian army had a firm springboard from which to launch itself. Thousands of excellent officers and N.C.O.'s—many now in this house—went right from the non-permanent active militia to the Canadian army, navy and air force.

Another complaint is that adequate training time is not allotted to these units. I have been led to believe there is some discrimination against the maritime units in the matter of training time as opposed to units in other parts of Canada. It disturbs me to think that this might be so. I would appreciate it if the minister would look into this matter. Recently a very distinguished former minister of national defence, the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness), wrote about this matter. I should like to quote him because I think what he has to say is sound. He speaks from broad experience as a militia officer and as

[Mr. MacRae.]

commander of an artillery regiment in world war II, and he also speaks from his experience as a former minister of national defence:

The direct defence of Canada also requires strong militia or reserve forces and it is only by the maintenance of such forces that numbers of trained men in organized units can be provided. A strong militia is also essential to carry on the survival operations, which would be the most important immediate task of our armed forces in the event of a nuclear attack. In addition, reserves are necessary to provide some of the personnel likely to be required for United Nations operations. The Korean war was an example, and to provide the numbers required for rapid expansion of our regular forces in any emergency.

I do not agree with what the government is doing in respect of unification of our Canadian armed forces. I am deeply disturbed to see so many senior officers leaving the service prematurely—not only senior officers, but others not so senior who I believe should have been retained until the end of their service. As I understand it, in many cases what they were suggesting was that we should proceed more slowly with what was being attempted. In other cases, of course, there was outright opposition to this whole program of unification. Like all members of parliament I have received the material which has been prepared by the Tri-Services Identities Organization—TRIO—as it is usually called. Recently, among the material which we received, there was a copy of an open letter to the Prime Minister of Canada. In this letter the gentlemen who formed this group—which is non-political—have outlined their position. They say, and I agree with them, that they are left with grave doubts concerning what is going on. They say there are a number of questions which are fundamental but which are unanswered. The TRIO group sets these out very well. I should like to place these on the record.

First, what is to be the future role of Canada's defence forces in terms of specific military tasks? Second, is Canada to rely for its defence in the future on alliances such as NATO and NORAD, and if it is, what type of military contribution is Canada expected to make to these alliances? Third, how is a requirement for mobilization to meet an emergency and up to a tenfold expansion in the numerical strength of Canada's forces provided for in this unified force which is envisaged? Fourth, what are the specific advantages in a single military service that are not attainable under an integrated three service system? This brings up the point, that many of us see considerable value in having some integration, but we cannot see the value of