

operate within a certain ceiling in dollar value, regardless of the outcome of any studies which may be undertaken in the fields of external affairs and defence. I should like to point out that this ceiling will lower as long as the value of the purchasing power of our dollar continues to decline.

With regard to some specific statements which the minister made, I am pleased that he has established that it is his intention to honour our obligation to be governed by the established NATO consultative procedures. I was also pleased to hear him indicate that the government will give some attention to the reports of the Committee on National Defence and External Affairs. I hope that it will give more attention to future reports of that committee than it did to its report on NATO.

I wish to congratulate the minister on his intention to try to reduce further the administrative costs of the armed forces and to increase the ratio of the combat units to total personnel and total costs, but I am afraid that he will meet with disappointment unless he has more success in grappling with Parkinson's law than did most of his colleagues up to now.

With regard to the minister's remarks concerning the maritime command, I am pleased that the government recognizes the vital importance of the role which that command carries out. If I may digress for a moment, may I say that I know the personnel stationed in my constituency will be pleased to know that the government is contemplating a study of a replacement aircraft for the Argus.

I think it is very unwise to reduce the strength of the reserve forces. Our professionals say that at the time when our permanent force is to be reduced, our reserve strength should be increased so that we might have something to fall back on in certain situations.

I hope that the minister will take into very careful consideration, as he promised, the economic side effects of the closing of bases, especially those located in more or less isolated areas the economy of which is dependent on the bases. I also hope that the government, in concert with other levels of government, will find some compensating stimulation for the economy in any area where a base must be closed before that action is taken.

The minister has deplored the apparent necessity for keeping the forces in a state of some uncertainty for some time longer. I hope

*Statement by Minister on Defence Needs*

that he can correct the situation at the earliest time, but I agree with him that our armed forces are made up of professionals and they will carry out whatever duty is allotted to them in a fashion of which all Canadians can be proud; because I believe that the Canadians who represent us in the armed forces, especially those who are stationed in Europe, are of the very highest professional quality and are a credit to all Canadians.

**Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, the remarks which I have to make will not take too long because I, like others, find myself in a difficult position as a member of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on External Affairs and National Defence. The committee spent all of last week drafting a report. I know what is in it but, because of the time it takes to translate it into French, it cannot be tabled until Wednesday or Thursday.

However, may I say that speaking individually I have a great fondness for the Minister of National Defence.

**Mr. Lewis:** Watch out.

**Mr. Winch:** But when he speaks, as he did today, on the so-called government policy on national defence, I am not only amazed but I think that the minister has increased the confusion in the defence policy and, worst of all, has demonstrated that so far as the government is concerned our defence policy is a *fait accompli* and the opinions expressed in the committee or in the House of Commons mean nothing at all.

I do not know why we have spent so many months in the committee, studying defence matters, when all we can do now is to come here to listen to an announcement of a *fait accompli* by the government.

**Mr. McGrath:** The house leader is not even listening. Shame on him.

**Mr. Winch:** The minister said a few minutes ago: "We will honour our obligation to be governed by the established NATO consultative procedures, and hence our plans must remain tentative for the time being... In this regard we are looking forward to receiving and studying the report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence."

• (3:00 p.m.)

As to NATO, I thought we made an arduous trip and worked our heads off to file