

*National Defence Act Amendment*

Whether people are opposed to the navy, whether they dislike admirals or generals, the fact is that the armed services constitute a tremendously important business in this country. There are many millions of dollars being spent. If we are going to have armed forces, then they must be properly run. When Admiral Landymore left the service he was chief of the maritime command and so would be in a position to know whether any studies had been made of integration. He would be in a position to know what unification meant.

Hon. members should consider the destruction of morale, the feeling of uneasiness, the wholesale firings of the top brass and the amount of consternation in the forces generally caused by this word "unification". One would have thought that someone would certainly know what it meant. If there was any plan for unification, if there had been any study of the effect of integration, certainly the top brass would have heard about it. But we have Admiral Landymore's evidence, and I will take his word any day over that of the minister, that he never saw any study. In other words, apparently we have been wandering along without any plan and with some idea in the minister's mind that he could change from time to time. I suppose this is what he means by "flexible".

I thought the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Patterson) did a fine job of explaining to the house the position of the Conservative party and those of us who are opposed to the minister's bill. I realize that the hon. member said it was his intention to support the minister. We are used to the Social Credit philosophy of criticizing something because they do not know what it is about but saying that they will go along with it. On this occasion I believe the hon. member was making a valiant effort to find out what the bill was all about. He did confess that the bill left him confused but said he was going to go along with the minister.

I suppose I should congratulate the minister because it is a fact that the feeling of the hon. member represents, I am sure, the predominant feeling of most citizens in Canada today. The minister has done a beautiful snow job by way of publicity not only on some members of this house but on the people of this country. No one yet knows what unification means but people have swallowed the minister's line that he is giving them more defence for less money, that Canada is leading the way in a sparkling, new concept

[Mr. Nugent.]

which shows original thought and which other countries are going to be glad to follow as soon as they realize how brilliant our minister is.

● (5:50 p.m.)

I also realize why so many people in this country pay little attention to the armed services and to defence spending. It is very hard to arouse the interest of people in why we are fighting so bitterly over this issue. Because the people at home are not paying enough attention I believe we should perhaps redouble our efforts in this regard. I resent the minister doing a snow job. I resent the minister, who should be interested in the defence of this country, selling himself, and I doubly resent it when he is successful. I have always said that the Liberals—the minister is a shining example of this—can sell a lie faster than we can sell the truth, but when the effects of a lie are so far reaching and dangerous to the country as well as so expensive to our treasury, then our duty becomes much clearer and much more rigid.

Admiral Landymore related an incident or two to prove the kind of mystification which exists throughout the top echelons of our armed services. He stated in his brief:

The minister himself gave us a clue at the meeting held in Ottawa in June 1965. At an assembly of a very large number of senior officers who had been invited to Ottawa to learn something of the organization plans for integration, the minister in his opening remarks announced there would be a single walking-out dress and a single rank structure by July 1967. I immediately asked the chief of personnel for more details of this and he, normally, is responsible for dress and rank structure. He told me he had no pre-knowledge of the announcement or any knowledge of any such plan.

I think the chief of personnel should certainly have had some knowledge of this if there was a plan. I would not be surprised if the Minister of National Defence had suddenly made it up on the spur of the moment and announced it in his speech. Since the minister had not been known beforehand to be an expert on defence matters and we in this house have no reason to suspect that since he has become minister he has learned very much about defence, it would be very comforting to hon. members to think that at least there are some people who know something about defence who have been guiding him. But according to this statement it has been a one-man show. The chief of personnel had no knowledge of something that it is his personal responsibility to know. He had no knowledge there was any such plan, which makes it