

*National Defence Act Amendment*

certain omniscience in coming to that conclusion because, should we be wrong, the pain and the agony that will confront us as a nation involved in any kind of conventional war in the future will be severe indeed. It seems to me we move too hastily if we assume we can take for granted that we will not be involved in a conventional type of war and conventional type of defence of our country. The proposed legislation which we are now considering assumes just such a development.

We have moral commitments under the collective security arrangements and agreements into which we have entered around the globe, and I submit we owe a debt and discharge of a fulfilment to our allies that requires the maintenance, improvement, development and, if necessary, the expansion of conventional forms of fighting arms, conventional forms of fighting units, that can fit into the over-all pattern of defence envisioned by those allies who, with us, belong to those collective agreements and collective arrangements. Therefore, as many a speaker preceding me in this debate has pointed out, we come to the vital question of foreign policy and the more crucial question of whether or not our foreign policy is being decided and determined by our defence policy. Sir, I wonder whether Canadians are satisfied in coming to the conclusion, or having the conclusion developed for them, that in the future we are merely to be the bearers and operators of an international fire brigade? This is what we would be reduced to being with the unified force proposed in this legislation.

As I asked a moment ago, what of our allies with respect to this question? What do they expect of us, what do we expect of them? Can we fulfil the commitments and the pledges we owe if we make such a drastic, revolutionary and convolutive change in our military posture and establishment? With respect to the possibilities of a major conventional war, will we not have our traditional responsibilities as partners in the free world alliance? I submit it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil those responsibilities if we proceed with the revolutionary change proposed in this legislation, at least before much fuller consideration has been given to its development in the context of the collective arrangements to which we belong and in the context of the threat to freedom in the world today.

We owe much to our allies. In my view we owe much in particular to our brave allies in

[Mr. Sherman.]

the United States whose sons are dying in Viet Nam today to keep the world safe for democracy. President Johnson said with respect to that struggle, "We did not choose to be the guardians at the gate, but there is no one else."

I was in the Pacific a few weeks ago. I was fortunate enough to have a few days in Viet Nam and Henry Cabot Lodge, the outgoing, widely loved and respected United States ambassador to South Viet Nam, told me, "It is not a choice out here between war in Viet Nam and the broad high road to peace. If it were such a choice we would take the broad high road to peace, but this is a dangerous world in which we live, and this is a particularly dangerous part of that world, and the choice out here is between different dangers, between a broken arm and a broken leg. That is always the choice in a dangerous world. We are making a stand in Viet Nam which we would have to make somewhere."

My own personal view of the situation and of American involvement there really turns on a statement made by Thomas Jefferson many years ago when he asserted that it is sometimes necessary for men to fight small wars in order that great wars can be avoided. I think this is the moral fulcrum on which American involvement in Viet Nam turns, and I believe in the essential correctness of the American involvement at this time in that place. I also believe in the essential correctness of criticism, but not distortion, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that criticism in this country of our American allies has grown out of all proportion and now amounts in many cases to nothing more than incontrovertible distortion of the role that the United States is playing in world affairs.

• (6:20 p.m.)

There is a cult of anti-Americanism being formed in this country which is unworthy of us as Canadians and destructive to the causes of friendship, freedom and peace. This is an imperfect world. Together, we and our historic friends and allies can make it better. We debase the dreams of all North Americans of good will, Canadians and citizens of the United States, when we demean ourselves by stooping to the practice of mean and petty criticism of our friends, encouraged by those who have no care for the dangerous game they are playing. This is a practice which is based on half truths, untruths, rumour and a misguided form of so-called patriotism. I deplore the widespread denigration of the American effort. We should do all we can to