

*Interim Supply*

aimed at Admiral Brock's brief on national defence. The writer agreed with much of what Admiral Brock had stated, namely, that Canada had no need for nuclear weapons and that the nature of our armed forces outwardly should reflect the nature of our foreign policy and the spirit and will of the Canadian people. He felt that some of Admiral Brock's points were rather dubious when he argued for a complete, balanced, independent force. The writer felt that such a course would undermine the whole principle of a co-operating alliance such as NATO. Again we have an editorial writer striving for further information and a better understanding of what is happening in connection with our three armed services.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* of November 5, 1966, editorially agrees with the belief that integration and future unification efforts would meet with a genuine feeling of resistance within the armed forces despite the efforts on the part of the government to create the impression that integration was being accepted without question. Certainly we know there are many people in the armed forces who are young and are prepared to accept the position that possibly the minister is right in suggesting that his course of action is one which will capture the imagination of people who will want to get on with the business at hand in the most efficient manner.

The *Winnipeg Free Press*, and again it is not a paper which necessarily agrees with the Conservative point of view too frequently, editorially implies that one reason for the doubts and the questioning is that the government's plans as yet are vague and undefined despite the legislation introduced by the minister. The editorial writer agreed wholeheartedly with the point made by the hon. member for Greenwood that the minister should let the defence committee hear from the body of persons who happen to disagree with the plan. The writer took the position that the minister clearly was attempting to ram through the bill as swiftly as possible apparently in the hope of neutralizing in advance the testimony of expert witnesses. He concluded that legislation containing so many critical changes in the nation's defence structure should be given detailed study in committee before the house is asked to approve it in principle.

I could go on, Mr. Chairman, and refer to editorials in newspapers right across the country, including the *Victoria Colonist*. These editorials evince doubt and concern

[Mr. Forrestall.]

about the path now being followed with regard to integration and unification. Where do we go from here? Questions of principle, the primary one being the right of parliament to have an understanding of what it is approving before it approves it, cannot be treated too lightly. The events of last Thursday have been dealt with, not specifically but by inference, by two or three of the editorial writers whom I have quoted. It was not in any way a meaningful exercise in terms of the question that was before us. Sooner or later, here on the floor of the House of Commons the whole matter must be brought to light publicly. It is difficult and indeed time-consuming to draw out here from the minister the answers to the several hundred questions which must be forthcoming before any reasoned and rational decision can be made in respect of a bill of this magnitude and principle.

● (9.20 p.m.)

Earlier I spoke of the impact of integration and unification on the maritime economy and referred to the strong feeling which has existed and continues to exist among the middle and lower rank personnel in the Royal Canadian Navy. Let me point out to hon. members that apparently unification is going into effect at this time. Messages are being received by the naval establishment couched in army parlance. I quoted one but I could quote others. The one to which I had reference relates to seniority in respect of promotion, and the term "Major" was used throughout. Perhaps the minister can explain this by saying there is an economic reason and that members of the air force and navy are simply to interpret this rank as referring to their equivalent ranks. The answer might be that simple, but I suggest it is not. There are too many of these things happening at this time.

We have had assurances from the minister that in spite of difficulties in recruiting navy personnel there is no danger to the country and no difficulty in meeting our commitments. It is of interest to note that messages have gone out in the past few days urging all members of our reserve naval forces to make arrangements with the permanent force to go back to sea for two or three weeks. Apparently our ships should be at sea but we do not have sufficient permanent members to man them.