

*National Defence Act Amendment*

**Mr. Forrestall:** It has been suggested that he might be in a few years. As I say, the minister will see the truth of my words. Eventually something like this would have to come. Our allies to the south have been integrating and unifying, with definite objectives, for 17 years. They have long since concluded, and this conclusion has not been shaken in the last 10 or 15 years, that the way we are approaching the problem is not the proper way.

Let us look at unification as it now is. It is claimed in the white paper that integration came, as I said earlier, as the result of the most careful and thoughtful consideration. Generally, a careful and thoughtful consideration of such important matters, or matters of major importance, requires the production of guide lines, of papers arguing the pros and cons of courses of action, with definite conclusions and recommendations. There is no such study, and no information has been made available to members of the house about integration or unification. It can be claimed that the white paper, in saying "careful and thoughtful consideration," has misled the house, or has misled the people.

● (9:40 p.m.)

It has misled us into believing that the minister did, indeed, give this matter extensive and thoughtful consideration. I hope that as part of this debate the minister can find time to explain to us in much greater depth than he did in his 65 pages of repetitive prose, precisely what he has in mind. Perhaps I did not read his speech properly. I give the minister that much credit, anyway. If I misread it, I apologize. But it did not seem to me to deal with this issue in the depth necessary to provide an explanation for this concept of unification. The minister talks about what may happen, physically. He tells us what he thinks is desirable. Frankly, however, that speech contained a lot more platitudes than hard common sense—and this is not my opinion alone.

If no paper can be produced, if the minister has not gone through this type of exercise, I think it is clear to Canadians and clear to members of the house that the hon. gentleman has embarked upon a program which has been evolving step by step. In other words, it has been a pragmatic program; if it works, it is to be accepted, and if it fails it is to be rejected.

In any event there is so little information available to us, now, either from the white

paper or from the minister's lengthy statement of December 7, that few people, not more than half a dozen I would think, within the minister's personal staff, can possibly understand what is intended. The parts in this puzzle which were missing and which in my opinion are still missing are, first of all, a definition of unification, second, a valid argument in favour of unification and, third, an explanation of the need to carry unification to the ultimate step without room for variation. The white paper says there will be no thought of eliminating worth-while traditions. The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) repeated this promise and we are very pleased to hear it. However, there are probably a great many things involving traditional matters which have already been discarded out of hand because it was found suitable to do so for the sake of public relations.

It would not be difficult to name half a dozen. First, traditional naval dress will disappear. R.C.A.F. uniform is to be changed. In the past it has been traditional to name naval shore bases as R.C.N. ships. This practice has been abandoned in favour of the designation Canadian Force Base. The white ensign has been removed from our naval ships, ostensibly on the ground that when the new flag was accepted all the old flags went out of use. I am still not sure of the statutory authority for this decision.

The traditional rank structure will disappear, though it is true the R.C.A.F. may not be so much concerned about this, because I think they would like to have their rank designations brought more closely into line with those of their counterparts in the United States. Nevertheless they will be changed. It has always been traditional for recruits to the three services to be trained by the service directly concerned. This practice, followed for very real reasons, will be discontinued.

Toward the conclusion of the white paper it was clearly stated that the policy outlined therein was not immutable. No good reason has as yet been put forward to show that unification will provide a better defence force. If the policy can be changed as necessary, it is time that this unification plan came under the surgeon's scalpel.

Let us consider for a moment or two the difficulties which make unification uneconomical, if not impossible. Operational service in the three environments is vastly different. At sea, almost everyone involved serves in an operational environment and comes in contact with the enemy. In the land service about