

Interim Supply

Mr. Hellyer: As well as integration and unification.

Mr. Lambert: No, not unification. Because one minor phrase appeared in the white paper, hon. members opposite are now trying to justify the suggestion that unification was a subject of that bill. Of those meetings that were held, two had regard to emergency planning with the Minister of Defence Production; two meetings had regard to regular officer training plans. The minister was not present at those meetings. There were four meetings during which the committee discussed the status of the reserve forces and examined the authors of the Suttie, Draper and Hendy reports. There were two subsequent meetings with the associate minister and two with the minister regarding these reports.

There were three meetings held in camera, at which the minister was not present, and three meetings with the Minister of Defence Production at which time we examined the operations of his department. There was one meeting following those meetings with the air industry of Canada to examine their brief, and two meetings having regard to the Canadian Commercial Corporation. There was one meeting after that related to recruiting. Those are the meetings the Prime Minister had in mind when he said the committee had an opportunity to discuss unification. That is just not the fact as one can readily see, and this is a matter of record. The minister was not present at a great majority of these meetings which were held in 1964 and 1965. The committee's deliberations finished in the month of March, 1965. There were no meetings of the defence committee during the balance of 1965.

As a matter of fact, as late June 7, 1965 the minister himself said, as recorded at page 2041 of *Hansard* for that date:

—I think it might be agreeable if, as soon as the committee on defence is constituted, the defence staff provide a formal briefing to the committee and answer any questions on the command structure—

Apparently we were to deal with mobile command, but the house adjourned on June 30 without the defence committee having sat. The Prime Minister knows what he did with the balance of that year.

In 1966 the committee was constituted and held its organizational meeting on March 1, but it did not hold any other meetings because staffs were not available and there was no initiative on the part of the government to hold meetings. On May 5, the first meeting

was held having regard to security and intelligence. The committee received a briefing on intelligence at that time.

On May 12, there were six Liberal members substituted on the committee. They were reappointed as members on May 26 because there was a delicate situation at the Halifax dockyards slated for discussion at the meetings of May 26 and 31. On June 2, there was a further intelligence briefing. On June 16 the committee visited the air transport command and met with training command people here in Ottawa on June 17. On June 21 we went to the mobile command. The minister and the Prime Minister I am sure well remember what happened on June 23 when we received a briefing in camera from the commander of the maritime command.

Let me remind the Prime Minister that integration and unification were discussed this year, but not in previous years. I will agree there was some discussion in this regard after May of this year, but the minister fobbed it off. We know as a matter of fact that no decision had been taken in this regard at that time, and we know as a result of evidence given by members of the defence forces that the minister had indicated it would take from three to five years for integration and unification to become fully effective. Notwithstanding everything that has been said, particularly by the Prime Minister and others, on November 7 I asked about the circumstances under which certain senior officers had retired. There was an indication by the minister at that time that this house would not hear about that. There is an interjection on the record which clearly suggests that we were not going to hear about the circumstances surrounding the retirement of those senior officers. Well, this is a most interesting prospect. Again the minister tells us that he does not want a discussion. He is afraid to come up with clean hands to indicate just what has happened in this regard. This was what provided the background, the thin, puny background of justification for the Prime Minister's speech on Thursday.

• (4.10 p.m.)

The government has found the money. We wonder whether this procedure is going to be repeated the next time the government is faced with the legitimate withholding of supply. After all, that is the fundamental purpose of this house. I put it to you, Mr. Chairman, that it is not necessarily the passage of legislation that is the prime purpose of this house. It is the granting of supply to the government. This restraint of interim supply, which has