

National Defence Act Amendment

they will soon feel the weight of public opinion and perhaps a little common sense will then appear and this measure can be stopped before irreparable harm is done to the country and to its defences.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Chairman, since this debate started it is safe to estimate that some two million words have been placed on the record covering unification. As a result we have heard considerable urging from hon. members on the government side of the house that we should terminate this discussion and get on with the business of the house. At one stage in the debate I would have agreed with that point of view. However, as the debate continues it is amazing to note the change of viewpoint of the Canadian people toward this important matter. Therefore I think it is only fitting that I, as the member for Queens-Lunenburg, an area which had a high rate of enlistment during the first and second world wars, state my views on the bill now before us.

I think it is only proper that I should establish my credentials first before I become too deeply involved in the subject matter of the debate. I was not a member of the committee on national defence but I followed quite closely the reports of the evidence given before that committee. I do not consider myself an expert on military affairs, having volunteered and served during the second world war in the Royal Canadian Air Force which, after all, is only one branch of the Canadian armed forces. My lack of information in respect of the other branches of the services, especially the navy, has been redressed greatly in recent months. One can readily understand the source of my information when I tell the house that in my riding there reside presently three admirals who recently retired from the armed forces.

Mr. Byrne: Presently raising cattle.

Mr. Crouse: There was an interjection by the hon. member for Kootenay East which I did not hear.

Mr. Byrne: Raising cattle.

Mr. Crouse: Some of them are raising cattle. Others are still deeply interested in matters pertaining to Canada's armed forces.

I point out to the Minister of National Defence that in Nova Scotia we are not called "Bluenosers" without just cause. Along the eastern seaboard where Canada meets the sea, Atlantic rollers surging toward the shore beat a rhythm which seems to make the blood

[Mr. Nugent.]

tingle and calls forth hardy men to sail on the bosom of the deep. There is a love of the sea and its traditions among maritimers which can never be fully appreciated or understood by those who have never sailed upon the broad Atlantic or never have watched a sunset at sea or white water cresting mountainous waves. As a Nova Scotian I sometimes find myself getting homesick for the sight, sound, and smell of the sea. Only after I return to my home in Lunenburg is the balance restored. My remarks, therefore, concerning this bill will be general in nature and specific only in respect of Canada's navy and the effect of this bill upon the men who enlisted in and are devoted to this service.

We were first made aware of the plans of the government and the minister for unification when the white paper on defence was tabled in March, 1964. This loosely worded document stated:

The objectives of Canadian defence policy, which cannot be dissociated from foreign policy, are to preserve the peace by supporting collective defence measures to deter military aggression; to support Canadian foreign policy including that arising out of our participation in international organizations, and to provide for the protection and surveillance of our territory, our air space and our coastal waters.

These, Mr. Chairman, are policies which I can support. We need collective measures for the maintenance of peace and security as embodied in the charter of the United Nations. We need collective defence as embodied in the North Atlantic Treaty. We need and must retain our partnership with the United States in the defence of North America, and we need national measures to discharge our responsibility for the security and protection of Canada.

At the beginning I was in favour of integration which I construed to mean the combining of the headquarters and the field commands of the three services, thus effecting a saving in defence dollars. To the thrifty, hard working, independent people in my riding this type of thinking made sense. They said that here at last we have one minister in this spendthrift government who knows the value of a dollar. Unfortunately their joy was short-lived, for it now has been admitted that the steps in the reorganization made possible under Bill C-243 will not lead to savings of any account. In fact, when one checks the blue book of estimates which has been tabled for 1967-68 one finds that the estimates for national defence have increased by some \$115 million.