

*Supply—National Defence*

remarks by saying I think it is unfortunate for Canada that there has been such a long time during which parliament has not had an opportunity of examining defence matters in parliament as a whole. You will recall that there were no discussions or opportunities for discussions on the defence estimates during the last session of the last parliament and that the estimates for the year before that were passed very quickly under the guillotine. The government should recognize that in a democratic society it is responsible to the people and is a servant of the people, and that parliament as a whole is the representative of the people. The government should hold itself accountable to parliament and to the people for all its actions.

The time honoured way of doing that is to present the estimates of each department of government to parliament every year for examination. As a matter of fact, it is necessary for parliament to meet at least once a year. Theoretically we could have a session of parliament during which no legislation was passed, with only the estimates being considered. I think that is only right because a consideration of the estimates and the voting of supply in my judgment should always be at the top of the list of priorities.

• (7:40 p.m.)

During the last session of parliament the government seemed to be preoccupied with decorating its political window with tinsel, rather than seeing to what was in the shop. During all the months of last winter and spring until the end of June, the estimates were not discussed. I do not believe that is the right way of conducting the affairs of parliament in a democratic country. For the reasons I have stated the defence estimates, in common with many others, have not been examined by parliament for a long time. The last major debate we had on defence was in 1964, almost two years ago. That was the debate on the bill which was passed to amend the National Defence Act to allow the reorganization of the Department of National Defence. But since parliament transferred this additional power to the government, the government has not held itself accountable to parliament for its actions, nor has it reported on the results of those actions until now, when we are considering estimates which are already eleven-twelfths spent.

Mr. Chairman, there are many, many questions in the minds of the Canadian people as far as defence matters are concerned. Perhaps chief among them is the question of

[Mr. MacLean (Queens).]

integration. The Canadian people want to know what will be the result of the program of integration being carried on. The services themselves want to know exactly what the program contemplated is going to be, how far this business of integration is going and what it means. The question of integration has been put forward as a convenient vehicle for propaganda and it has been said it will be a great means of saving money and preventing waste.

I am all for efficiency, the prevention of waste and the elimination of duplication or triplication wherever it exists. But I feel there are disadvantages in the program of integration, depending on its extent. These disadvantages have never been admitted. The benefits claimed for it have never been documented or substantiated, except that it has been said time and again that integration will save Canadian taxpayers roughly \$100 million. But the expense of defence remains about the same. It should be noted that if \$100 million is being saved by integration there is another \$50 million or so saved in defence expenditure, by reason of the fact that defence construction has been greatly reduced over the last three years.

As I understand it, for the last three years the expenditure in connection with defence construction has been roughly a third of the figure for a good many years before that. This is for the construction of buildings having to do with defence plant. For the last couple of years for which I have figures, the expenditure was just over \$25 million for this item; for a number of years prior to that it was on the average at least \$75 million a year and one year it went up to over \$150 million. So there is this element that is no longer a charge on the public. I should like the minister to report as to the actual progress being made toward spending a larger percentage of our total expenditure on equipment and a lesser amount, relatively, on the housekeeping side of national defence.

Up till now, Mr. Chairman, we have been lacking factual information on the effects of integration and on what we are getting for the defence dollar as of 1965 or 1966. Then, too, there has been no significance given to the intangible things which have to do with integration. The White Paper which was produced a couple of years ago mentioned integration, and I shall quote briefly from it:

Following the most careful and thoughtful consideration, the government has decided that there is only one adequate solution. It is the integration