

National Defence Act Amendment

policy discussed from every aspect—tactical, strategic, logistic—and intelligence of the quality that we received in the defence committee?

I am reminded of John Walker's comments on C.B.C. in the program "Preview Commentary" of September 20, 1966, when he said:

When the session adjourned recently, the Conservative member for Halifax, J. M. Forrestall, was accusing Mr. Hellyer of "illegal" actions in unifying the services before the bill is presented this fall and charging him with putting things over on the members.

His argument, like that of the military men who claim they never knew unification was planned to begin in 1967, is a hollow but desperate one. It was reasonably clear from the white paper of March 15, 1964, that unification was supposed to begin some time between March, 1967, and March, 1968, the details and extent to be worked out by the new single defence staff, as Hellyer repeatedly told the defence committee.

Incidentally, if I may interpolate for a moment, because I wish to continue with Mr. Walker's comment, if we examine the address of the Minister of National Defence of December 7 last, it seems perfectly clear that a period of years will still intervene before there can be anything like complete unification. This is a process that will tend to continue and improve as each year goes on.

Mr. Churchill: Not with the same minister, I hope.

Mr. Matheson: Perhaps not with the same minister. He may be prime minister by that time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Matheson: Mr. Speaker, may I continue with what I think is very fair comment by John Walker on the C.B.C.:

This was confirmed in a long directive sent out to all the forces April 2, 1964, repeated by Vice Admiral H. S. Rayner the next day in a personal notice in every naval wardroom and barrack. "The end objective of a single service is firm", he said, although Admiral Landymore apparently didn't get the message for another two years.

And on April 9, 1964, Mr. Hellyer told the Commons that it was correct that for planning purposes the defence department "considers July 1, 1967, as an acceptable target date for the unification of the three forces".

I believe that in military matters, as in other matters, if you are to move you have to decide to move, you have to get the engine into gear and have the courage to move. This is precisely what has happened. John Gellner

gives us an idea of the administrative background of this whole situation. The only satisfaction we as Canadians can take from a review of our situation is that similar conditions have prevailed in most other western states. John Gellner says:

To understand the revolution in national defence management, one must first look at what the practice used to be.

I am pleased that my hon. friend the former minister of national defence, the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness), is in the chamber. I think we can describe the situation that prevailed for a long while between wars. John Gellner continues:

In the past, in peacetime, the defence minister of a western democracy was only the spokesman of the services in the cabinet and in parliament, and the interpreter to the services of the government's policies. He did not usually take a hand in planning strategy. He was not even the co-ordinator of planning. Co-ordination was done by a chiefs of staff committee, and by other joint committees of the services (in Canada, there used to be about 200 such committees).

This is the sad way in which defence policy developed during the peacetime years. John Gellner continues:

These, split by service rivalries, were not the best instruments for common action.

Each service drew up its own budgetary requirements, usually on the basis of its own conception of what its mission was.

Invariably, the requirements submitted totalled much more than the government was willing to spend. After much haggling they were pared down so that each service got its piece of the pie.

This may have been 40 per cent for one service, 40 per cent for another and 30 per cent for the third, with not much more logic to it than that. Gellner continues:

The size of it, however, was as often as not determined on the basis of arbitrary ratios rather than on rational division.

The tendency to look at a military problem in isolation was also prevalent when it came to judging individual equipment programs.

I like what Ron Collister has said by way of summary in his excellent series entitled "The Unification Issue," when he sums it up in this way:

Unification is on its way because it makes sense to the new generation, in or out of uniform, on the grounds of economy and efficiency in 1966 and the age of science.

My hon. friend from Fraser Valley was challenged by a member of the official opposition a few minutes ago on the question of whether the Minister of National Defence was in fact effecting economies for Canada in this program of unification. I am reminded of a