

*National Defence Act Amendment*

I will not say any more on that subject because I wish to deal with the two other points I have mentioned. I have already dealt in part with the excessively dogmatic and dictatorial manner of the minister. However, it can be further evidenced by his attitude toward the reserve forces. He certainly built up opposition where it was completely unnecessary to do so. He cracked the whip at the reserve forces of Canada who over the years have done a wonderful job. He is cracking the whip on uniforms. He did not need to do so because the matter of uniforms could have been left to develop in the natural course of events.

These and many other matters could be mentioned but suffice it to say that the minister has brought a lot of these problems on his own head because of his dogmatic and dictatorial attitude. How much better it would have been if he had learned to be a little more co-operative and realized that he is not the only one interested in our defence forces or the only one who knows something about them. This is all I will say on the second point because, as I said, the most important aspect of unification is the future role of the Canadian Armed Forces. This, of necessity, ties in with foreign policy and with many of our international relations. I honestly believe that a great deal of the confusion about the government's intention with regard to unification would not have developed if the committee had had an opportunity of studying the bill after it was introduced but before it was given second reading, and also if this house and the general public had been given some understanding of what was in the government's mind concerning the role of our Canadian forces in the future.

● (5:50 p.m.)

I believe, sir, that the entire situation is not only confused but that it will continue to be confused until the government indicates just what the purpose of the forces is. I put the question this way: Are Canadian forces to perform only a peace-keeping and intervention role and have combat capacity limited to non-nuclear operations or are Canadian forces intended to have full combat capability not only for the direct defence of Canada but in particular within the present strategy of the NATO and NORAD alliances?

It appears to this group at least, Mr. Speaker, that the nature of the armed forces required and the equipment for each of these roles are vastly different. It seems self-evident to us, therefore, that a clear definition of

the future role of the Canadian forces is required before any sensible examination and decision can be made on the best organizational structure. The minister himself pointed out certain matters that affect structure and equipment. It is difficult to tie in the structure and equipment which he emphasized with regard to mobility with the role of the Canadian Armed Forces in the future within the NATO and NORAD alliances.

If I may refresh the memories of hon. members, I will refer to what the minister said in his presentation. He indicated that at the present time there are six air squadrons in Germany having a nuclear strike role and also having a conventional bombing capability. He indicated also that there are two air squadrons located in France having a reconnaissance role. As the minister pointed out the two reconnaissance squadrons will have to be moved out of France during the present year. He stated further that it was the intention of his department to reduce the number of squadrons from eight to six, four of which would be strike squadrons and two reconnaissance.

In addition to our air squadrons in Europe, we also have the fourth Canadian infantry brigade group in Germany. This outline would appear to indicate that, all these years after the end of the second world war, we are going to maintain at least six air squadrons in Germany and an infantry brigade group. We would like to ask on what ground is this necessary, especially when we remember the further remarks of the Minister of National Defence? Mobile command headquarters were established at St. Hubert, Quebec, in October, 1965. The minister stated in this connection:

—a mobile command's mission is to maintain combat readiness and a land tactical air force. The mobile command is responsible for the provision of a rotational brigade for the land forces assigned to NATO in Europe and for the training of two additional air portable brigades designed for rapid deployment. Also the command is forming a Canadian airborne regiment whose personnel and equipment can be rapidly sent to danger zones. A vital component of mobile command is its tactical air element and current planning of the defence department calls for the formation of four squadrons of CF-5 tactical ground support aircraft. In addition to the formation of the CF-5 squadron plans are in hand for units of Buffalo transport aircraft and light and heavy helicopters to meet the need for air mobility in any combat zone.

When you put together these two statements you find that basically one refers to maintaining thousands of servicemen and their dependants in Europe, while the other refers to mobile command and the equipment necessary to operate it. We say that there is a