

National Defence Act Amendment

will produce astronomical economies and fantastic efficiency, and regardless of how this concept is put in the language of public relations, I contend that if we remove the elements of criticism, of healthy discussion and differentiation within the armed forces, our armed forces are going to lose a great deal of their effectiveness.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think that anyone who looks at the matter conscientiously and sincerely today will agree that as a result of the overwhelming desire of the minister to proceed to this mystical goal our defence forces are placed in serious jeopardy at this moment. I have talked to many military people; I receive communications from military people; I visit defence installations across the country, and I find that there is a serious lowering of morale. There is a loss of esprit de corps. The pace of change has proceeded so rapidly there is confusion in the military centres across Canada.

I give one illustration of this. There is a joint air training centre at Rivers, Manitoba. Actually this is the only unified or integrated base of the armed forces at the moment, I would think and has been for a number of years. At Rivers there is co-operation among the three services who are living happily under the same roof. They have been proceeding toward the common goal of greater integration. Yet at this station there is grave uncertainty. There is the feeling that it is one station which will be seriously disorganized if not eliminated as we proceed toward the goal which is away beyond what was ever conceived by integration, that of unification. It seems to be a strange paradox, an illogical situation, Mr. Speaker, that the one station dedicated to the concept of integration and which has actually carried forward its training program on this basis should find itself in this demoralized condition. I am sure similar situations could be found in other military installations across the country.

I close with this, Mr. Speaker. The fundamental purpose and responsibility of the armed forces of Canada, or the Canadian defence forces, or whatever you wish to call them—a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; the language or terminology is not of any great importance—is the defence of the security of this nation at the present time. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if we were at this time faced with a serious threat, because of the obvious confusion rampant in the armed forces we would not be able to meet our obligations. We depend on volunteers to

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

man the Canadian armed forces, we are largely a citizens army.

Unification, Mr. Speaker, this streamlining which is contemplated by the program the minister has in mind, would turn our armed forces into a body of highly trained mercenaries, devoid of the esprit de corps that comes from traditions, loyalty to the nation, loyalty to the cause of freedom, objectives that have made it possible for the Canadian serviceman in the great wars of this century to establish such an enviable reputation.

I do not think I am exaggerating in this respect. It seems to me that the wholesale exodus of our Canadian military officer élite, their public criticisms of the minister's proposal, and the reversal of General Foulkes' opinion from his statement in 1961 to his statement last fall, bears out this fact.

I am also sure, Mr. Speaker, that as the defence committee comes to grips with the details of the proposals outlined in the bill now before us, this is the conclusion that will be reached. The tragedy is that it might be too late for the safety of the nation. It is for this reason that I decided to speak at this stage of the debate and to appeal once again for a face to face confrontation with the men who have placed their careers and their reputations on the line by opposing this program of unification.

The bill will eventually arrive in the committee; the sooner the better. I trust that as the debate proceeds the minister might even now be persuaded to give the members of the house the opportunity of taking this close look in committee, which is the only way we will ever sort out fact from fiction.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, members in the house have been indicating different reasons for their participation in this second reading debate today. I could enumerate several reasons for my participation but mainly I take part in the debate because I disagree entirely with the idea that unification will bring about the desired objective of the minister. I could also state that I disapprove of his dishonest approach in this whole matter.

Mr. Prud'homme: Come on.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I disapproved of his attitude last fall, with regard to the charges laid in this house, charges which were substantiated by the sworn testimony of Admiral Landymore. The minister referred to the member who brought these