

National Defence Act Amendment

really important question. One naturally asks: can a hybrid force of this kind effectively integrate with the forces of our allies under our collective defence agreements such as NATO and NORAD? Our allies have no unified forces of the kind proposed for Canada at the present time; they have the conventional three services.

It is difficult for any of the military men with whom I have discussed this subject to understand how a hybrid force such as is contemplated by this legislation could successfully be integrated into the more specialized forces of our allies. As someone put it, it would be like trying to mix oil and water. Close co-operation in future with our NATO and NORAD allies would certainly be very difficult, if not impossible.

Another question which arises is this: what about the role of the navy with respect to NATO? As I understand from the information which has been given to me, our naval forces have certain responsibilities to carry out in respect of NATO, namely, anti-submarine work. It is also my understanding, though the minister has denied this from time to time, that our naval forces are at present not fulfilling the commitments which have been undertaken.

Mr. Hellyer: That is not so.

Mr. Nesbitt: The minister says no. He has said it on other occasions. But it is difficult to understand how this can be so when some of our ships are apparently not sufficiently manned to go to sea. The minister himself told us a year or so ago that there were plans to build additional ships to fulfil our anti-submarine role, but these vessels have not as yet been laid down.

It would seem to me, from information which is public knowledge, that one of the main dangers to NATO and to this continent is the increase in the number of nuclear-powered rocket firing submarines operated by the Soviet Union. While at the moment there is a detente between the Soviet countries and the NATO powers, there is no assurance that such a state of affairs will continue indefinitely and one must always take into account the weapons which any hostile power or powers might have. If the numbers of nuclear-powered submarines are increasing, it would appear to me that our navy should be given an increasing role rather than a decreasing one in this regard.

As both the minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) have

stated on other occasions, defence policy really depends on foreign policy or, to put it another way, defence policy is really a part of foreign policy. What is our present defence policy? As I understand it, for a good many years our defence policy has been in this priority: first, to preserve the security and sovereignty of Canada; second, to play an active part in collective defence agreements such as NATO and NORAD. These two items are closely related, especially in regard to our link with the United States known as NORAD. The third objective is to participate in United Nations peace-keeping activities. These seem to be the three bases of our defence policy, and that is the priority given to them.

• (4:50 p.m.)

But there would now appear to be patent evidence that the proposed new force cannot fulfil adequately, if indeed at all, the first two priorities I have mentioned, namely, the immediate protection of Canada and active participation in collective agreements such as NATO and NORAD. There is, as I have mentioned, the difficulty of integrating a hybrid force such as is proposed by this legislation with the three specialized services of our allies, and there is the factor of the steadily declining role which seems to be laid out for the navy. It would now seem that the purpose is to place the third priority, United Nations peace-keeping operations, in first place, and there appears to be plenty of evidence to corroborate this very natural conclusion.

The *Ottawa Citizen*, a newspaper that normally speaks on behalf of the government, carried a lead editorial on Canada's defence program in its issue of November 5, 1966, which has already been referred to by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness). I quote from that editorial:

The evident strategic doctrine contemplated by the government is to set up a mobile force of land, sea and air services that could be moved quickly to any part of the world to undertake either a U.N. peace-keeping obligation, or to help fight a brush-fire war on NATO's behalf. This would require the country's air and naval units to play largely a support role for the army, rather than the semi-independent part they once took. The air force appears to have come to terms with this doctrine. The navy has not.

From what I have seen over the years the *Ottawa Citizen*, and certainly its editor, seem to be very close to the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and the government, and when it comes out with this allegation I think most reasonable people would be inclined to pay pretty close attention to it.