

National Defence Act Amendment

It is often argued that equality of representation as a weakness of the former organization. This I suggest is a wrong assessment. It is necessary to have equality of representation if for no other reason than to assure that there is balanced argument in all matters of capital expenditure.

The effect of professionalism on a defence staff composed in the present form is quite obvious. If one looks at the first and second staffs under integration, he sees that they have been composed somewhat along these lines: the first one, the C.D.S., had an R.C.A.F. background. There was an army vice chief, the personnel had two vice chiefs, or two members on it, one from the navy and one from the air force; the controller's staff was navy and army oriented and engineering was air force and navy oriented. This is absurd. They made changes in the second staff, and the C.D.S. presently has an army background, the vice chief has an air force background, the personnel come from the air force and the army, the controller, back to the single service, this time is from the navy, and the engineering is represented by army and navy backgrounds. The balance there is poor. It was poor at the outset and remains poor.

For example, in operational matters there is no naval or air force representation in either composition. I do not know how you can come to this state of affairs unless the inference of the present chief of defence staff is correct, that it is no longer the intention of the present administration to continue in any of this long-range planning the concept of a naval defence force.

Mr. Hellyer: Nonsense.

Mr. Forrestall: The circumstances can occur when important matters of policy come under consideration without experienced, professional opinion essential to the matters under discussion being necessarily represented. It is necessary to have two deputies for operation, personnel, and engineering to ensure that professional advice is always present at defence staff deliberations.

It is necessary, Mr. Speaker, for other reasons. In each major department the staff officers working in specific professional fields should have a head, or voice, who fully understands the professional task being performed. In this way staff will be properly represented, and with some faith will accept, even though there might be a conflict of opinion, the decisions coming down from the top level. If there is any reason for the minister

[Mr. Forrestall.]

doing what he is doing, it must be that he wanted to engender support for his proposal.

Nobody objects to looking forward, and forward thinking—at least, I know of nobody who does. We shall examine this matter in depth when we come to the committee stage, but I suggest that the composition of high command at the level adjacent to the minister should come somewhere on these lines. We should have a chief of defence staff, and a deputy chief for air, a deputy chief for sea and a deputy chief for land. Specifically, where operational matters are concerned I believe such an arrangement to be necessary. If the chief of personnel happens to be air, you could have a deputy chief for sea and a deputy chief for land. The same holds true for engineering. If he happens to be from the army, then the deputy chief could be from the naval or air element. I am not certain that the controller is absolutely necessary; I do not believe you need three or four deputy controllers. One good accountant is enough for a job like that.

In other words, under this concept—and this is my personal point of view—if you accept the validity of the usefulness of this type of approach to our defence organization, and defence control at the professional level, you cannot help getting back to the essential concepts of three basic services: air, land, and sea.

If there is to be any sensitivity of awareness of constant technical change, and if this is to be transmitted properly to the political arm, which must at all times remain dominant, then, under the present system, you fail the test. Only in a system such as I have suggested, not necessarily exactly as the one I have suggested—but along those lines—you do not lose balance and perspective, and the contribution that the true professional may make.

This argument can be extended to cast a doubt on the full effects of integration. This is not carrying the argument to its extreme limit and saying there is no room for integration of services. There is room for integration of services, and particularly is there room for integration at the operational and field level. Eventually something like that will have to come about. I do not think we doubt that. The minister has said that his white paper is not immutable; it is flexible. He will see, I am sure, as time goes on, if he is not prime minister by then, as has been suggested—

An hon. Member: He might not be.