

It is satisfactory to note, within the past three weeks, that the plea made to Canada by the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Rogers, to increase the size of the Canadian brigade in Europe coincides with the recommendation of the subcommittee to increase the strength of that brigade by 4,400 personnel from its present complement of 5,400. Further, it was a source of satisfaction to note that U.S. Admiral Harry Train supports the need for Canada to beef up its sea power by acquiring new frigates, and to replace our aging vessels which have become an embarrassment to Canada.

Certainly we, as members of the subcommittee, should be pleased by the fact that the estimates recently tabled in the chamber show that Canada will spend more than \$7 billion on defence in the next year. This represents an increase of 19 per cent, and is in line with the federal promise to meet our NATO commitments for the procurement of the F-18 fighter, the long-range patrol planes, the refitting of aging destroyers, the purchase of medium-sized tanks and wheeled vehicles, and the promise to meet the increased cost of maintenance and operation of our planes and ships and to expand our military manpower.

We cannot, however, be satisfied even with these expenditures in this period of galloping inflation. As the report suggests, we must find another \$1.7 billion to keep pace with our projected short-term requirements. To those who say, "We cannot afford to," I say: We cannot afford not to. Even this comparatively modest amount is the penalty we must pay because of past neglect of our defence system and the depressed priority level to which national defence has been pushed for far too long.

● (1530)

It is really amazing, honourable senators, that our troops have been able to perform so well under present circumstances. They should be given every credit for what they have been able to accomplish over the past decade.

What the government has done to the Canadian Forces is shameful and must be corrected. Even though we received positive reaction to our report from the Minister of National Defence himself, who stated publicly that the report should be taken seriously, that it was realistic and well balanced, and particularly his supporting the need for a white paper, I have to treat that reaction on the part of the minister with cautious optimism. I am convinced that the minister is sincere in what he says himself. I am sure he wants to continue in the stated trend of defence spending, but I am not as trusting of the conscientious objectors who sit in cabinet or on Treasury Board.

Certainly, the spending announced last year was welcomed by all concerned and gave a special boost to the morale of the military. Certainly, it is in vivid contrast to the government's attitude on defence in the sixties and seventies. Certainly, the projected five-year outlay of some \$40 billion should allay the fears of pessimists. But I have to confess that I am one of them, because I have heard those stories before. My reason for pessimism is because of the new exclamations of spending restraints alluded to in the recent budget, which noted that

[Senator Marshall.]

defence expenditures were placing considerable pressure on the government's financial position, and which advised defence management to proceed on the assumption that there would be no further upward adjustments for at least two years. Again, the positive intentions of the government to provide vast sums for defence spending have been tempered—tempered by the recently announced restraints which tend to demoralize.

I have another concern due to the fact that, as I understand it, an interdepartmental committee has been established to look into the question of whether the planned purchases by Canada are the right ones, whether the government will really have enough money to pay for them, and also whether the proportion of the budget now spent on overhead can realistically be cut in favour of still more capital spending.

We can only hope that the conclusions reached in this report will not detract from the thrust now being made by the government, because a withdrawal or postponement of committed defence procurement would be unwise, unfair and, in fact, downright stupid.

To avoid taking up too much of your time by going into all aspects of the report, honourable senators, and because many aspects will be covered by other members of the committee, I want to restrict my remarks to the reserves and the cadets.

After re-reading our report in conjunction with the report of the other place, entitled "Action for Reserves," I question why, if we believe in the total force concept and that the regular and reserve forces should be equal participants, the reserves should be studied in isolation, particularly when dealing with the manpower question which is so interrelated.

Despite the fact that the report deserves commendation for its more detailed study, it indicates a lack of co-ordination in parliamentary efforts, a waste of resources and a duplication of effort. The reserves, to my mind, must play a more meaningful role as a vital and equal component of the total force. Unless the government and the military stop treating the reserves as poor cousins whom they have to put up with, just giving them some of the leftovers, and unless they stop treating the reserves with other than token promises and condescending pats on the back about how important they are, the reserves will continue to deteriorate to a state of ineffectiveness—if they have not already reached that state, other than for a few isolated units who hold strong in spite of, rather than with, regular force support and because of a strong unit dedication by a smattering of officers and men who have some unit spirit, dedication and patriotism still left within their hearts.

I cannot share the optimism of the Director General of Reserves and Cadets, who appeared before the committee, that more attention will be paid to the reserves in manpower, training and equipment, because that same rhetoric has been bandied about every year since World War II. I remember when they appointed the Chief of Reserves, General Rohmer. Somewhere in his evidence he said that during his tour of duty—as a major general, I think—he was never once asked his opinion on the reserves.