

*National Defence Act Amendment*

● (8:30 p.m.)

The change that is taking place in the forces appears to be directed along that line, with the navy dropping its anti-submarine role and the air force dropping its attack force role, bomber fleet and strike reconnaissance role in order to give transport assistance and close support to a land force, with the navy also providing transport assistance. With the sanction of the government this is what the minister appears to be aiming at, but at the same time he says, "Oh no, we are going to maintain our contribution to NATO although it may be reduced in size from time to time. We are going to maintain our military alliance with the United States in NORAD, and maintain our connection with the Commonwealth for military purposes, if required." But recently the minister has come around to putting United Nations peace keeping operations in the forefront, and this is where I think he has gone wrong.

I do not think there is any objection in this house or throughout Canada to activity by Canadians in peace keeping operations, but I believe these peace keeping operations should be separated from our military forces, navy, army and air force. Most of this work has been done by army personnel, and in this connection I mention the Gaza strip, the Congo, Cyprus, and the International Control Commission, the brightest organization in the eyes of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin). We also have people stationed in various other parts of the world, but most of the work has been and is being done by the army. I believe we should separate our peace keeping role from the armed services. Our peace keeping forces have not been obliged to intervene to put down insurrections. So far as I know they have not engaged in fighting. They have defensive weapons in case they are attacked or unexpected trouble occurs, but they have not been used to suppress military activities in any country. We had signal personnel in the Congo. I presume if we had had infantry there the United Nations might have used them in a combatant role, but that has not been our history over quite a number of years, and so I say we should make a division of our objects, and for our peace keeping operations we should have a force separate and apart from our armed forces.

If a Canadian peace keeping force under United Nations auspices is assigned to some country where there is trouble, I think that force should not be a regiment or a battalion

[Mr. Churchill.]

of the army, or ships from the navy, or aircraft from our air force, except transport craft. Here is where the minister could really achieve something worth while by setting up a special force which would have to be disciplined, trained, and administered for supply purposes from defence headquarters, with a special uniform, equipped only with protective weapons such as rifle, revolver, armoured scout cars if in terrain where irregulars might attack them, and let that type of force operate for peace keeping purposes. Make it an elite force of specially selected and specially trained men.

I think the effect on the country in which that force would be operating would be better than if we assigned an organized military force to undertake that role. I do not think there would be objection from the country or countries concerned, if this type of force were available. It would convey no idea of aggression because it would not be armed for that purpose. It would contain no idea of aggression because it would not represent the navy, army and air force of this country, or would not represent a single unified force of this country.

I put this idea in front of the minister and say to him, "Consider setting up a force of that nature with a strength of, say, 3,000"—at present we have 1,800 people engaged in these foreign operations under the United Nations—"and maintain the navy, the army and the air force for the defence of Canada, for our operations with NATO and for our military alliance with the United States." If the United Nations gets involved in a struggle in which forces have to take an active part, only then would I dispatch Canadian forces from our armed forces.

The minister and Canada as a whole can have both forces. We can continue our peace keeping operations under the United Nations, because I think that is essential, and we can have the army, navy and air force to fulfil their important role with regard to the defence of Canada and to meet Canada's obligations under her military commitments with other countries. We can have it both ways and everybody will be satisfied. We do not need to have a single unified force in order to carry out United Nations operations. We could have a separate force for that.

I was unable, Mr. Speaker, to think of a suitably spectacular name for such a force, but some of the bright people in the Department of National Defence or in the