

National Defence Act Amendment

will be "phased out". At the appropriate time in the future, the government will have to decide what position to take on a "follow-on" aircraft.

In other words, the Secretary of State for External Affairs says that at some time in the 1970's we will proceed to consider whether we will replace something that Mr. Gellner has indicated is in his view a military absurdity.

Perhaps what Mr. Gellner has said as a writer is not important to this country, but I should like to indicate that the view expressed in this article has been adopted by General Allard, the chief of general staff. He gave evidence to the defence committee, and I should like to refer to what he said in answer to the hon. member for Simcoe North as reported at page 1830 of the proceedings of that committee.

The hon. member for Simcoe North read the comments I have just read from Mr. Gellner's article, as to the value of Canadian contributions, and then added:

I want an opportunity to talk about it.

Mr. Allard: I could answer you right away, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith: All right, fine.

• (6:50 p.m.)

Mr. Allard: The answer to this is that this is a political question, and the political direction that I will get will certainly serve to generate the necessary plans. As far as Mr. Gellner's article is concerned, I do not—

The Chairman: Order. I must interrupt the hon. gentleman to advise him that the time allotted to him has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

The Chairman: Does the committee give the hon. member permission to continue his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Chairman, like the hon. member for Edmonton West I shall try not to abuse the generosity of the committee. I was reading the passage from the proceedings of the committee where the hon. member for Simcoe North put Mr. Gellner's article to Mr. Allard, who said:

As far as Mr. Gellner's article is concerned, I do not disagree with it.

So we have the chief of our general staff saying that he agrees with an article, and indeed it makes admirable common sense, in which it is made abundantly clear that the military contribution we are making to Europe at the present time makes no sense militarily. I ask, what sense does it make

politically? It has been said to me by some experts that we are buying some sort of influence, that by making a contribution that does not make sense we are somehow or other pleasing our allies. The sort of domino theory put forward is that if we were to withdraw this useless brick, upon which nobody depends, it would bring down the edifice. I am not running down the troops themselves, because they are first-rate and efficient, but it is suggested that if we withdraw from this useless role the whole edifice will come tumbling down. This is absolute nonsense. It is an insult to our allies, and I suggest it is an insult to our troops to say to them, "We want you to continue doing something that does not make good military sense at the present time." How can you build morale upon an argument of that sort?

My time has elapsed, Mr. Chairman, and I do not wish to trespass upon the generosity of the committee. In conclusion I would say to the minister that even at this late date it is time to use some imagination; it is time to make something in the nature of a stirring appeal to the people of Canada. Only a truly Canadian defence policy can obtain the support for which the minister asks in relation to his plans for unification. Only if it is seen that Canada is prepared to make a maximum contribution to peace and security will the minister receive the support for the policy he is putting forward. It is not good enough to carry on with this sort of inertia and repetition of our role. Politically a new phase has developed in Europe, yet we are carrying on the same immobile policies of the past.

Canada's defence policy should be directed to the future and not to the past. We are spending vast sums of money in this area. We are asking for the lives and devotion of many highly competent and dedicated men and women. They should be put behind a unified force; we accept that. But this unified force should play a modern, up to date role fitted into the needs of Canada to contribute to the security of the world in the 1960's and 1970's. As far as this party is concerned, we shall continue to urge that we do not worry just about machinery and organization, as though we were a group of organization men and nothing more, and we shall try to arouse the imagination and enthusiasm of the people of Canada for a contribution that makes sense at the present time.

Mr. Knowles: Seven o'clock.