

National Defence Act Amendment

The drop may have been more since there may be a slight difference in the figures.

The drop of 17,000 represents a financial saving of some \$5,000,000. But the savings are being eaten up by the necessity of paying servicemen more to keep them from returning to civvy street for better paying jobs.

Then the article goes on to say:

In the meantime, the cost of weapons and equipment keeps going up.

Of course the minister in his utterances in the house and as reported in the press has repeatedly talked about the impact of inflation on his department.

The manpower and financial crises pose a stern problem—whether to reduce some armed forces commitments and tasks or increase the defence budget. The 1966-67 defence budget is \$1,572,000,000, an increase of \$22,000,000 over 1965-66.

As I pointed out, the real problem is that of unification. It is pointed out fairly in this article, as I have said, that a number of the leaders in the various services certainly have agreed with the proposition of integration but not unification. This very senior officer pointed out:

● (6:30 p.m.)

We want to grow into unification in, say, five years.

We don't want to be pushed before we can get properly ready for it.

That is what the minister is doing by this bill, which he expects to have passed in a hurry. Many hon. members have spoken about the bill and undoubtedly many of our military personnel do not agree with it. Some may agree with the proposition of unification, but do not feel it should be put into effect in a short period of time.

The article then states:

Sources close to the minister say he is inclined to regard as disloyal any officer who opposes unification on technical ground and that is where the main opposition lies.

We all know that certain senior officers who would not agree with the minister's proposition for unification lost their jobs.

Another problem regarding unification was referred to by the Chief of Materiel Command who said—

—he could not provide them with adequate support... weapons, equipment, spare parts and the like... in an emergency.

He was referring to the operational commands. That is one reason unification should not go ahead so quickly, and a further reason

[Mr. MacEwan.]

it should not go ahead quickly is the upsetting situations young men find themselves in so far as careers are concerned. I talked to a number of excellent young Canadians who had joined the navy after attending R.M.C. and other schools, and they now do not know where they are headed.

In this regard our commitment to NATO is an important one, and as we all know our NATO forces report to the commander of SACLANT at Norfolk, Virginia. Under that command our role has been one in respect of anti-submarine operations. In the last few years our naval research people devised one of the best types of sonar systems, called the variable depth sonar. It was developed by E.M.I. Cossor, Limited, at Dartmouth, in the province of Nova Scotia. In my constituency the Trenton works company constructed what was known as a "fish" housing for this equipment. This proved to be excellent and assisted to a tremendous degree in our anti-submarine role. As has been pointed out by other hon. members, we have insufficient ships to carry out our role in NATO.

I have been aboard ships in Halifax during the last two months, and on one particularly I spoke to a number of junior officers. Reference has been made to the fact that we in the opposition have been talking about admirals and generals, and what they have said. These junior officers said they had wanted to make the navy their career but that they now do not know where they are going. They suggested that unification was not the answer to all our problems, and that it looked as though they would be stricken off strength.

These men pointed out that there were insufficient ships, particularly in view of the number being declared surplus, to train junior officers. In this regard let me quote from an article which appeared in the *Toronto Star* on September 24, 1966. It was written by Tom Hazlitt, who journeyed down to Halifax to see what the situation was, and who he wrote the following:

At a jetty around the corner and out of sight of this old navy town there lie six ships which may consider a dismal symbol of the future.

The six ships tied up at *Shearwater*, the nearby naval air base, are the modern destroyer escorts *Athabaskan*, *Algonquin* and *Crescent* plus the World War II vintage frigates *Swansea*, *New Waterford* and *Victoriaville*.

He pointed out that these ships were kept in what is known as "hot reserve". He suggests that is a way of saying there is nothing wrong with them except they do not have crews.