

*Supply—National Defence*

present time with regard to the allocation of certain defence programs and bases within the various command structures of the new defence organization, one realizes the minister could well lose that which he has gained unless the department is efficient and effective in implementing these policies within the new organization and do it quickly.

I am particularly concerned with this program as it relates to the new designation of various military bases in the country and the various aspects of the command structure into which they will fit. I can cite no better example than the heretofore air force base adjacent to my own home city. Here we have one of the better equipped and developed post-war air bases in the country and for a full two years now, because of the lack of a specific policy in the use of this base, nothing very much has been done about determining its role.

A waste of tax dollars is involved here because it is an accepted fact that this base is going to be part of the new training command and civilian and basic maintenance personnel are being retained. But unless the base is being used for a definite role it is a waste of money. I agree that time is a prerequisite in determining just how this or other bases will fit into the program. Nevertheless I believe there is need for urgent action in this respect. We understand that training command, for example, assumed authority only at the first of this year, which is only a few weeks ago, but I believe the Canadian people and the personnel of the armed forces are expecting action in this regard and quickly.

Action is expected not only in respect of the specific commands within the new organization but the correlation and integration of these commands as they make use of the various bases necessary for any defence organization in the country. I noted the remarks of the minister with regard to the Canadian Services College and correlating the various aspects of training into one program. This is necessary and it is good that it is taking place. But it is just one small area of many with regard to which similar quick action will have to be taken.

Another point about which I am concerned in the over-all picture relates to the strength of our armed forces and the recruiting programs being carried out. It has to do with the need for urgency in the development of phase two of the program of integration, because as the morale of our forces has suffered under

the integration program and its prospective application to them there has been a falling off of personnel and recruiting. So much in fact is this so that just one year ago when we were debating the estimates we were talking about pilots in the air force who were being laid off prior to their normal retirement time because they were not necessary.

The position today is that we do not have enough pilots in the air force. We are short of pilots as we are short of technical people and personnel for many other areas within the armed forces. This all points up the need for quick action in the implementation of what I have called, for want of a better name, phase two of the program of integration.

There are one or two points I should like to raise with regard to peace keeping. This question also refers back to policy. Where are we going, what are we trying to do, how long are we going to be carrying on our peace keeping responsibilities in Cyprus and is this expense really justified? It is a heavy expense because Canada is paying her own way in setting a good example to the world. But are we effective in what we are doing or just drifting into a passive situation in which the United Nations and others responsible for the political side are letting the matter drift because Canada and a few other nations are willing to come along and do more than their share in maintaining a peace keeping operation?

Here again, I think, is an area where external affairs and defence must have the very closest correlation so far as policy is concerned. I have mentioned Cyprus. What about the 1,000 personnel we have for years contributed to the United Nations emergency force in the Middle East? We hear reports that our troops over there lack a sense of purpose, that things are stagnating, that they really feel they are not making any worthwhile contribution. Is this just because on the political side matters are being allowed to drift without there being any real effort to reach a solution and bring an end to this particular situation?

We are spending a great deal of money in this area and Canada is willing to spend money if it helps to maintain world peace. Most of us in this house are willing to support such programs, but I think we should be very careful not to be caught in a trap whereby we are doing something that really is not necessary and which we never intended to do in the first place. We need direction in this regard and we need it urgently.

[Mr. Thompson.]