

we were able to fulfill it, we would still leave our brigade in Europe in a state of less than effective capacity.

I believe we do not have the right to send young Canadians to those positions unless we equip them properly, and we have a properly structured fighting force. If we are not prepared to do that, then we should not be there at all.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Molgat: I believe it is absolutely unfair to our young soldiers to put them in that position. Therefore, I believe we should review that whole commitment very soon, and that is one of the recommendations of the subcommittee.

This brings me to the whole question of where do we go in this matter of national defence. Again, speaking at that meeting in Toronto, the minister made some specific comments regarding a white paper. He said:

Recommendation one states that a White Paper on Defence should be undertaken immediately. As far as I am concerned, white papers generally, and white papers on defence in particular, have been used mainly as vehicles by which the government has laid before Parliament and the public its defence policy. They have provided a means for explaining decisions which the government has taken either on major new policies or on major changes in policy. White papers have, in other words, been vehicles for announcing policy decisions resulting from a process of policy review by the government rather than vehicles for stimulating public debate on policy issues and policy options.

The minister went on to say that he felt there was a need for a public debate on the issue, and he commended the Senate and House of Commons committees for the work they were doing and the public discussion they were generating on national defence. He felt, however, that it had to go further, and, later on, when speaking about the work of the Senate and House of Commons committees, he said:

I am, however, considering how this work might best be integrated into a more comprehensive study in which Parliament clearly should be a leading participant. The parliamentary reports already referred to will prove useful additions to the substance of the department's strategic overview.

So the minister seems favourably disposed, but at this point, if I understand him correctly, he feels that we are not ready for a white paper as such. Well, I accept that. I really do not care if it is a white paper, a green paper or a grey paper; but I believe that what we need is a national debate on the whole question of national defence and armaments. If we said that some months ago, when we produced our report, then it is even more important today, because since then there have been further events. We need only look at recent newspaper stories. I read one that appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* of Monday, October 18, 1982. The heading was: "MPs call for cuts in arms spending." We had three members of the House of Commons travelling across the country in connection with

[Senator Molgat.]

the program Operation Dismantle, and speaking on behalf of disarmament.

Recently in connection with the decision of the government to increase the amount of money to be spent on job creation, we found that the defence budget was going to be cut by approximately \$245 million. Yet, in our report, as a result of the committee's study, we found that there should, in fact, be an increase in expenditures if we are to meet the commitments we have accepted, and if we are to fulfill the tasks that we have set ourselves. From a national defence standpoint, the committee found that we needed greater expenditures. We also know that in connection with the recent municipal elections there were votes taken on the whole question of disarmament. Therefore we must have a comprehensive debate on this whole subject.

As the economic situation becomes more difficult, and as there are more pressures on budgets, undoubtedly there will be some people who say that we should cut national defence further. Unless Canadians get involved in this discussion, how can we get a reasonable solution to the problem?

I agree with the minister that a simple white paper produced by the Department of National Defence is not enough, because if we are going to get a solution to this problem, there must be substantial public approval. If taxes are going to be spent on national defence then the Canadian public has to know why, and there has to be majority support for what it is that we are trying to do.

Therefore, I believe that we should move along in this matter, and, in my opinion, the solution is to have a joint committee of both houses. Let us have a real Canadian debate on what it is that we want to do in this regard. I fully sympathize with those who say, "Yes, we want disarmament". Obviously, if we were asked, "Are you for disarmament?" most of us would answer yes. We would be for disarmament, but under what conditions? Surely it must be mutual; it must be verifiable. There are many conditions. It is not simply a question of whether we are for disarmament. Unless there is a debate going on in the country, I do not believe we will bet the right solution. Therefore, I hope that our committee continues to complete its work on maritime defence and that, in the meantime, we move on to have a public discussion on the issue of national defence.

● (1510)

There are not too many people in Parliament today who remember the days between 1930 and 1939 when Germany was busy re-arming, and the rest of the democratic world was standing by watching the events. Had there been a public debate at that time, possibly the posture of the free countries would have been different in 1939. In fact, the events of 1939 might not have happened at all had the free world reacted somewhat earlier, but everyone was putting the subject aside as though it were not to be discussed openly. Granted, here and there some bold politician, notably Sir Winston Churchill, would make a speech on the subject, but it would be pooh-pooed because it was not the popular thing to say.