

*National Defence Act Amendment*

could be put into a single artillery corps. One doubts, however, that this would work. Techniques of gunnery on land are so different from those at sea that it would not be practical to exchange gunners between sea and land, and unless this could be done the corps would never develop the cohesion which is so essential, nor would it develop the loyalty which is so necessary to the proper fulfillment of its functions.

What the effect of all this will be on the navy and the air force is hard to say. It is possible that it may not have much effect on the air force. This is because the air force does not fight as a force. It is unique in that the actual fighting is done by a very small proportion of its numbers. The fighting members of an R.C.A.F. squadron are so few that they can, and do, build up a squadron loyalty in a very short space of time. The vast majority of air force personnel are required to keep planes flying and to put them into the air. The pilots are the men who go to fight. It must be exceedingly difficult to create and maintain any esprit de corps within the ground staff of the air force, and this includes all its non-commissioned ranks.

One would expect the effect on the navy to be catastrophic. Warfare in the navy is total, even more so than in the army. Even in an infantry battalion there are some men who are not in the front line. But in a ship everyone is in the war. If the ship sinks all hands sink with it. A high state of morale among the whole crew is essential aboard any navy vessel and it is difficult to see how this can possibly be achieved unless the sailors who man the ship are proud of being sailors, and they will not be proud of being sailors unless there is some recognizable organization of sailors to which they belong and with which they can identify themselves. This is the organization we now know as the navy.

The minister's answer to this argument could take one of two forms, as I see it: First, that the separate regiments and corps within the army could be abolished. If the hon. gentleman is planning to do this I suggest he should do it before doing anything else and see whether he can run an army without any regiments and corps. The present time would seem to be the logical point at which to undertake such an experiment—an experiment on a small scale rather than on a large scale. Or he might say, in the second place, that we could if necessary create a naval corps within the unified force. But this would make nonsense of unification, would it not? He would

[Mr. Sherman.]

just be recreating the navy. Nothing would have been achieved except for the change of uniform and rank structure.

On the subject of rank one cannot help notice that the two lowest ranks in the new force are to be corporal and private. This gives rise to two interesting questions. In the artillery, as most of us know, corporals are called bombardiers. One wonders whether it is intended to change this practice and call them corporals. In the rifle regiments privates are called riflemen, in the engineers, sappers, in the armoured corps, troopers, and so on. Are we to assume that all these ranks and titles are to be changed and that all the men serving in these capacities are to be identified as privates or corporals? If the answer to these questions is yes, there will of course be howls of protest from various parts of the army. If the answer is no, then why is a seaman to be called a private while the troopers' title is to be left alone?

Another potentially dangerous result of unification in my view is that the tactical thinking of the numerically strongest arm, the army, will come to dominate that of the navy. If we call an admiral a general we are half way to thinking that a sailor is merely a soldier who fights on water. There is a great myth about unification, it seems to me, the myth that this is a forward thinking and progressive concept whereas in reality, historically speaking, it is retrogressive to the extent no less than four full centuries. Contrary to what is being said, the idea of a unified fighting service is not a new one. Far from being progressive in his thinking, the minister is putting the clock back 400 years. Before that time all fighting was done by soldiers and all armed forces were commanded by generals. The English were the first to realize that fighting at sea was a different art from fighting on land. So they organized a separate navy. This happened during the reign of Elizabeth I. When Philip II of Spain decided to attack, he put his army on a fleet of ships commanded by his best generals and sent them off to England. This fleet was, of course, the famous armada. The naval battle in the channel was the last ever fought by a unified service and the armada was destroyed just because it was a unified force. The men who commanded it were soldiers and their object was to fight a land battle on the water. The English fleet was commanded by sailors who knew how to fight a naval battle. And they won.

The lesson was not lost on the men of those days and soon every nation separated its navy