

*National Defence Act Amendment*

all members of the armed forces to get out of the services today, we would find the services completely depleted almost overnight. However, there is a beautiful little scheme to prevent this. I am told by servicemen—I have letters in my office to back this up—that if a member of the armed forces wants to get out of the services he must first of all have a job to go to and, second, he must give six months' notice. In other words, proof must be provided to the authorities that somebody will hold open a job for him for six months. In my opinion that is the only reason that the armed forces today are not so depleted that there would not be enough men to defend Parliament Hill against an invasion from Hull.

I suggest to the minister that the best thing he can do is to take a good lesson from the hon. member for Victoria, B.C. (Mr. Groos) and as long as this debate continues govern himself as did the hon. member. I think the hon. member for Victoria has rendered a very good service and I am very pleased that he is chairman of the standing committee. I hope he can maintain the calm and restraint that he showed today, and most of all I hope he can pass on some of his calm and restraint to the minister.

**Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford):** It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the most important issue in this debate is whether or not the present legislation, which we are told is designed to unify our armed forces, really indicates an important shift in our foreign and defence policies and, if it does, whether this shift in our foreign and defence policies is desirable. To date the government and, indeed, various organizations have dragged in a number of red herrings, so to speak, which have thoroughly confused the real issues involved. There are many, many questions concerning this legislation which have been left unanswered by the government, and how the government can have the effrontery to ask parliament to approve this legislation in principle before those questions are answered, or the details have been clarified, is hard to understand.

● (4:40 p.m.)

In my opinion the subject matter of this bill should go before a joint meeting of the defence committee and the external affairs committee so that the details of the bill and the government's long-range defence plan can be clarified. Only then could approval in principle be given or withheld by this house. The government and the minister have been vague and ambiguous with regard to many

[Mr. Martin (Timmins).]

aspects of this bill but it does appear, despite all the confusion, that the following are to be essential elements of the measure.

First, it is the intention of the government to set up a single service which will be outfitted in one kind of uniform the design of which has apparently not yet been chosen and that all designations of rank will be an agglomeration of those now used in the existing services. It also appears that the government intends to do this over a number of years, perhaps over three or four years.

Second, it would appear that the new service will be extremely mobile and well armed. To this extent it will probably be very efficient. It will resemble a kind of marine corps or possibly, as somebody put it, a modified police force. I suppose it will rather resemble a marine corps.

Third, it appears that the air force and the navy will eventually be relegated largely to transport and support roles. These three considerations seem to emerge from the morass of information which has been handed out. As has already been pointed out this afternoon, the minister's public relations men are already organized upstairs, passing out information on this program to the press gallery. It is difficult for members of this house to compete with such a formidable tribe because they probably have easier access to the press than do most of us. However, I rely on the judgment of the members of the press gallery to pay some attention eventually to the arguments put forward in this house as well as to those handed out to them by the minister's public relations staff. Incidentally, I would say that the members of this staff have been very efficient. I compliment them because they have been able to "sell" the public on the proposition that this new, unified force will be economic, efficient, and somehow up to date in this modern world.

So far as economy is concerned, that is a matter of evidence, a matter of fact. There has been plenty of evidence so far to raise doubt whether this new force will be economical. I think these facts could be brought out very well when the bill goes to committee. For that purpose, and for that purpose alone, I see no objection to the bill going to committee after second reading. But approval of such a procedure ends there.

The second aspect which the minister and his cohorts have "sold" to the public is the claim of greater efficiency. Perhaps this new force will indeed be efficient. But efficient for what purpose? That is the big question, the