

*Interim Supply*

concerned, let me begin with an editorial comment from that great Canadian newspaper, the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*. On November 11, Armistice Day, the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* disagreed with the suggestion by the Minister of National Defence that it was part of his ministerial duty to cause alterations to be made in the text of Admiral Landymore's brief. The editor maintained that the time-honoured rule that the minister is responsible for the utterances of his subordinates has no relevance to the case. When Admiral Landymore was called as an expert witness he should have been allowed to present his opinions unfettered. The committee could then have assessed the value of his testimony by comparison with the statements of other witnesses.

● (9.00 p.m.)

In that particular editorial of November 11 the editor called on the minister to satisfy parliament and the country that the extraordinary policy followed by his department in relation to Rear Admiral Landymore was justified. The *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* has published a number of editorials over the last six or seven years on this very vital matter. Their opinion has been one of concern about the method in which the present Minister of National Defence and the government have approached the whole question of unification and integration and the way in which they have approached the release of information by their representative spokesmen before the defence committee. Like the rest of us they will remain concerned until all of the information comes to light.

In our neighbouring province the Saint John *Telegraph-Journal* of November 7 predicted in its editorial that the question of the unification of the armed forces could play a big part in the next federal election. The editor felt that many Conservatives, along with the older members of the navy and those who become vehement over creeping republicanism in Canada, are united in trying to prevent the minister from destroying the armed services. They contend that the changes will result in a lowering of morale, that the change of uniform, the separate rank structure and the removal of the prefix "royal" from the designations of the respective services will lead to disunity.

The *Montreal Gazette*, in a leading editorial on November 2, took the Minister of National Defence to task for his role in the revision and deletion of certain very important aspects of

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Admiral Landymore's testimony to the defence committee last June. It took issue with the point that the minister had the power to control all evidence given before the committee by his staff. If this were to be carried to its logical conclusion, no civil servant or serving officer need appear before the parliamentary committee. This has been stated before and I am bringing it up simply because it has been the subject of editorial comment by one of the nation's leading daily newspapers. In the same editorial of November 2, 1966, the editor contended that if ministers are to be allowed to delete information of the very kind that parliamentary committees should have, then parliament will be inadequately informed through its committees.

In the *Montreal Gazette* of November 7 the editor disputed the minister's position that unification was the logical conclusion of integration. He admitted that there had been widespread agreement and that reforms brought about in the last few years with regard to integration were welcomed, particularly where they might tend to result in greater efficiency and in some savings to the public. The editorial goes on to point out that the minister's plan, however, has met and probably will continue to meet resistance at the point where the policy moves toward unifying the three services. The editorial substantiated its argument by citing the fall-off in recruiting and strength figures over the last few years despite the repeated efforts of the department to bolster the picture by offering re-enlistment bonuses and pay boosts.

On November 9 the *Gazette* followed with a criticism of the minister's inflexible refusal to send the unification bill to the defence committee before second reading in the house. The editorial writer took the position that referring the subject matter of the bill to the defence committee before second reading would not in any way hurt the chances of the bill being passed. The editor felt that no one could fault the minister for being firm on the principle but it appeared that he had caused himself unnecessary hardship and trouble by displaying firmness not on the issue itself but on a secondary matter.

On November 11, in view of the impending crisis in the house along with rumours of possible dissolution, the *Gazette* once again devoted its lead editorial to the unification question. It maintained that the issue of unification could never be made a sufficient reason for a general election. It felt that the question was so cloudy that it could not