

VERNMENT



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CANADA'S ARMED SERVICES AND NORTH ATLANTIC DEFENCE*

An address by Mr. Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence, at the Annual Meeting of the Quebec Command of the Canadian Legion, B.E.S.L., in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on April 19, 1950.

....It has become evident to all that the prosperity, the peace and the security we seek is threatened only by one force and that is the Soviet Union and her satellites. Their attitude alone has made it necessary for us to spend twenty times as much as before the war on our national defence. However, we know that a nation of thirteen millions occupying three and a half million square miles of territory cannot defend herself alone, nor can any nation.

We therefore took an active part in promoting the North Atlantic Treaty and I have attended the three meetings of the Defence Ministers of the twelve countries concerned.

We have made good progress with planning and programmes but now we are moving to the next and more difficult stage, that of translating plans and programmes into action. Fortunately for us that requires no major changes because our role in any future emergency is clear.

The only new thing is that our role in an emergency has been publicly and repeatedly stated by a minister in peacetime.

Our aim is to work with other nations to deter aggression, and if necessary to defend our country and to defeat any enemy that may attack us - deter, defend or defeat - that was the way it was put by Defence Secretary Johnson of the United States at The Hague meeting.

I said our role was clear. At sea, to defend our coasts and enable our ships to travel across the North Atlantic or wherever else they may be required.

At home we must have the force - a highly mobile, largely airborne brigade group - to deal with an attack on the scale and of the kind that might be made. We must have an air force which can best use the resources available for our own defence and as the means to develop a greater ultimate effort.

We have achieved a great deal of unification in the armed services, between the three forces, Navy, Army and Air Force, between active and reserve, wiping out the differences of caste and standards and conditions of service, and then finally between the services and the civilian population.

* An excerpt from an address originally entitled THE LEGION.

....I feel that you might like to have a very brief report from me on the progress of our armed forces.

We have today in the full-time active Navy, Army and Air Force over 48,000 officers and men, another 48,000 in the reserve forces and about 23,000 civilians mostly working in dockyards, etc., or a total of about 120,000 engaged full time and part time on our defence.

Recruiting for the active force has been entirely satisfactory. We have been getting men of the quality and at the rate we want. All three services will soon be enlisting only to fill vacancies caused by ordinary retirements and discharges. To the suggestion that is sometimes made that we should be taking all qualified men that offer, or even that we should have conscription in peacetime, I can give the answer that if we had another two hundred million dollars to spend on defence at the present time we would spend it on buildings and equipment rather than on increased manpower. Soldiers without equipment had better be doing something else. So long as we have sufficient trained officers and tradesmen, delay in getting into action would be caused by the time taken to provide equipment rather than by the time taken to train men.

As for officer training, we have nearly 6,000 training today to standards equivalent to a year's practical work and a university degree. In proportion to population we have more men training to such standards than, I believe, has any country.

As for equipment, we have developed an all-weather two-engine jet fighter, the CF-100, and its tests show that it is probably the leading aircraft of its type in the world, several years ahead of any country. Even in advance of successful testing we placed an order for the production of this aircraft.

Good progress is being made on the manufacture of the F86A, under license from the United States. This is the fastest single-seater fighter in production.

For the Navy we have ordered eight new vessels, three of them anti-submarine escort vessels of a totally new type, designed and made entirely in Canada. This ship is, we believe, well in advance of any comparable vessel.

We also have on order large quantities of radar and wireless equipment.

We are deliberately deferring large orders for Army equipment for two reasons.

First, at the end of the war, the Army was relatively very much better off than the other two services for modern equipment. A short time ago I found that out of 181 million articles which we estimated we would need for the Army during the first year of an emergency, we had in store or on issue 121 million, a pretty high proportion.

The second reason for deferring Army procurement is that there have been fewer changes in Army equipment than in that of the other services and the time may come soon when we may have anti-aircraft rockets, guided missiles and recoilless weapons of much greater efficiency.

Such is the cost of modern defence equipment that it can be confidently stated that no country in the world is providing its defence forces with as much money as they could profitably use.

Just consider some of the costs of defence equipment. One of our F86's will cost more than \$400,000, without armament, the new anti-submarine vessel about \$8,000,000, the latest 5.25" anti-aircraft gun, equipped and installed, \$600,000, permanent radar station about \$2,000,000, a modern airfield with buildings and equipment about \$15,000,000, a tank \$300,000 or \$400,000 and so on. We can only spend each dollar once, either on equipment or buildings or personnel. Each man taken on for the Navy, Army or Air Force costs at least \$2,600 a year.

It is fundamentally important that in co-operation with our friendly associates we should stay ahead in the development of new weapons. It is a great thing that we should be taking the lead with the CF-100 and with the anti-submarine vessels, two of the most important defensive weapons to be developed since the end of the war.

A major necessity in defence planning and development today is to simplify weapons. What we must work at is to develop a wireless set which can be made in a matter of weeks for \$100 and do practically the same job as a set costing \$1,000 today. Naturally the expert in every field is a perfectionist. This search for perfection is the bugbear of anyone aiming at production.

There is a great deal of talk about standardization. In Canada we are ready to standardize new weapons and equipment with that of the United States and the United Kingdom and the other countries with which we are associated. What is more, we have agreed to schedules of the characteristics of the weapons we would like to see adopted. We know and have said what we are prepared to do. There is real need for speedy agreement on a number of items of equipment - particularly personal weapons, light motor vehicles, field communications equipment and anti-tank weapons. We are prepared to agree on one type or another. Sometimes it hardly matters which type because there is so little difference. It is vitally important however that the North Atlantic Treaty powers should speedily reach agreement so that new equipment can be made to common interchangeable patterns.

Today we have more national security and more social security in Canada than ever before, but national security and social security have to be paid for by all of us. With a budget of \$2,300,000,000, about \$1,200,000,000 must be used to meet debt charges, social security payments and other amounts fixed by statute and not within the control of any government. \$1,100,000,000 is left to meet all expenses of the federal government. Of this about 40 per cent goes to defence, leaving 60 per cent to cover all the other items.

We are prepared to spend that because the Canadian people realize the necessity of taking steps to look after their own defence in co-operation with the other eleven nations under the North Atlantic Treaty.

....In international as in national affairs we do not get something for nothing. We must work and pay for what we get; we must work and pay the price for our security. The Russians' attitude leaves us without a choice. In the present state of the world, defence expenditures are the necessary premiums for national security.

In Canada we have the highest standards of public and private conduct. Indeed, we usually judge what we do by the best there is in the United Kingdom, the United States, France

and indeed, in any other country, and it is surprising how often we can match or beat the best anywhere.

Yet how often also do we hear people who for one reason or another, play the role of professional Jeremiahs. Virtually everything that is done in Canada is exposed to the salutary breath of criticism, and that is as it should be. It keeps us on the job trying to surpass those high standards we have set for ourselves.

Sometimes, however, it is refreshing to have a glimpse of our country through the eyes of others. Attendance at the North Atlantic and other international meetings has given me opportunities to see how Canada is regarded by the other nations. I can tell you that no country on earth stands higher than does Canada.

Why is this so? Canada stands high because of the service of our armed forces, because of the assistance we gave other nations during and since the war, because of the able way we have been represented, because of the objective and helpful attitude we have taken, because of the reputation and character of our people, our representatives and our young sailors, soldiers and airmen.

Just think for a moment what a large proportion of the people of Europe would give anything to be able to be in Canada, just where we are.

We are already here, and while we should count our blessings, we must be prepared to defend them as well.

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