

*National Defence Act Amendment*

• (8:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Churchill:** Closure of debate.

**Mr. Olson:** The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre knows very well that, if there are a number of clauses, closure is a situation in which a minister of the crown moves every day that the question be put at the end of that sitting day. I think that is the way it works. I never was in the house when closure was used. There has been some type of stigma attached to it since 1956. I do not have the mental block in respect of closure some people have, because I believe closure has its place, if the majority of this house is being frustrated day after day and week after week by a very small minority. Although this conduct is confined to a large party, I believe it is only a small minority in that party which intends to hold up the proceedings. I believe there is a proper use of some form of allocation of time so that the majority still can run this country. I think we in this party would be willing to accept our fair share of the amount of time allotted under the use of provisional standing order 15-A.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Mr. Chairman, I was under the impression that we would hear from a number of the Liberal members who were members of the national defence committee. It would appear, however, that possibly the officials of the minister's department have not finished writing their speeches for them, as was the case during the committee hearings. As has been suggested, possibly closure already has been applied to the Liberal members who were present during the hearings of the national defence committee.

At the beginning I should like to point out that I joined the committee on national defence in the very late stages of its deliberations. I was in attendance, however, long enough to realize that the Liberal members who served on this committee were there for the express purpose of feeding to the different witnesses whatever questions the officials of the department wished fed to them. This was a disgraceful performance on their part. With the exception of a few members who had enough on the ball to ask their own questions, the Liberal members were depending on the officials who sat behind them during the committee hearings to feed them questions to which answers were desired.

[**Mr. Olson.**]

This afternoon we heard a very weak argument by the minister in respect of the unification bill. For 50 minutes he spoke about equipment and many matters other than the unification bill itself. At no time, other than in the last few closing remarks, did he concentrate in any way on the bill before us. He stood up and misled the house with the suggestion that because of integration or unification of certain operations in the services there had been a saving of 30 to 40 per cent. He used these percentage figures to indicate that there has been a terrific saving. If there is a staff in Washington or London, 30 per cent of that staff would mean the saving of only one person on that particular staff. Therefore his percentage figures will not mean a thing.

I should like to ask the minister to stand up in this house at the proper time and indicate that the percentages which he gave as savings are accurate. I should like him to say whether 30 per cent of a particular group, or 40 per cent of another group, were actually struck off strength or merely transferred to another branch of the service. Is the minister implying that simply by the reduction of a certain staff by these large percentages a saving has been accomplished? It is my understanding of the services that if a man is no longer required in his job he probably is transferred somewhere else.

The saving the minister implies is nonsense, unless the percentages to which he refers apply to people who actually are struck off strength. If he can give us this assurance, I will accept his statement that there is a saving. I suggest, however, that that is not the case. All we need do is look at the estimates for the Department of National Defence. It is nonsense and hogwash for the minister to tell the Canadian people that tremendous savings have been effected in the Department of National Defence.

I might refer back to the minister's propaganda team which sat in the gallery and fed propaganda to him. I say again that the saving the minister has implied is a lot of nonsense. In another place I would call it what it is, bluntly, but the rules do not permit me to do so. As appears at page 1582 of the evidence of the committee the minister wrapped up the summary by saying:

Finally, may I say that in recommending the changes consequent on this Bill I do not wish to reflect in any way, on individual members of the Armed Forces. They are wonderful people and I am proud of my association with them. I have stated repeatedly, and I mean it with all my