

Interim Supply

whom I see over there, for Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes, for Charlevoix, who is not here, and another for Sainte-Marie (Mr. Valade), tolerate that position taken by the Conservative party, and afterwards speak highly of the merits, the good intentions of that party which prevents federal civil servants from being paid today.

Mr. Chairman, some may accuse the minister of being arrogant—maybe he is; that is his problem—but when the minister says, for instance, that Bill No. C-243 will be considered in committee and that everyone without exception will be able to make their suggestions, amendments, subamendments, motions, etc., then I maintain that the Minister of National Defence is right, that he does not have to yield to the threats of the Conservative opposition. Let him keep the reins; he is the minister. It is neither a Conservative, nor myself, but himself who is minister, who has his responsibilities. As for us, we have the right to call him to order, to blame him or to congratulate him, we will have the right to blame him in connection with Bill No. C-243.

The Conservatives are not penalizing the minister, even though we have been sitting here for four or five days; it is not the minister who is penalized tonight, at 8.15; it is the federal civil servants in the various departments.

National defence is not involved here, but the federal employees.

● (8:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Monteith: It certainly is.

Mr. Caouette: Some, I think, but not all.

[Translation]

Several departments are involved, and various federal employees are not paid tonight, through no fault of the Department of National Defence, but because of the Conservative filibuster.

I would, therefore, like the newspapermen to print this: the Conservatives are systematically blocking the payment of federal employees' wages.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): And those of the armed forces.

Mr. Caouette: And, naturally, those of the armed forces, since the armed forces are paid by the federal government. But I do not admire the Conservatives at all for exchanging their views on the air, between themselves

[Mr. Caouette.]

and the gallery opposite, where they appear to be taking their orders from an ex-admiral, a retired admiral.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Caouette: Such procedure is inconceivable, Mr. Chairman. Since when does a minister accept that an army officer, an admiral or a general, shall dictate the policy of the Canadian army? This is a government responsibility, a responsibility of Parliament, and even if there are smiles displayed in high places, Mr. Chairman, I repeat that the supreme authority in Canada is not ex-admiral Brock, but the Ottawa parliament. Here lies the authority in Canada.

I can hear some people whispering, but the facts remain the same. The supreme authority in Canada is parliament. And when parliament determines any policy, the army people must accept it; otherwise, we would get ourselves into a situation such as we have seen in Europe, Asia, and some African countries. And we blame those people for having been misled by army people. Are we going to meet with the same fate? Mr. Chairman, I object to that. And as long as I am a member of parliament, as long as I am a member of the Canadian parliament, I shall oppose any defiance of the authority of parliament by a few individuals, either army, navy or air force people. The legislation passed by parliament must be accepted.

Mr. Chairman, those are the comments I had to make. I have just received a note from the future Conservative leader, the admiral.

[English]

Mr. McCleave: He was out fighting for you many times.

Mr. Caouette: Who?

Mr. McCleave: The admiral.

Mr. Caouette: I am always fighting for my country, my friend, for your information. And I do not need a lesson about that either.

[Translation]

The Deputy Chairman: Order. Would the hon. member for Villeneuve allow the hon. member for Rosthern to ask him a question?

Mr. Caouette: Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

Mr. Nasserden: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the hon. member for Villeneuve if he would not agree that parliament has not yet decided the question of national defence policy?