

*Supply—National Defence*

prime ministership of this country. I am inclined to believe that is exactly what he is trying to do.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Mr. Chairman, would the hon. gentleman permit a question? Is he alleging that there was some irregularity in the taking of the service vote?

**Mr. Peters:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am alleging that there was some irregularity.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Perhaps the hon. member would give us some details of this irregularity, because that is a very serious charge.

**Mr. Peters:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I could give some details but I suggest this is a matter to be brought before the defence committee when it holds its meetings. My information is that on most occasions when there had to be a write-in of candidates' names there was only one name written in, and the consensus of these scrutineers is that there was only one name or candidate for whom the people could vote.

Mr. Chairman, in my riding I am known to at least a few people. I have been around for quite a while and I am fairly closely connected with some of the Legion organizations. It is therefore surprising to me that the minister is not aware that the sons of men who have served in various forces have an affinity to those forces and are willing to serve them and their country.

It is surprising that the names of individuals running for election during the last election were not known to the sons of those people who had served, when they voted overseas. I think this whole situation should be investigated.

In any event, Mr. Chairman, I do not think the minister or the government should rely too heavily on the service vote which was overwhelmingly in support of the Liberal party to back up the statement that the morale of Canadian service personnel is exceptionally high. I think they will be fooling themselves if they do so.

**Mr. Hellyer:** No one is saying that.

**Mr. Nielsen:** That is precisely what you have said.

**Mr. Peters:** The response you receive from your backbenchers would indicate that these people believe there is high morale in the service as supported by the overwhelming Liberal service vote. I think that is a false premise upon which to base the statement

that the changes in the service are being worked out to their advantage.

I do not think the minister is well advised, in coming into the house during a debate of this nature to outline the national defence program of this country as it is taking place at this time, to state that the changes are being made because somebody else made a mistake or somebody else was at fault. Let us not fool ourselves: Most of the policies of the defence department taken over by the minister were policies which remained from the second world war when the Liberal Party was in power. In my experience the Conservative party when it was in power did not change the defence policy very quickly, or at all. I think that government was advised by the same people who are now advising the present government. The minister may smile, but I am sure he is aware of the fact that sitting up in the gallery are those people who really decide defence policy. I am sure they advised the Conservative party in exactly the same way they are advising the Liberal party now.

I do not believe there is much change taking place now which was not inevitable. I think it is unfair to use a political argument in respect of a decision to scrap the Bomarc, to support the changes being made. Why does the government not admit that the changes are being made because of poor advice received by the department from its advisers?

If the minister has truly changed the policy of national defence I think he should concentrate on that change, rather than lay the blame on others. I think Canadians are very interested in this suggested reduction in the expenditures of the Department of National Defence. The public I am sure is interested in the role that Canada is to play, having a mobile force that can be moved into trouble spots in the world. That is a role that can be of great credit to Canada, but I have not heard anything said which would indicate to me that this is being accomplished. When we want to send someone to a funeral half way across the world we try to hitch-hike a ride with United States services, because we do not have any equipment to fly him there before the burial takes place. This is only a newspaper headline but it is something we hear about every day.

It is perhaps possible that we have planes which are suitable for the military role, and I am sure we do not have to carry our peace keeping force around the world as fast as that. But the committee has not—I have not, at least—heard the minister really speak of