

*National Defence*

October 22 last. I do so only because the *Hansard* record as it now stands would leave an impression which is not correct. He said that in response to requests of mine the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) had arranged for a debate on external affairs on a particular day. It was finally decided that it should take place on Monday, October 22. The impression was left that after I had arranged for the debate to take place, I was not here. I would point out, of course, that there is a vast difference between my being here and the attendance of the minister who is responsible for the debate and who must answer the questions that arise in the course of the debate. I would also point out something of which the minister was obviously unaware, and that is that at the time the date was arranged it was clearly understood between myself and the minister who arranged for the date, not the Prime Minister, that I would not be present.

The reason for the fact that the debate went on was quite obvious. It dealt with external affairs, in regard to which the member for Peel (Mr. Graydon) always leads on behalf of this party. In so far as national defence was concerned, it was to be dealt with by the member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes), who also always leads in regard to that subject for this party. *Hansard* records for that day will disclose that, following the speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson), the member for Peel replied, as is customary, and after the speech by the Minister of National Defence, the member for Nanaimo followed. I repeat that the arrangement was made with the knowledge that I would not be present on that day, and that knowledge was accompanied by the knowledge also in my possession and the possession of the others with whom it was discussed, that the member for Peel and the member for Nanaimo would be here. I refer to that to remove any suggestion that an arrangement had been made with the Prime Minister which was not carried out.

I come now to the remarks made by the Minister of National Defence in his speech yesterday. It is necessary for us to remember exactly what it is we are discussing at this time. We are not discussing the estimates; we are not discussing the subjects which may come up under other specific headings. This debate was arranged for the purpose of having a report presented to this house of events that have occurred since last we met. I wish to repeat, in relation to the remarks that I made earlier, that it was the kind of debate in which the members of the house were looking for information, and in which the

minister should have been giving the information. When I referred to the absence of the minister during the time that the member for Nanaimo was speaking, I did so because that followed immediately after he had spoken. Since he has left the suggestion that he was absent for only a short time and under circumstances which he subsequently explained, I would point out that I heard the explanation he gave and it did not satisfactorily explain at all his absence under the circumstances. I would also point out that he was not present in this house during the whole of the speech by the leader of the C.C.F. party (Mr. Coldwell); that he did not enter this house last evening after dinner until the debate had been under way for an hour; that he was not in the house for most of the speech by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), who made one of the clearest and most comprehensive statements ever made here in regard to the type of organization and training that should be carried on; and that he was here for only a very small portion of the speech by the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Dinsdale), who dealt with various aspects of defence with special reference to the air force, in which he served so gallantly. I can only repeat that, having regard to the nature of the debate, this house had a right to expect his attendance when those important speeches were being made.

Now we come to the reference by the minister to those who may be guilty of the terrible offence of not fully agreeing with everything he says, though even yet they have no knowledge of most of the details. This is what he said, as reported at page 1088 of *Hansard* for yesterday:

But as the full cost begins to appear in lives and manpower and money—yes, and in things we have to do without—there also begin to appear qualifications in that support. There are the people who say "yes, but." We begin to see emerging the cautious tribe of "yes, but'sers . . ."

That is not a comment that can be passed over in this debate. A short way further on he said:

Moreover, too many suggestions like "not this but that" and "later and smaller" rather than "enough and now" will tend to do two things. It will tend to weaken support of our effort and that of our allies and our understanding of what we are doing together, and our confidence and trust in each other, all of which are fundamental ingredients of this kind of partnership.

Those words can have only one meaning. They imply that anyone who suggests that anything else should be done but what is being done is impairing the confidence of the people of Canada and in some way weakening Canada's position in support of NATO and the general defence of our country. We have the statement "not this but that";