

*National Defence Act Amendment*

force. The documents which had been prepared for the Canadian field force were destroyed.

All this has been recounted in the official history of the Canadian effort during wartime by Colonel Stacey. There was great wastage of time and money. New documents were issued in the name of the Canadian active service force and we were instructed throughout the army to re-enlist, reattest and swear in again the people who had been members of the Canadian field force. We went through all that reattestation.

The Canadian active service force provided only for service in Canada, so when the decision was reached that forces would be sent overseas—and it was reached very quickly—instructions came again from the cabinet through the Department of National Defence to the effect that everyone who had been sworn in to the Canadian active service force must be asked whether he wished to serve only in Canada or elsewhere in the world abroad. We had to go through the whole process once again. That happened in wartime when the officers and men were all volunteers.

In wartime it is conceivable that no one would object to a name being changed half a dozen times, from the Canadian field force to the Canadian active service force, the Canadian expeditionary force or anything of that nature. However, the government of that day took the stand that the officers and men, having specifically entered the Canadian field forces, should have the opportunity of saying whether they wanted to belong to a force of a different name.

That opportunity was given and the change was made. When it came to determining whether they would serve elsewhere than in Canada the government of the day decided the officers and men should have yet another opportunity to make a choice. When the several thousand who had been reattested into the Canadian active service force were asked whether they would serve outside Canada only a very small number declined to sign on for service abroad. The official history indicates that there were only about 500 all told who declined.

The point is that even in wartime the officers and men were given that choice. They were all volunteers and free citizens of this country. Our objection is that under clause 6 this opportunity is not to be given to the officers and men who are now in the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army, and the

Royal Canadian Air Force. Without being reattested or sworn in, and without any choice whatsoever in this matter, once this bill is declared law these officers and men become members of the Canadian Forces.

I should like to move the following amendment to clear up this matter, and I am sure the Minister of National Defence, now that he has had time to think this over, will agree that this freedom of choice should be offered to the officers and men now in the services. Consequently I move:

That clause 6 be amended by adding thereto the following subclause:

(3) No officer or man who was a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army, or the Royal Canadian Air Force immediately prior to the coming into force of this part shall be enrolled in the Canadian Forces without his consent registered by reattestation.

• (3:20 p.m.)

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Chairman, the matter raised in this amendment is most serious, one which will have the most far reaching and the longest lasting consequences of any in this bill. Unlike the minister I am not one who believes that the bill before us will provide the answer to our defence posture over the next 40 or 50 years. Indeed, I will be quite surprised if we do not find ourselves in the position of having to make further changes within the next two or three years.

However, it is to the amendment to clause 6 that I would like to address my remarks. Perhaps I will start by analyzing it as I understand it. It is quite clear when it says that officers and men who were members of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army or the Royal Canadian Air Force immediately prior to the coming into force of this part are, subject to the provisions of the National Defence Act, members of the Canadian Forces.

It says in effect, as the previous speaker pointed out, that this is compulsory. The word "conscription" has certain connotations, but I think it is an expression of the government's failure to recognize any moral responsibility whatsoever to serving officers and men in the three services.

The explanation of clause 6 is not very clear. The remarks of the minister concerning this clause leave much to be desired. All we know about clause 6 is that it is transitional. However, as I mentioned, a better explanation is needed. So strongly do I feel about this lack of information that in my opinion the government is open to the charge that its