

ment which affects him as an individual, not only as a member of his majesty's forces but also as a member of this house, and I think he is entitled to make his statement.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Lotbinière): The second statement made by the hon. member for Cape Breton South was to the effect that in his estimation no member of parliament could discharge his duties properly both as a member of this house and as an officer of his majesty's forces. I protest against such a statement, and I refuse to accept my hon. friend's judgment on that matter. I do not know whether what he said expresses the views of his party, or whether it was only his own personal view. But in my opinion the sole judges in this matter are the constituents of the riding who freely elected me to this house. When there is an appeal to the people I shall go before my constituents and abide by their judgment. If at that time my hon. friend or members of his party wish their views on this matter to be expressed and wish to try to influence the judgment of those judges, they will be free and very welcome to do so, but I think I can assure them that they would be wasting some of this time which they claim is so valuable to the country.

Hon. C. G. POWER (Acting Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I was not in the house last night when the hon. member for Cape Breton South made the observations he did, but representing for the time being the three armed services, and being in a sense their mouthpiece so far as the interests of the members of the armed forces are concerned, I feel that I must express on this question of privilege the resentment which I am sure the members of the armed forces will feel in view of the reflection cast upon them by the hon. member. The members of the forces who attend the meetings of parliament do so on their regular leave of absence. That has been the custom not only in this war but during the last war, a custom which has been sanctioned during all the years since the last war; for this House of Commons every year has voted a pension to the relatives of Harry Baker, M.P., who was killed in action in 1916. It is also the custom in the British house at Westminster. It is true, as my hon. friend has said, that members of the British house of parliament are in the front line when they are in London. But time after time, as press reports show, members of the British House of Commons have become casualties while on duty in the middle east or in India or elsewhere, and no one to my knowledge has ever raised in the British house the question of their right to sit in the commons.

So far as we are concerned in the administration of the armed forces this matter was very carefully considered at the beginning of the war. It was thought that if any hon. member of this house wished to devote some of his time, or the greater portion of his time, to the service of the state in the armed forces, and his constituents were willing to allow him to do so, the administration of the services had nothing to say about it, more than we have anything to say about members of parliament who carry on outside the house their profession of lawyer or doctor or preacher or labour organizer or school teacher.

Mr. L. A. MUTCH (Winnipeg South): Speaking, sir, on the question of privilege as one of those to whom the remarks made in the house yesterday refer, may I say that I have no interest in the views of the hon. member who made those remarks, neither have I any confidence in his judgment as to my capacity either as a member of this house or as a member of the armed forces in which I have the honour to serve this country. He is entitled to his views and I and my constituents are entitled to put any interpretation upon them that fits the circumstances.

The question whether one is capable of doing the two jobs at the same time is hardly relevant because I think none of those present in the House of Commons in uniform was ever attempting at the same time to carry on his military duties but was here on regular leave. I have come here on two occasions while on my annual leave, and on every other occasion and for every day or part thereof on which I have been absent from my duties as an officer of his majesty's forces I have been absent without pay. That is nothing unusual; it is the same with everybody else, but I think it is time somebody brought this point out into the open.

So far as I am concerned, with all due deference to hon. members of the house and the people who sent me here, I should have no difficulty in determining where my duty lay. I had no difficulty before, and if misfortune overtakes us I shall have no difficulty again, because I have to live with myself. But I am concerned for hon. members of this house who have gone overseas and have given distinguished service there in the organization of the Canadian army—distinguished service which has been recognized by those with whom they deal. If they do make an appearance in this house once in two years and give an informative, not to say discursive description of what is going on within the armed forces they should not be subjected, nor should the people who sent them here, to the kind of suggestion which was made in this