

Supply—National Defence

their enlistment ages as nine, 11 and 12. I am sure the minister with his tremendous staff could get information in respect of these retirement ages. If he cannot I suggest we ought not pass this item.

Now that the minister is here and before we pass this item I should like him to give this committee some information about the department's directorate of information services which, according to an answer given to a question posed by my colleague, the hon. member for Greenwood, has a staff of 76. Why does the Department of National Defence need 76 people to staff the directorate of information services who are, in effect, public relations experts? Why does the department need public relations experts, other than for the obvious reason that the Minister of National Defence needs to build up his image so as to become the next leader of the Liberal party? He may be a very good leader of that party, but I do not think his ambitions in that regard should be assisted by the public treasury through the operation of this directorate of information services with a staff of 76. I think we should get some answers to the questions we have asked.

Mr. Woolliams: He has not answered any questions.

Mr. Orlikow: He has not answered any questions, that is true. We should also receive some information about these retirement ages and enlistments dating back to ages nine, 11 and 12. That certainly is a good trick if the minister can get away with it. Perhaps we could find other groups in the public service who could be retired in this same way.

An hon. Member: How about members of parliament?

Mr. Orlikow: Somebody suggests members of parliament, but I was thinking of some of those civil servants who were retired on pensions of less than \$25 per month about which my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, has talked so often in this house. I should like an answer to my questions and an explanation about the directorate of information services, or the directorate of public relations or publicity, whatever it might be called. Surely we can expect an answer to these questions before we pass this item.

Mr. Hellyer: The directorate of information services is one of the first branches that was integrated after the bill was passed a year and a half ago. Formerly each of the three

services had its own information service branch which provided information to the press and to interested citizens of all kinds. They also conducted tours and performed a number of tasks of this nature, including the publication of magazines. As hon. members will recall, each of the services had a magazine. There is now only one directorate of information services on behalf of the three armed forces. This was accomplished after the bill was passed and we reduced the number of personnel by 60 per cent. This represents one of the major savings accomplished at the outset of integration and amounted to over \$1 million per year. It was also referred to by the Royal Commission on Government Organization. As a result of the law passed we were enabled to integrate our headquarters and reduce the number of personnel in this area by about 60 per cent, with a savings to the taxpayer of about \$1 million per year.

Mr. Orlikow: That savings is all very well, but it seems to me from everything I have heard that each year our defence efforts cost more money while each year we have fewer people in the forces and spend less money on weapons and equipment. Perhaps in this same way we could reduce our expenditures by another half a million dollars or so. Surely we do not need public relations people in national defence. If we need armed forces at all it seems to me we need fighting men rather than public relations men. I am satisfied the fact is that we have cut our expenditures in the way the minister has suggested, but perhaps we should have cut them more.

Mr. Hellyer: The people employed at this time in the directorate of information services work very hard. It has small organizations in various parts of the country to which the press and other interested people have access for information, as incidents occur in the normal course of events; for feature articles on the service; and to keep the people abreast of service developments. This includes the overseas staff which is involved in this same kind of work. It also includes the staff who prepare the armed forces magazine, the *Sentinel*, as well as the people who perform this task for the Department of National Defence.

I can inform the hon. gentleman that the number of people employed in this branch is so small that they must work very hard indeed. I do not think it would be possible to cut the staff any further without reducing