

Interim Supply

skill the patient might die. This is what, we are suggesting might happen as a result of this dangerous experiment upon which the minister is embarking. Doubtless he believes it will work out in theory, but if it comes to the test and the skill is not there, the defence of Canada is dead. The United States can no more afford to take a risk than we can.

• (5:00 p.m.)

The result of all this is that we could be very easily absorbed by the United States, and if that happens the minister, in large measure, will have contributed to it.

I now wish to refer to two articles which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* this morning. Apparently the feature writer, whose article appeared on the front page, did not know what the editorial writer would be saying, or vice versa. The editorial says:

Although it is usual practice not to send a bill to committee until it has passed second reading in the House of Commons, the government should be prepared to make an exception in the case of the armed forces unification bill.

Further on it says:

—it has not yet been as fully explored as it should be before it is determined in principle.

If Mr. Hellyer feels it would be a personal affront to have the bill sent now to committee, then he is putting person above country.

I am sure the minister does not want to do that. The editorial continues:

He is serving himself rather than the nation in demanding committee investigation before unification is approved in principle.

By forcing us to give second reading now, he knows he is forcing us to approve it in principle. That point has been made several times. The editorial concludes by saying:

The investigation, nevertheless, should be held. The future of the armed forces is considerably more important than Mr. Hellyer's pride or Mr. Diefenbaker's politicking.

The article by the feature writer on the front page quotes the Minister of National Revenue as follows:

"I think it's very unfair that civil servants should be penalized because the opposition in the Commons wants to hold up interim supply," the Revenue Minister added.

If the Minister of National Revenue said that, then he has certainly gone down in my estimation because he knows that is not true. He knows that it is not the responsibility of the opposition to see that the civil servants are paid. It is the government's responsibility to see that civil servants are paid. This may have been one of the reasons the government

[Mr. McIntosh.]

presented this bill at this time, knowing that interim supply was coming up, and thinking they could force us to pass the bill because of what civil servants would do to the Conservative party in case there was an election.

But, Mr. Chairman, we are people who are not going to put person before country. Our country comes first, before the civil servants, before the members of the government, or anybody else.

The feature writer went on to say:

If the Conservatives persist in their blockade, the government would have little alternative but to dissolve parliament and call an election . . .

This is ridiculous because there have been several proposals made today to get the government out of this situation, and satisfactorily to both sides. I say to the members of the government: you don't have to call an election, but if you want to, go right ahead. We are not afraid of an election, and don't you ever forget that.

The Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Keays: Mr. Chairman, as I rose to speak I heard some references from the other side of the house to the effect that there is another one. If the government was not so adamant in refusing the request made by the opposition for information concerning the defence bill, we would not be taking up all the time allotted for estimates on interim supply. This is one reason for my participation at this time, because I wish to speak on the estimates of the Department of Transport and of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I am happy to see the Postmaster General in the chamber because I wish to speak about his department in connection with the Department of Transport. I am sorry that the hon. member for Quebec East, who accuses us of sitting on the fence, is not in his seat, although I believe he is still around the building. I would like to tell that hon. member that I am not sitting on the fence with respect to an issue which I wish to raise in a few moments, and I would like to hear him express his views on the subject which I shall raise.

On a recent tour of the lower St. Lawrence area the Postmaster General announced a new mail service for the district from Campbellton to Gaspé. I commend him for wishing to improve the mail service in that area. We who live on the peninsula do not enjoy