

*National Defence Act Amendment*

am trying to make is that when men volunteer, as they do in Canada, to serve in the armed forces they want to know, and it is only reasonable that they should know, that the terms under which they join will be honoured and binding no matter how inconvenient it is to the service. I can visualize a situation where a difficulty may arise in regard to the six months' notice. If a situation develops where it is tempting for a great many servicemen, because of a particular set of circumstances, to get out of the services, there will be an inclination to do this quickly because it will be the early birds, the ones who do it first, who will be allowed to go. After it becomes a strain on the service the rest will be retained. It will be a question of who will get there first.

This is an unhealthy situation. I do not say this in criticism of the minister, but I point out that in my judgment it is a matter of vital importance to morale in the services that the services should be bound by their side of the bargain just as much as the individual is bound by his side. Unfortunately that is not the case. If you have a situation where the six months' notice privilege can be withdrawn under certain circumstances, I do not think it will make for good morale. No honourable man objects to keeping his side of the bargain, no matter how inconvenient it may be for him. We should realize that when a man joins the service it is the most important contract in his whole life. It involves his complete career in most cases, in peacetime especially, and is much more important than his purchase of a house, a car or something of that nature. It is a very unsatisfactory situation in which to find himself, if he discovers that after he has entered into this contract the rules can be changed by the government if it suits its convenience.

In my opinion this is not justice. I believe that the individual as well as the government should have equal rights when it comes to terms of engagement. That is all I wish to say on this part of the clause. I will have more to say later on the first part.

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 3 carry?

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Chairman, I have a brief question to ask the minister. This matter was dealt with in part just before the luncheon adjournment. I wonder whether this information has been conveyed in a very tangible and real way to the people affected under the R.O.T.P. It is my understanding that this information has come to many of them as a

[Mr. MacLean (Queens).]

brand new awareness and understanding of their position with regard to the plan.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Mr. Chairman, on April 17 a telegram went out to all commands giving them the policy and asking them to communicate it to the men in their commands.

**Mr. Forrestall:** May I ask the minister one further question? What has brought about the great delay in communicating this information to the men? Was it because of a breakdown in communication?

**Mr. Hellyer:** As I indicated, Mr. Chairman, the staff had been considering the possibility of applying the additional, obligatory service to R.O.T.P. graduates. This matter only reached my desk and that of the associate minister a few days ago. We dealt with it expeditiously once it was presented to us. In fact, we felt, and I think my hon. friend will agree, that if we changed that obligatory service it would have been the wrong approach. We did not feel that would be right under the circumstances and therefore it will apply only in so far as future graduates are concerned—those commencing their training this fall.

• (2:20 p.m.)

**Mr. McIntosh:** I am sorry I did not get back from lunch in time to hear the complete content of the minister's statement. Am I correct in assuming that the import of his statement was to the effect that this change only applies to R.O.T.P. personnel and that those who have served their three years, as suggested by the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings, wish to get out of the service and have made their applications will be allowed to do so? Is that the meaning of the minister's statement?

**Mr. Hellyer:** The requirement to serve five years applies to all air crew other than R.O.T.P., who abide by the terms of the obligatory service they agreed to when they joined the forces. That is the case up to this time. In so far as the future is concerned, no one will be given pilot training from the regular officers training plan unless they agree to serve five years following the completion of their pilot training.

**Mr. McIntosh:** In other words, this officially cancels the six month clause which the judge advocate general said was policy, not law?

**Mr. Hellyer:** No, Mr. Chairman. The six months' notice only applies in the case of aircrew after they have served their five years obligatory service and, in the case of