

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

armed forces equally? Why is it exclusive to the army? Are there commitments in the army which require bilingual staff officers, whereas there are no such requirements in the navy and air force? I think that is a question which should be answered.

I also think we should know who are going to be the members of the board. If the order has been in existence since November of last year and testing is done in January of each year, there must already be in existence a board. Who are the two permanent members of this board? Is this board one that travels throughout Canada and to overseas posts, for instance, where staff officers are on staff for the purpose of administering these tests? I should like to know what the percentages are in this regard. How many English speaking officers have learned to speak French to date, and has it had a bearing on promotion; and how many French speaking officers have learned to speak English? What will be the balance in the future? Are we going to have officers primarily of French speaking origin commanding other ranks primarily of English speaking origin, and vice-versa? This will affect the whole morale structure in the army, as I am sure it would in the other two services. The minister will realize this.

Certainly in my background of service life I know how it would affect me if I were still a member of the air force and if this sort of order were introduced. The morale of the forces in the other ranks will be very definitely affected since this directive is aimed at staff officers and it is aimed at command. It is not aimed at the lower ranks and other ranks in the forces.

You might come up with a predominance of officers from one particular province commanding other ranks from another province. I think this sort of thing should be explained and the minds of army personnel of all ranks, and of all ranks in the other two services, set at ease because there are several questions that I think will be arising in their minds. The minister has very kindly told me that the terms of the order which issued from the minister's office are substantially—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must interrupt the hon. member as his time has expired.

Hon. Lucien Cardin (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I will be able to answer in three minutes all the questions the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) has asked. Perhaps I [Mr. Nielsen.]

might start off with a question he did not ask concerning the terms of reference. He asked me earlier today to table the instructions that were issued to the forces and I can say that what I could have tabled is exactly the same order, except for my signature of approval on it. This was really the authority to go ahead with this particular order.

The way this came about was that in discussions with the chief of the general staff it was felt that we wanted to find out what the proficiency in languages was among the members of our forces, and particularly in the army. The whole instruction has to do with being able to test proficiency in bilingualism and to arrive at some form of standards whereby we would be able to detect in the records of different members of the forces just how proficient they may be in languages.

As the hon. member knows, we have schools and programs for teaching English and French. For instance, at the Citadel we have four month programs under which the French are instructed in English and vice-versa. We also have a program of exchange of officers between the Royal 22nd Regiment and other regiments in order to be able to facilitate bilingualism. But we wanted to have a means of finding out just how proficient they were.

The reason for doing this is that there is a requirement in the army more particularly than in the other two services for bilingual officers. This is obvious, I think, from the commitments we have had to carry out in the Congo and Indochina, and there are several French speaking countries in Africa which have asked for French speaking officers and soldiers. The matter of submitting to tests for language proficiency is on a voluntary basis. However, it is true that once there is a marking of B, or B bracketed, as the hon. member has read in the instruction, this does mean something and it will be considered in promotions to certain positions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order; the hon. minister's time has expired.

DEFENCE PRODUCTION—CONTRACT TO QUEBEC
FIRM FOR DESTROYER CONVERSION

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I posed a question to the Minister of Defence Production as follows:

May I ask the minister, is it correct that a \$3½ million conversion contract for the destroyer