

*Supply—National Defence*

incumbent upon me, as one who has the honour to represent a constituency which has therein one of the largest air force bases in Canada, namely, Greenwood, to draw attention to what, I submit, is a major point of weakness in the hon. gentleman's review of his estimates before this committee.

Greenwood, which is in the heart of the constituency I represent, always causes a quiver at election time but we never quarrel with the legitimate hopes and aspirations of those airmen who wish to make their service in the air force a full time career. On Thursday last, as reported at page 1423 of *Hansard*, the minister tried to slough off one of the basic problems confronting service personnel in Canada. I do not intend to talk about the policy toward Viet Nam or the policy of integration other than as it affects our servicemen. I take exception to this statement by the minister, as found on page 1423 of *Hansard*:

—the important problems relating to individuals in the armed forces today are not those resulting from integration; they are the same real problems affecting men and women in all walks of life, that is, pay, allowance, housing, career opportunities, etc.

The hon. gentleman continued in that vein. I submit that the minister blandly restricted the problems of servicemen to those encountered by men and women engaged in industry and business. He gave a detailed countdown of management methods and new mechanical equipment, some of which, we hope, will achieve more lasting fame than the bomb toss computer. Nowhere did he mention the subject of morale. Other speakers in this discussion have mentioned morale. But the minister maintained complete silence on the matter although his other observations were protracted enough. Frankly, that does not amaze me.

I have to be honest and admit that so far as the principles and philosophy of integration are concerned I am one who is really sympathetic toward the minister. My difference of opinion concerns the way in which the policy of integration is implemented. When a minister, in reviewing the details of the work of his department after such a radical policy has been attempted, makes the claim that there are no problems so far as personnel are concerned other than those which would normally face men and women in industry and business he is, I suggest, being irresponsible. Unless he admits that

[Mr. Nowlan.]

there is a manpower problem and, specifically, a manpower problem relating to morale, he is being very irresponsible.

It is necessary to recognize a problem before action can be taken to resolve it. Yet despite all the astuteness and aplomb of the minister he remains completely neuter on one of the basic qualities of the entire armed services, their morale and esprit de corps. It is his blind spot, and compared with him the one-eyed Cyclops monster of old had 20-20 vision.

I have quoted what the minister said about service problems. Of course service personnel are concerned about the things he mentioned, career opportunities, allowances, housing and so on. But does the minister think seriously for a moment, if indeed he thinks at all, that the economy, the rising cost of living and family matters account for the insecurity and frustration felt by the great majority in the services today? Does he not acknowledge even remotely that the purchase of so-called permanent commissions has created confusion and uncertainty for those left in the services who had hoped to make it a permanent career?

• (3:50 p.m.)

While the re-engagement policy announced during the course of this debate is helpful, I submit it is somewhat of a sop too and perhaps an acknowledgement of the morale problem. But I am afraid it is too late and too little. Does not the minister honestly think that an officer or an enlisted man would be wary of re-enlistment when he or his friends, even though permanently commissioned, had received the pathetic and prophetic "Dear John" letters? Certainly for those in short service an extension from year to year or every three years does not allow a mature man to plan his future with any confidence. It is too bad the minister never pruned trees for if he had he would know you cannot cut off the top without injuring the base.

Again, Mr. Chairman, there is the problem of the permanent commission and the way in which many, the hundreds we have heard about, were bought out. But in another area does the minister think that the problem between the permanent commissioned officer and the short service man with regard to their respective pensions is similar to any situation on "civvy" street? I wonder how many unions would allow two men both trained for the same job and doing the same