

Committee on Defence Expenditure

the midst of bitter accusations, the hurling of epithets, personal charges and so on, over something trivial by comparison to the things I have mentioned here. It is indeed trifling. I am afraid that some of the language used in this house will greatly discourage our participation in the United Nations war effort and it will discourage enlistment in the armed forces for Europe. By exaggerating Petawawa we are playing into the hands of our enemies.

An hon. Member: You mean the opposition?

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): I express the opinion of a good many people across Canada when I say to this parliament: Let us get on with the job.

Mr. Nickle: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fulton: I understand that the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Nickle) wishes to ask the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Murray) a question.

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): I will be glad to answer.

Mr. Nickle: Is it your intention, sir, to indicate that the responsibility for the failures in proper handling of defence funds in Canada rests with the United States army?

Some hon. Members: Don't answer.

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): The United States army is a great and powerful force for good in the world today. They make their mistakes, as the Canadian army does, but they keep on with the task.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is going to be extremely difficult for me to make a more effective case in dealing with Mr. Currie's report and the necessity for continuing the investigation started by him than has just been made in the speech so carefully read and eloquently delivered by the member for Cariboo (Mr. Murray), who has just taken his seat. Because never was there more clearly shown—and for the first time in this parliament—just what has been going on in this country over a period of many years as a result of lax administration of the defence department.

I shall use the words used by the member for Cariboo himself. To quote him, under this Liberal administration—and this government is a direct descendant of the government then in power—during the war and during the period of events which he described on the Cariboo highway there was an "epidemic of plunder and corruption". Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure if any one

of us in the opposition used those words, accurate and apt as they are, to describe some of the things which went on, we would be called out of order.

Mr. Gardiner: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question? Did he not use much of this kind of argument in connection with the campaign in which he won his seat and came into this house?

Mr. Fulton: I most certainly did not.

Mr. Gardiner: It was the issue of the campaign.

Mr. Fulton: I do not know what the purpose of the hon. minister's question is, but it shows that he knows as little about the political atmosphere in British Columbia as he does about agricultural conditions there.

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Speaker, I know plenty about both and my hon. friend used all this information.

Mr. Fulton: Let me tell the minister that what he states is not so, and—although I know that others are not particularly interested in this—I will say for his benefit, that neither my campaign nor, so far as I know, the campaign of any other Conservative in British Columbia, was carried on on the basis just described by the minister. It is of course the minister's purpose to distract attention from the fact that one of the members who support the government in this house has described what took place under a Liberal government, of which this government is a direct descendant, as an "epidemic of plunder and corruption", but those words will stand.

Yet when we suggest not that the Currie report has shown an "epidemic of plunder and corruption", but merely that the Currie report should be taken at its face value as demonstrating that there was a fundamentally loose situation with respect to the administration and control at the top level in the Department of National Defence, when we say, just take those words—very much more moderate than the words used by the member for Cariboo—at their face value, and go on from there and try to see what can be done to remedy that situation, we are accused of making arguments for political advantage. We are accused of gross exaggeration and it is stated that we are taking a minor incident at one camp and trying to make a major issue of it.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the member for Cariboo has done a great service to this parliament and this country by placing this matter in its proper perspective. Surely no members on the government side, unless they deny completely the accuracy of what has just