

National Defence Act Amendment

That was his observation of the House of Commons in 1964 and I am sure it would be his observation today with regard to this particular debate. We are entered upon one of the great debates of this institution. This is an historic debate and every member of this house should record on *Hansard* his opinion with regard to the policy of the government. This debate will be studied by an author like Mr. Terence Robertson. He will be writing a book about this debate and with justification because nothing is more important than a fundamental alteration in the defence policy of Canada. Every citizen of Canada has an interest in what is done by parliament, and some time next week I presume the issue will be decided. There will be a vote and the government, with the assistance of the New Democratic Party, the assistance of the Social Credit rump in the house and with the major assistance of the Cr ditistes led by a member who boasts of his lack of effort in wartime—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: —Canada's defence policy will be changed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) has no right to impute any intentions to me; whether or not I was a member of the Canadian army, that is none of his business.

I must tell him one thing, however; it is that I am as good a Canadian as he can be and that there are Canadians who can be excellent people and behave with dignity in Canada, without having been members of the Canadian army. I wish the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre would get that into his head from now on, for he seems to forget that one can be a Canadian without treading exactly in the somewhat doubtful footsteps of the hon. member himself.

And I want to tell him, still on the same point of order, that I am not to be taught any lessons by him and that I am welcome in the ten Canadian provinces much more than he is himself.

● (9:40 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. Churchill: What is the point of order, Mr. Chairman? I suggested that the government will have the support of that hon. gentleman in this house and he now objects to this fact. This is known to everyone and it is with that support the government hopes to

pass this bill. I hope the people of Canada realize that fact.

It has frequently been asked in this house why the Prime Minister does not participate in this debate. We have not heard from him. He neglects parliament in this regard. It has often been asked, as I have asked, what is behind his attitude. Why is the Minister of National Defence pursuing this course? There must be some undisclosed reason behind his attitude. Why does he want to destroy the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Army?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions in an article written by Mr. Terence Robertson which appeared in one of the supplements attached to the newspapers of this country. I regret that I do not know the exact newspaper to which this one was attached but it was published in 1966. Mr. Robertson is a great admirer of the Prime Minister, and in his book on the Suez crisis he pays him great tribute for his efforts on that occasion. Mr. Robertson has maintained an interest in military affairs. Last summer he wrote this article and perhaps someone can identify the newspaper company which published it. The title of the article is "The real reason for putting them all together". He was referring to all the members of the three services. Let me read some of the statements in this article. Mr. Terence Robertson states:

There should be a sign outside defence minister Paul Hellyer's office saying "Keep Clear—Nationalists at Work". For behind all the uproar, all the insinuations and ill feeling that surround the future of our armed forces, lies the one big issue of Canadian nationalism.

Mr. Hellyer: Do you believe everything you read in the newspapers?

Mr. Churchill: The minister interrupts me and asks me if I believe everything I read in the newspapers. I do not attack the newspapers; I commend them for a great many things they have done. I read the articles written by Charles Lynch which deal with the Minister of National Defence to find some inkling of what he is like. I am inclined to believe that sort of article. I do have some confidence in the writings of Mr. Terence Robertson.

That hon. gentleman then states in this article:

If any cabinet minister undertakes a policy that will politically justify replacing symbols of our past with new and distinctively Canadian ones, he can be sure of Prime Minister Pearson's whole-hearted support.