

National Defence Act Amendment

those who want to retire from a voluntary service and not be subject to compulsory service as will be the case when the bill passes. On what authority has the minister instructed his officials to reply to these applications with a directive that the men must now remain in the services for a period of five years?

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to point out that no officer or man has ever had a right to release after six months' service, nor is it proposed that he should have such a right. As I understand it, the policy is that except in special circumstances applications for release will not be approved until six months have expired. Thereafter they will normally be approved, but this is subject to the exigencies of the service—

Mr. McIntosh: May I ask a question?

Mr. Hellyer: Let me finish my statement—

Mr. McIntosh: Did you not tell us they could get out within six months and is that not recorded in the minutes of the committee?

Mr. Hellyer: I said that is the policy but it is not a right. It is not a regulation, nor is it—

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I call it one o'clock. Surely closure is not to be extended to meal hours.

The Deputy Chairman: It being one o'clock, pursuant to the order made by the house on April 6 this committee stands adjourned until two o'clock.

SITTING SUSPENDED

SITTING RESUMED

The committee resumed at 2 p.m.

The Chairman: Order. When the committee rose at one o'clock clause 3 was under discussion.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, a point was raised this morning which had been raised earlier in the debate by the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings and the hon. member for Lapointe. Earlier in the week I undertook to give a reply. I was unable to do so and therefore I should like to do so now.

A policy was introduced in August, 1966 under which pilots are required to serve a minimum of five years following completion of aircrew training. This policy was extended to all aircrew in November 1966. This policy

[Mr. McIntosh.]

will not be applied to R.O.T.P. graduates who were not asked to accept this additional obligatory service before commencing aircrew training. In the future, that is, commencing with the 1967 graduating class, R.O.T.P. graduates will not be given aircrew training unless they are prepared to accept this additional period of obligatory service.

Aircrew training is costly and this heavy expenditure of funds is not justified for R.O.T.P. candidates who are not willing to accept, prior to undertaking training, additional obligatory service to that which they undertook when they entered the R.O.T.P. Those who do not wish to undertake the obligatory service required of aircrew will be employed in non-aircrew positions. There is a surplus of candidates for aircrew training and therefore no difficulty in filling all of the aircrew training spaces with qualified candidates to whom the five year obligatory service rule is acceptable.

From August, 1966 until the present time, during which staff consideration was being given to the application of the aircrew obligatory service policy to R.O.T.P., graduates, there was uncertainty among those R.O.T.P. graduates who had or were undertaking aircrew training as to whether the obligatory service they had undertaken when they entered R.O.T.P. would be extended. This has caused concern on the part of R.O.T.P. graduates in this respect and I trust that this will be cleared up now that the decision has been taken to apply the aircrew policy only to R.O.T.P. graduates who undertake aircrew which they were committed on entering the R.O.T.P.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): Mr. Chairman, I am concerned about a principle which becomes evident in this clause. I do not suggest it is something new so far as this bill is concerned, that it results only from the minister's policies, or anything of that sort. I refer, however, to the situation where an individual enters into a contract by which he is bound in respect of service in any of the services concerned. There is a tendency, as the situation changes and as a matter of convenience, for the government through the Department of National Defence to change the contract to suit its own requirements. This would seem to be one of the most demoralizing situations in which a serving man or officer could find himself. Under the provisions for retirement a man may retire from the services by giving six months' notice. The hon. member for