

*National Defence Act Amendment*

Many other reasons have been brought to the attention of the house by other hon. members during this debate. Now we are to be forced by closure to accede to the government's whims. This step is wrong. Closure never should be forced on the House of Commons, least of all when our security is at stake. This is not right.

When I started out I stated that I intended to be brief. I will. I should like, however, to close by quoting from an editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* of yesterday—that Liberal paper which is so friendly to the government. This is what they say concerning this last unforgiveable step which has been taken by this government. I think this should be placed on the record.

The federal government could be making a mistake—

Let us not forget that this is from yesterday's *Winnipeg Free Press*. They anticipated the possibility of what has happened today.

The federal government could be making a mistake if, in its determination to impose unification on Canada's armed services, it should resort to some form of closure on Parliament.

The government can argue that the unification bill has been through the legislative mill, including the defence committee, and that there is nothing of value to be gained by prolonging the discussion. In fact, not all witnesses who should have been heard were called before the committee. And in spite of all the talking that has been done, some major questions remain unanswered—notably those concerning the effect that unification may have on Canada's military commitments under NATO and NORAD. The suspicion is growing that the reason these questions have not been answered is that the government does not know the answers. If closure is resorted to, this suspicion will be strengthened.

Unification is government policy, but it is a policy that has met vigorous opposition from many members of Parliament who must feel that they represent a substantial body of opinion. The government can press on; that appears to be its intention. But if it does so at the expense of cutting further debate, it cannot help but leave the same kind of impression that the St. Laurent government left when it used closure in 1956—that here is a government which has failed to convince the majority of the population.

On that note I shall sit down but I wish to say that I do feel this editorial sets out as succinctly as one could the position which the government has taken, the errors it is making and what it is doing to Canada by pressing forward with this bill at this moment.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Churchill:** Mr. Chairman, I waited for some member on the government side to get up to address the house because just a few

[Mr. Monteith.]

minutes ago the hon. member for Kootenay East said that we were trying to prevent their participation in this debate. Every opportunity was given to them, as people here will have noticed, and no one rose from the other side to support the Minister of National Defence or to enter into this debate. Earlier today two opportunities were afforded to the government to change from this particular debate, of which they are making much, and deal with, first, the dairy problem which is a serious problem in Canada. They refused to accept this opportunity which they had. A second opportunity was given to them to deal with the minister of manpower's bill on adult training. They declined that opportunity and said in effect that we must continue with the debate on the unification bill. Then they turn around and accuse us of prolonging the debate. We gave them every opportunity to get on with other business which appears on the order paper and they did not take advantage of the opportunity.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me ask this question: Who is prolonging this debate? Those on the government side. For what purpose? Solely so that the house today could hear the hon. member for Kootenay East, and what a treat that was.

**An hon. Member:** Did he speak?

**Mr. Churchill:** There was nothing in his speech worth any attention whatsoever. This is a peculiar way to operate the House of Commons when the government insists on going ahead with a debate which they have been telling us they wish to terminate. We gave them the opportunity today.

I intend to do something which I very seldom do in this House of Commons; that is, quote extensively from an author. In just a moment I will give the reason for this. The author from whom I intend to quote is Mr. Terence Robertson who is an author of distinction. He writes for the Canadian people and for international areas. He is called a military specialist and has been one for 20 years. I might mention two of his books; one is about Dieppe, "The Shame and the Glory" and the other is about the Suez crisis.

Mr. Robertson has an intelligent knowledge of the House of Commons. He made a speech to the Canadian Club of Ottawa on December 4, 1964. On page 8 of his speech he said this:

If any government, no matter which party is in power, can get its own way simply because a debate is considered drawn out and tedious in some quarters then the two party system is already on the way out the window.