

*Committee on Defence Expenditure*

to a barge. This was a large unit and in good condition. The farmers thought that they could acquire it as it would be a good place in which to store beef, dairy products and so forth on the farm. But the hinges of the door had been destroyed. Soldiers, in order to fasten the door in its place, the hinges having been broken off, had taken sides of Swift Premium bacon and spiked them in place as a substitute for the hinges. On the highway and on Canol carloads of the most valuable tinned goods, such as tinned hams, disappeared.

Some may think that I am out of order in bringing these facts to the attention of the house.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, no.

**An hon. Member:** Join the opposition.

**An hon. Member:** Keep on going.

**Mr. Murray (Cariboo):** I would remind the house that the young army captain who was sentenced at Petawawa, a man with a most brilliant record, received most of his training on the Alaska highway. That goes for many of the other men from Petawawa who have been sent to the penitentiary. They worked on the Alaska highway and many of them saw, at first hand, these terrific examples of wrongdoing which went unchecked by their superior officers.

I have a certain feeling of compassion for some of these men. I do not wish to see wrongdoing condoned. The law has taken its course and they must abide by the decision of the court. But I have a feeling that these young men were exposed to temptation on the highway long before they ever came to Petawawa. Probably they came there after the episodes which I have mentioned, but you cannot discuss Petawawa without recalling the chapter relating to the Alaska highway.

I am not accusing any of the senior officers of wrongdoing in this connection, but I am one who believes that a man should not consider himself holier than anybody else. The hon. member for Nanaimo was the general officer in command of the Canadian army for the Pacific in the years that I mentioned, 1942 and 1943.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Pearkes:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the hon. member will want to keep the record straight. The Alaska highway was not under the Pacific command in those years.

**An hon. Member:** Just keep the record straight.

[Mr. Murray (Cariboo).]

**Mr. Murray (Cariboo):** The hon. member was general officer commanding the Pacific command in 1942 and 1943 and that was in the Pacific area. General W. W. Foster was appointed as a special liaison officer. It got so bad up there that they had to appoint General Foster to take charge so that he could report direct to the war cabinet at Ottawa. So the hon. member for Nanaimo was not held responsible after that first year of construction. Anyway I do not think he should be held responsible and I do not charge him with anything. But I do think he should have a little compassion for those who are being so viciously attacked over Petawawa.

I do not say that he knew what went on on the Alaska highway, but I will say that the outrages on the Alaska highway resulted primarily from the presence in the country of the United States army which introduced a system of ethics which were at least startling to Canadians.

At the same time, had there been charges in parliament over the Alaska highway disgrace in the years 1942, 1943, 1944 and thereafter, the hon. member and other senior officers in the Canadian army would have been greatly worried over matters which had got out of hand, certainly through no dereliction of duty on their part. Worried also would have been Mr. G. S. Currie, author of the Currie report, who was deputy minister of national defence throughout the period I mention when these crimes and misdemeanours were committed.

**Mr. Hees:** What government was in power at the time?

**Mr. Murray (Cariboo):** I am not going to saddle the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), a young man with a great career ahead of him and a great record back of him, with crimes and misdemeanours which were committed long before he took office.

**Mr. Hees:** This government was in power. It is the same old government, the same old stuff.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Where were you at the time?

**Mr. Murray (Cariboo):** It is clearly evident that the shouting and tumult over Petawawa is for political purposes chiefly. It is unfortunate that the House of Commons should be compelled to pause for so long a period to hear debates which have become so bitter and so unprofitable. We have the great task of NATO on our shoulders; we have heavy responsibilities in Korea and on the continent of Europe. We have a list of national problems facing us which call for attention and solution. And yet we sit here day after day in