

*National Defence Act Amendment*

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend knows this is an extremely difficult and complex matter which requires discussion. Discussions are taking place with various interests in Canada as well as with United States governmental authorities, and they must be concluded before any decision can be taken. As soon as these discussions are complete we will be in a position to know what to do. Because of the complexity of the discussions I felt this was not a matter I should mention as something we should do this year. I doubt that it will be possible to renegotiate the convention this year.

**Mr. Simpson:** I have a supplementary question. Will the Prime Minister not agree that it would be a good idea to clear up this matter during our centennial year?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The question is argumentative.

**NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT AMENDMENT**AMALGAMATION OF NAVY, ARMY AND  
AIR FORCE

The house resumed, from Wednesday, April 19, consideration in committee of Bill No. C-243, to amend the National Defence Act and other acts in consequence thereof—Mr. Hellyer—Mr. Batten in the chair.

**The Chairman:** When the committee rose on Wednesday, evening, April 19, clause 2 was under discussion.

**Mr. Churchill:** Mr. Chairman, the other evening I suggested that clause 2 should stand. I thought there was agreement to this suggestion on the part of the minister and members on the government side. That being the case I again suggest that clause 2 stand and that we proceed with clause 3.

**Mr. Hellyer:** That is agreeable, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Does the committee agree to stand clause 2 and proceed with clause 3?

**Mr. McCleave:** Mr. Chairman, I want to draw one matter to the attention of the committee. In the event that clause 25 is never reached for consideration because of the arbitrary allocation of time I should like to point out now one rather silly typographical error which should be corrected here rather than in the other place.

[Mr. Simpson.]

**The Chairman:** Is it agreed that the committee stand clause 2 and proceed to the consideration of clause 3?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

On clause 3—*Commissioned officers.*

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Chairman, clause 3 deals with terms of service. The first part states that commissions of officers in the Canadian forces shall be granted by Her Majesty during pleasure. This is the same as the section in the present act except for the deletion of the names of the three services and the substitution therefor of "Canadian Forces".

Subsection 2 of new section 21 states:

Persons shall be enrolled as subordinate officers or men for indefinite or fixed periods of service as may be prescribed in regulations made by the Governor in Council.

That is a change from the present act which states that persons shall be enrolled as men for fixed terms of service as may be prescribed in regulations made by the Governor in Council. It was pointed out by a number of witnesses before the defence committee that an indefinite term of service so far as the men are concerned will likely have serious consequences and therefore is a questionable provision. On December 7 the minister dealt with this matter during introduction of the bill and he had this to say regarding the length of engagement periods for men:

If they join, it normally will be for an initial engagement of five years. If this engagement is mutually satisfactory, they may, under the provisions of the bill, be re-engaged for an indefinite period. If they want to be released later, this can be done with six months' notice, except in an emergency or during periods of obligatory service.

Admiral Landymore was the first of the witnesses who appeared before the committee to point out some of the difficulties which may arise as the result of putting into effect such a regulation. He stated, as found on page 1055 of the committee proceedings:

This is an invitation to have trade unions in the armed forces. Let us say that a group of technicians is dissatisfied with some aspect of their service. They can, under this concept of engagement, en masse, give six months' notice, in order to exert pressure to have their wishes fulfilled. Here is subtle, silent, collective bargaining, entering the armed forces. This has no place in the services. I am not objecting to trade unions or collective bargaining in industry or in civilian life but this form of activity is not acceptable in the armed forces, for very obvious reasons, however democratic we might wish to be.

I cannot tell you how often this type of unlimited engagement has been considered and, in wisdom,