

*National Security Measures*

situation under the auspices of the International Control Commission but found it was practically useless to participate with countries so directly involved in the east-west conflict, is only fooling itself if we, its people, think we can participate in a meaningful way as an honest broker—which the Prime Minister says we are not—or in any other consultative way with the Soviet Union.

I am amazed that my time has expired and that I have not dealt with Maritime Command.

**Mr. J. Chester MacRae (York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I find that there are only a few minutes left in which to take part in this debate. I realize that I am following some very knowledgeable speakers from all corners of the House on the matter of defence. I want to discuss one aspect of the motion presented by our party, that dealing with the reduction in our active and reserve forces. I ask, why should our forces not be up to strength? Is there dissatisfaction in our forces today? Very briefly I wish to discuss a survey done within the last three months covering a cross-section of our armed forces.

The reason for the survey was a suggestion made by the Public Service Alliance of Canada to the government that in some way the armed forces might be organized along union lines. When I read the suggestion I had grave misgivings that the forces could be unionized, having had some experience in the active forces in the last war and in the reserve forces. However, many of us felt that we should ask the members of the armed forces what their feelings were on this subject. We chose a number of military bases in Canada, including Base Galetown which is in my constituency and is one of the finest military bases in the British Commonwealth.

**An hon. Member:** Next to Greenwood.

**Mr. MacRae:** I would dispute that. Some 25 per cent of those who were questioned responded. Was there much opposition to the survey? Rather surprisingly, there was not, although some may have felt that they should not have been written to and a few wrote back to say so. One reply that I remember in particular was that we should keep the army out of politics, and politics out of the army. But of course, Mr. Speaker, at head of the Department of National Defence we have a man who first of all must be elected to the House of Commons.

I would like to put on the record a brief summary respecting the response to the questions we asked. If the minister does not already know about this, I think he will find it of considerable interest. From an analysis of the replies of those who responded we were able to ascertain the following: There appears to be a substantial degree of disenchantment among armed forces personnel about the decision-making process concerning their working conditions.

On the whole, army respondents and non-commissioned respondents have expressed a higher degree of

disenchantment than navy and commissioned respondents. A majority of the respondents appear to be ready to accept the application of the principle of negotiation to the armed forces. However, although this principle of negotiation might not be applicable to all aspects of the armed forces, certain aspects of their working conditions are undoubtedly negotiable. These are pay and allowances, retirement and pension conditions and grievance procedures.

There is a definite lack of consensus among the respondents as to the necessity or even desirability of organizing armed forces personnel along union lines. However, it was felt there should be some mechanism established whereby negotiations with the government are conducted in a collective manner. This negotiating body should be formed within the armed forces, and definitely should not be in the hands of an outside group such as the Public Service Alliance.

Finally—and I concur emphatically in this—the armed forces should not, even in time of peace, have the right to strike. That is as it must be.

I find that I have only a moment or two left, Mr. Speaker, and what I have to say may not be very popular with one or two of my colleagues. I wish to thank the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) for the assistance he has rendered to me in dealing with armed forces personnel problems. This debate has centred mainly on policy. I am more interested in trying to help with the personal problems of the men in the armed forces and their families. The Minister of National Defence is in the chamber, and I wish to say that I appreciate the consideration he has extended to me in the cases that I have brought to his attention.

I remember one particular case last fall. I do not know if the minister noticed at the time but I was very critical of him one day. The following day I went to him about a problem concerning a gentleman who was formerly in the forces. The minister's response was most generous to this ex-serviceman and it was something he and I appreciated. I wish to thank the minister publicly on the floor of the House for this.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** I thank the hon. gentleman.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard):** It being five o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 58(11) proceedings on the motion before the House have expired.

A long weekend in the glorious month of May is a great opportunity to reassess our attitudes and to formulate our judgments on the critical issues that are before us. I hope hon. members will enjoy and share the bountiful gifts of a provident Mother Nature. May her sons learn from her example to be just and good-natured.

At five o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.