

of men who have retired. What about the man who is presently chief of the defence forces, Air Chief Marshal Miller?

• (3:50 p.m.)

He was first a deputy minister and a most respected and trusted adviser. He then became chairman of the chiefs of staff committee. Again, he was a most senior adviser to the minister and to the government. Now he is the chief of the defence forces. When the minister says his predecessors were rubberstamps he indicates that these men whom I named dominated their ministers.

Then we come to this beautiful phrase written by somebody who had more invective in his soul than sense. I am reading from page 1567, quoting the minister as reported at the foot of the page, the second column:

—in 1961 and 1962 when that hon. member was Minister of National Defence and when his government's defence policy was known only for its procrastination, indecision, ineptness and downright stupidity.

These were the men who were advising the government of that day. These were the men for whom the ministers were supposed to be rubberstamps. Now we have a bold, new approach. This minister is not going to be a rubberstamp. Does he mean then that he is rejecting the advice of these senior advisers, some of whom are still the minister's military advisers? If senior military advisers give advice which is concurred in by a minister and the minister can then be described as a rubberstamp, what does that make these men today when the present minister says: "I am not going to be a rubber stamp"? One might almost be tempted to say that the gold braid is about to adorn the corporal's stripes.

This speech, to me, was wrong. Certainly one can hit hard; one can criticize. But the hon. member for Calgary North, the former defence minister, did not indulge in personalities with regard to the present minister although the temptation must have been great. While I may be conducting a direct attack here I do so in defence of a well established practice, crying out against this form of attack.

The minister was living up to form when he was over here on this side of the house and was defence critic. We saw some ineptness then. There was that famous speech of his in 1960 or 1961 which was given to the press—a bold new defence policy. The speech was never delivered but it appeared in the press. This was the sort of non-stupidity to which we were to become accustomed.

### *Supply—National Defence*

I want to give one example of the so-called bold decision-making by this minister who charges others with indecision. It relates directly to the CF-5 aircraft. Late last fall and in the early winter kites were being flown to test opinion with regard to this new aircraft which was to be purchased. The minister visited the R.C.A.F. Association in Edmonton late in February and of course he was invited to speak. He told them about this great new plane which was to be bought. A decision, he said, was to be taken within the next few days. As a matter of fact, it was to be taken early in March.

I asked the minister about this when he came back. He said "Yes, we are going to take a decision soon, within the next few days". After some time had passed I asked the same question again. Again the reply was, "Soon". When was the decision made? Some time after parliament had been dissolved, in September when there was no chance to examine the decision. We know it was not so much the political advantage to be gained by announcing this purchase after parliament had been dissolved which motivated the minister and the government; it was the fact that they could not make up their minds about this aircraft.

Delay may be legitimate. This is a major step to take. There are many factors to be considered. But surely to goodness the minister also knows that on other occasions too there are many factors to be considered. I recall hearing in this house his extravagant phrases when he was in opposition. That is why I wish to nail down this speech of his for precisely what it is worth.

Why would we get such things as this in a newspaper report by some reporter who has not been present in the press gallery for any length of time? How did he get this copy in time to write this article for an early edition of the *Globe and Mail*? I wonder.

**Mr. Churchill:** Explain that.

**Mr. Lambert:** This is the opening paragraph:

Defence Minister Hellyer turned on his critics last night and slapped them all round the ring.

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

**Mr. Lambert:** When it comes to slapping critics around the ring the minister is indulging in a little toy game with toy soldiers. That is all. We have listened to a lot of the criticisms made by the minister in the past. "Slapping critics around the ring?" In this house? This minister?