

Supply—National Defence

point out that while the government was pursuing a stupid defence policy the stupidity was justified by the saving of some of that billion dollars. Since we are apparently following a policy that was admittedly wrong the Minister of National Defence should point out to the country how much money we are to save so that we can at least console ourselves with the thought that while we have been foolish in our policies we have been penny-wise.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Mr. Chairman, I do not rise to take part in this debate on defence estimates as a defence expert, though I have served on the defence committee and have taken more than a passing interest in defence expenditures and defence policy in the past few years. I should like to address my remarks to the value the taxpayer is receiving for these defence expenditures. Now as never before in the history of the world we must bear in mind and always remember that the civilians must keep a very close watch over military might and military expenditures and the final authority must forever rest in the hands of the civilians. I believe this is very true today because of world situations that exist.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Looking back over our defence policy and our defence expenditures and thinking back to the time when the minister assumed this portfolio, we are reminded of what a clear-cut policy he seemed to have but did not have for defence. He outlined clearly where he was going and where he thought our defence policy should be going. He outlined how the unification of the three services would save the taxpayers of this country a great deal of money.

I was on the defence committee some years ago and I know that a number of questions were asked in this regard. I did not ask any; I was prepared to wait and see. We have waited a number of years and I have looked for the savings in defence but have seen none. The amazing thing about this is that John Q. Public is convinced that there is a saving of public money here. There should be a saving in this area but there is not. John Q. Public is convinced that the minister has done an amazing job and has not made any errors.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): John Q. Public is convinced that the minister is spending this

money wisely. I say this is partly the fault of this house because we have not examined the minister's estimates thoroughly enough. It is partly because the press and the minister's public relations officers have been together on many aspects of defence. It is partly because we are in the middle of a peacetime period in Canada and John Q. Public is just not interested in the whole question of defence and how our defence dollars are being spent.

I think these estimates should be filibustered until the minister can stand up and show that he is saving money, until he says he will take a second look at this wasteful expenditure of \$215 million on an aircraft which the United States government is not going to purchase. This aircraft has been tried in Viet Nam and it has been proven that it is not a good combat plane; yet we blindly go ahead with it because the Canadian public are not interested in defence and allow their defence minister to spend \$215 million on a plane which is not a good combat plane, has not proven itself and is not going to be purchased by the American forces who originated and planned it. The United States government have scrapped this plane. Yet we blindly go ahead and spend this very great amount of money on it. This is just one aspect of the mistakes made in our whole defence picture.

Let us look at our defence picture. We force 500 pilots into immediate retirement. They are told, "We don't really need you fellows. You have been really faithful. We admire the spirit in which you enlisted so we will give you a bonus if you now retire. Canada no longer needs you". Then what happened? After the taxpayers of this country had spent something like \$175,000 training each one of these pilots and had footed the bill and having been told we did not need them, the minister turns around and says, "We do need you fellows. We will give you \$200 for each year for which you re-enlist". What kind of management is this? This is the question that should be uppermost in the mind of every taxpayer. Is he getting value for his dollars?

Mr. Hellyer: Yes.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): We should examine this question very closely. The minister says yes, the taxpayer is getting value for his dollar. Who beside the minister and his executive assistant have anything to say about defence matters? I sat on the defence committee and I have read all kinds of articles saying what a great committee it is. It is an