

*National Defence*

any length tonight, is that the financial capacity of Canada ought to be gauged by the physical capacity of Canada. If Canada can produce the goods and services necessary to attain the high standard of military preparedness which my remarks have envisaged, then Canada should certainly be able to get the money with which to employ this physical capacity to achieve the objective we have in mind.

If the government and its present financial advisers are unable to tell how this can be done, it is high time they sought advice from people who know more about modern finance than apparently they have been able to learn up to the present time. So if the minister is being deprived of the money he considers it necessary to have in order to give Canada the kind of defence mechanism Canada should have as a producing unit, considering her resources of men and materials and machines and factories; if he is unable to get the money to accomplish the objective which Canada is capable of accomplishing, then we want him to make that known to us so that we can all do something about it. I think he will find a good many members of his own party who will be ready to help him out, too, and who will not be quite so ready to listen to some of the outworn ideas of finance with which they have been indoctrinated up to the present time.

So I do not know that we would be prepared to accept from the minister the plea that he did not have the money with which to do anything which is physically possible in Canada. Let us bear in mind that not until the recent war broke out, and even then not until the war began to look terribly dangerous, after eight months or so, did it become evident that we could make whatever was physically possible in Canada financially possible. But then when we did make it financially possible, we did so by the accumulation of colossal debts which now we have to pass on to future generations to repay. The time to take care of this problem for the next war is before the war occurs. Let us find some means whereby what is physically possible in this dominion can be made financially possible without the accumulation of taxes and debts.

Having made this contribution, I shall defer any further remarks until some future time.

**Mr. A. L. Smith (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, my remarks on this matter will be brief and will concern themselves with one subject only; that is, the matter of courts martial. Everyone realizes that in a military organization discipline is a must, but I am opposed to the whole principle of courts martial as we know them. By that I am not

[Mr. Blackmore.]

for one moment suggesting that commanding officers should not exercise the discretion that is given them in dealing with breaches of discipline and minor matters of various kinds. I think it absolutely wrong in principle, however, that courts martial as they are now and as they have been should deal with offences when there is an opportunity of having those offences tried in the normal way in a civilian court.

In saying what I do I speak perhaps not with authority but certainly with some considerable experience in defending people before courts martial. The thing that is wrong is that each and every one of the five men you have making up a general court martial is in some way, unconsciously if you will, anxious to do nothing that would displease the senior officer who has set up that court. We know that before any court martial is ordered in a district, for example, the district officer commanding may do a number of things. He may take certain steps of his own, from a reprimand up. He may take the ultimate and final step, after his investigation and after he has read the written statements presented by the persons who have investigated, and order a court martial composed of officers junior to himself. In other words, they may take those officers from the various districts who have the authority to set it up, be it the minister—I do not mean the present minister, but the minister of national defence—who has on occasion set up these courts martial in which I have personally had a part, over and above the men who usually deal with such matters. No one will think for a moment that the persons sitting there as judges are not influenced by the fact that the man above them, be it the minister or be it an officer commanding a district, who read the evidence, has said, "This is beyond my powers: the offence is too grave, so I am going to set up this court martial." No one can tell me that the persons sitting as judges are likely to make a finding in favour of the accused person when their superior officer has, in setting up the court after investigation, virtually told them that the man is guilty. In other words, lest anyone think that I am criticizing the individuals who sit as judges, I may say that were I in that position I would no doubt be equally influenced. It is not human nature for any person to tell a superior, who has power of preferment over him, that he is wrong and this man is not guilty.

That is the situation as we have it today. I am not suggesting it was started by anyone in the house. It is an old court which has outlived its usefulness. Someone will say: Since you object to this what do you suggest