

Interim Supply

Mr. McIntosh: We do not know the reasons behind the Prime Minister's stand, when he would not listen to the plea of the leaders of the opposition parties who presented several ways in which this issue could be resolved. They did not want the administration of this house to be held up. But the Prime Minister is as adamant as the minister in rejecting every suggestion. The Prime Minister has said that by following certain suggestions we would kill the bill. But arguments have been brought forward to show this is not so. The bill would not be killed if the matter were dealt with in the way suggested by the hon. member for Peace River. Nevertheless, the government thinks it would be killed.

How can we judge the minister's reasons for doing what he is doing when we can get no answers to our questions. We must get answers to certain questions, and I believe our requests have been reasonable. We see no reason for the minister's refusal to take advantage of opportunities to answer at least some questions. He should answer questions, rather than saying, "I am sure of this policy", or "See the white paper".

Interim supply, as the minister knows, provides the only method available to us now to force the government to reveal to the people of Canada what is behind the radical change in the defence policy of our country. Also, we do not believe in the principle of the bill, so we cannot agree to second reading which, in effect, would force us to agree to the principle. As I have said before, if we agree to the second reading, we will be the laughing stock of this country. The minister by his actions, and by his refusal to answer questions put to him in this house, has put us in an impossible position. I said before that we cannot give in to the proposed action of the government. I, for one—and there are many like me on this side of the house—were I to give in, would feel I was not doing my duty as a member of parliament.

I say, we cannot afford to gamble that the minister is right, and that 20, or 40—I do not know the exact number now—of the highest qualified advisers in the country are wrong. This is the position in which the minister has put us. If we believe the minister is right, when he says, "You will not be sorry", and "I am sure of this" it means, in effect, that the 40 senior advisers in this country who have been discharged or who have resigned are wrong.

An hon. Member: It is 69 now.

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Mr. McIntosh: I ask the people on the other side of the house to allow us to get the answers, and not to support the minister who wants to adopt this foolish position. What you are saying is, "The minister is right, and 40 senior military personnel are wrong".

An hon. Member: It is 69.

Mr. McIntosh: It is 69 I am told. How utterly ridiculous this is.

An hon. Member: We are buying a pig in a poke.

Mr. McIntosh: Also, we do not know what the minister is proposing by his unification. If we knew, it would help to clear up some of the mystery.

Mr. Hellyer: I am anxious to tell you as soon as we get on with the bill.

Mr. McIntosh: We cannot accept that, because we cannot accept the principle. On all the issues which have come before this house, we have had some information. Whether they had to do with pipe lines, agriculture or anything else, we knew where we could go to get information. In this debate, we do not know where we can go to get information. We have tried to get information from the minister, but he refuses to give it to us. In fact, he refuses to tell us what unification or amalgamation actually means.

I do not know where the minister got his advice. Some people have said that perhaps he had a divine mandate, direct from heaven. That may be so, but surely he could reveal some of his information to the members of this house.

If we are to remain a sovereign power, we cannot rely on some other country to defend us. This is what would happen if unification, as we believe it to be, is allowed to be put into effect. There are many other factors at stake in this issue, and some of them have been referred to by the previous speaker. The first and most important thing is that the defence of our country takes top priority. Another factor to consider is our national pride. I do not believe for a moment that the Canadian people want to be sheltered under the United States umbrella, and not take some part in our defence.

I said on a former occasion that we are one tenth of the size of the United States in population, and possibly in resources. If we do only one tenth of the job of continental defence, we can hold up our heads with pride and say that we are doing our share. Defence