

that are in maintenance well when you are talking in terms of the total manpower available.

Mr. HARKNESS: What I was coming to following that was: Is this situation due, to a large extent, not so much to the crude figures of the number of people in the Navy as the fact that in a large number of the specialist trades, as you mentioned earlier, there is an acute shortage?

Rear Admiral LANDYMORE: It is just a general shortage of personnel. I think in the past year we very nearly got within the total numbers of people required. We had the trades quite well balanced in relation to crews. In other words, we are not so short of one trade that we are holding ships out of operation because of that one trade. Within the totals that we have, the complement is quite well balanced now. Initially we were putting ships alongside partly for the reason of shortage, and partly for the reason of lack of balance of key personnel. But that has been corrected; now I think it is just a general shortage. For the period of 2 years that I was in Halifax, we were not getting nearly enough recruits to keep the strength up; we were falling behind all the time. And, of course, this will reflect later on because it takes quite a long time to make those men skillful enough to bring them up, so that the efficiency drops for that reason alone.

Mr. HARKNESS: I would now like to—

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Harkness, I will have to call an end to your questioning. At this point you have gone over the 10 minutes that we agreed upon; I have allowed you 12 minutes. Do you have a series of questions?

Mr. HARKNESS: No, I was going to revert to some of the specific points in the Admiral's brief, so if my time is up, perhaps you had better put me down for the next round.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I will.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I would like to raise a point of order Mr. Chairman; we are close to the noon adjournment. My impression has always been that the committees of the House of Commons operate quite freely without any direct or indirect influence from ministers. We have seen this morning the Associate Minister of Defence conversing at great length with members of this Committee, and he is supported by his staff. I wonder whether this is the procedure which is normally followed in committee—I have not seen it before. The interest of the Associate Minister is well known, so perhaps we should call him to the stand so that he could participate publicly with us. I believe he is very seriously concerned about the continuing deterioration of the forces, and perhaps we should hear from him.

Mr. MACALUSO: Mr. Chairman, may I make a comment on that point? Unless Mr. Churchill has radar ears to hear what anyone is saying, perhaps he should not put into question what members are talking about back and forth, because unless he knows that the matters of this Committee are being discussed, then I suggest that this allegation is false like many others that are presented here by him.

Mr. DEACHMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I may just have a word, I do not think this is really a point of order; it is just another curious Churchillian observation.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I consider sir, it is a valid point of order. I think there should be no direct or indirect influencing of committees by Ministers, unless