

Interim Supply

We on this side of the house have been accused of holding up civil service payments. In the press we have been tabbed as having a great rift in our party. It is alleged that despite the great rift in our party the official opposition continues to hold up the debate. I do not feel there is any great rift. The very fact that we are here trying to do something which is very important to this country—at least, we feel it is—shows that there is no great rift. We are one great happy family on this side of the house. There may be a little rift in our family, political family if you wish, but what family does not have a little rift? Anyone who says there never is a rift must be speaking a little less than the truth or must belong to a different political party.

I went home over the week end. Naturally questions were put to me. I was asked, "What is all this about? You are representing us in Ottawa. What is the answer?" Quite frankly, I must say that I could not give them any answer. How can we as members of parliament have an answer for our constituents? We are here as \$18,000 a year men representing constituents and when we are asked by them to give them an answer we are unable to. What is the policy? The minister says he will tell us about it after it is approved. That is really what he is saying. He informs us he will tell us what the real policy is after we have approved it.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): During the debate on second reading.

Mr. Gundlock: After it has been approved to that point.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): During that debate.

Mr. Gundlock: You may understand parliamentary procedure a little better than I do. I am quite sure you do. But in attempting to describe the situation to the people I represent when they ask me what it is all about I say that I do not know but that maybe after second reading we will find out. That, however, is too late. This is the procedure being followed by the government and the minister. Frankly and honestly may I say that I have great respect for the Minister of National Defence, and he is aware of this. I really hate to take part in this debate but I must, because when I am unable to answer the questions put to me by my constituents I feel it is my duty, in spite of what the minister says, to try to do something about it.

[Mr. Gundlock.]

I should like to say a word or two about holding up payments. Earlier the minister said, "Do you want to be guilty of holding up payments?". I certainly do not want to be guilty of holding up payments. As a matter of fact my daughter is a civil servant working here in Ottawa. I will not tell you in what department. She is a very sincere young lady. She works in a building with 1,000 others. I have spoken to her, I have spoken to another friend, not a political one, in another department, and I have spoken to still another friend in a different department. I am not so sure that they are blaming the opposition. I rather had the impression as a matter of fact that they are blaming the government because over such a simple matter surely it would not be asking too much for the minister to call the committee again to review some of the evidence in a detailed manner. This is my opinion.

I hear we may be faced with an election. Well, all of us have been through elections. To me the threat of an election is a club; it is blackmail. I listened to the hon. member who spoke before me. I do not quite agree with him. I think he made a very eloquent and emotional speech but in my opinion it was ineffective because I hope we can do better than having emotional and eloquent speeches. I appeal again to the minister. I am sure he can do what we are asking. I recall one particular night in 1963 when the minister spoke on a supply motion. As found on page 3437 of *Hansard*, the minister had this to say:

We particularly welcome the opportunity to express the view that the government has failed to give a clear statement of policy respecting Canada's national defence.

Last evening I put on the record some of the factual material relating to our present defence dilemma, which should have been put on the record by the government.

I respect those words of the minister and I think they should be some sort of a guideline in this defence debate. I am not going to speak any more about the defence but I do hope the minister will consider our plea. I do not think that this time the opposition is going to take the blame that some of those on the other side of the house think we will. We are not going to be blamed for this situation and the minister should pay attention to that fact. Let me ask the minister to reconsider his statement in that regard because under the circumstances he should not make statements of a flat and categorical nature.