

Motion for Adjournment of House

actions he has created a further serious decline in service morale and a state of widespread concern about Canada's ability to maintain an effective defence force.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member for Halifax address the Chair on the question of urgency of debate?

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, to bring the matter before the house properly, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Saskatoon (Mr. Brand), that the house now stand adjourned.

Mr. Pickersgill: Oh, oh.

Mr. Forrestall: I suggest to the Minister of Transport this is not very funny. I am trying to do something properly and I do not want to be shot down improperly.

The urgency of this matter, Mr. Speaker, may be summed up briefly in this way.

Unless the minister or the house refers to the defence committee at this time the question of unification as set forth in the motion, total unification of our Canadian forces will be irrevocable before the members of the house will have had an opportunity to discuss or review the matter in any way, or to record their views. Yesterday in response to a question by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre the minister stated, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 8053:

No, Mr. Speaker. I do not think it would be desirable or in the public interest to do that at the present time.

The minister was talking about referring this matter to the defence committee. By this action and by that statement he had denied the members of this house an opportunity to place on record their pertinent and useful views. It has been clearly stated that the minister is not prepared now, and will not be until some vague time in the future, to let this matter go before the defence committee, thus depriving members of the house an opportunity to discuss the matter.

All the main requirements under rule 26 concerning the urgency of debate have been met. The importance of the matter is demonstrated also in the public concern that has been voiced not only by members of parliament but by thousands and thousands of Canadian servicemen as well as by senior, high ranking military officers who have found it necessary to make public statements. They are concerned about our ability to mobilize in

[Mr. Forrestall.]

the event of a national emergency. I suggest this is an important matter.

I should like to mention one further point, Mr. Speaker. The Department of National Defence accounts for nearly one quarter of our total annual budget. If this policy were forced through without full knowledge of all the facts it would be a disservice to this house. I suggest that on these grounds there is urgency of debate at this time.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): I should like to speak to the question of urgency of debate, Mr. Speaker. Before doing so, however, I should like to suggest to the hon. member that if he is serious in his suggestion that I have acted illegally he should have the courage of his convictions and lay a charge—

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Hellyer:—rather than slip a phrase into a motion of this kind and attempt to take advantage of whatever publicity may accrue to him by casting reflections upon me in a way which is not in accordance with the facts, and which I defy him to substantiate. He is a very junior member of this house, and for that one must make some allowances.

Mr. Starr: Talk about arrogance.

Mr. Hellyer: At the same time there are certain rules that apply to all hon. members—

Mr. Graftey: And he wants to be Prime Minister some day.

Mr. Hellyer:—and I would suggest that he learn to abide by those rules.

With regard to the question of urgency of debate, Mr. Speaker, the subject referred to here is no more urgent today than it was yesterday or a week ago or a month ago. As a matter of fact the urgency of debate on this subject arose in 1964 when the white paper on defence was presented to the house and to the Canadian people. It was stated quite clearly in the white paper on defence what was the policy of the government—

• (2:50 p.m.)

Mr. Churchill: It was not stated clearly.

Mr. Hellyer:—that it was to integrate the armed forces of Canada as a first step toward a single unified armed force.

This question was considered at length at the time by the special committee on defence. That committee reported to the House of