

Proposal for Time Allocation

insisted that we require parliamentary approval now, before regulations are drafted, so that they can be based on the parliamentary bill rather than on merely a draft which could be changed subsequently, which would have the effect of undoing any work done in the meantime.

• (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. Churchill: I heard the adjutant general state that case and the minister repeated it briefly on April 14. That is a good point. It is a technical point. The assumption is that the House of Commons might alter the wording in clause 2 and clause 6. But the Minister of National Defence has disclosed to us over months and years that he will not alter a single thing, and with regard to this bill I think it incredible that he will effect some alteration in line with our suggestion on clause 2. In other words, if we suggest that he rewrite into that clause the Royal Canadian Navy, The Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Army, is he going to accept our suggestion? We are not so stupid as to believe that. The adjutant general raised a straw man and the minister has made use of it. There will not be one word changed in clause 2 or clause 6 unless the minister says that there shall be a change.

The minister has his supporters in his own party. He has the N.D.P., the Social Credit rump, and the Cr ditistes marching along led by the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) who announced publicly—it is in a newspaper headline today—that he will support the Liberal government. He might just as well join the Liberal party. This is a straw man which has been raised. In any case, let us not be ridiculous about this, although the minister is being ridiculous.

Members of the departmental staff are accustomed to drafting bills and regulations and making subsequent alterations when they find they have made a mistake. It so happens that in the defence committee when the bill was under study the adjutant general brought forward half a dozen changes which he himself had discovered, and one or two were made in response to questions that we raised. There is nothing unusual about making a draft and having it changed. I have suffered the penalty of drafting material and having it not only changed but thrown out. But you survive, and I think the adjutant general could quite safely go ahead with his drafting.

As a matter of fact, if we pass, as I have suggested, all the other clauses of the bill, even if they are passed on division, there will

[Mr. Hellyer.]

be an inference that the bill as a whole will go through unchanged by parliament, and with the declared intention of most of the New Democratic Party to vote for it, plus the Social Credit rump and the Cr ditistes, the government is relaxing and the adjutant general might also relax. That, sir, is the reason I have made this proposal.

The bill does not become law until the regulations are approved. They will not be approved for four to six months. Until they are approved the bill will not be proclaimed and until the bill is proclaimed unification cannot take effect. So I say, postpone it. We will let parliament make a gesture by passing 99 per cent of the bill and we can postpone clauses 2 and 6 until the fall. The government can then bring the bill back into the house in the same position as it is now, and we publicly consent to that being done without raising any objections, points of order, or anything else. If the government then insists upon imposing its allocation of time closure procedure, let it go ahead.

I suggested in the Prime Minister's presence that so far as our party was concerned—and I am pretty sure my colleagues will support me—that an allocation of two day's time might be made next fall instead of three. I also suggested that we go ahead with these other matters of business and wind up this session on Friday of this week, starting the new session at the convenience of the government but certainly by May 1.

May I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that on Tuesday I introduced a motion that we move from the unification bill to the adult training bill. Technically it was out of order and the Speaker so ruled, but he did say that by unanimous consent that motion could have been adopted. Had the government agreed we could have discontinued discussion of the unification bill and we could have spent Tuesday and Wednesday on the adult training bill. I did not do that as a trick. I did it seriously and responsibly because we had received notification then that we would be under allocation of time and it had been intimated to us that the allocated time would run through Friday, Monday and Tuesday. In those circumstances we said among ourselves, "Why then continue the debate on unification on Tuesday and Wednesday?" The house could have gone ahead with the adult training bill. But the government is only concerned about introducing this method of closure and imposing a restraint on freedom of speech.