

National Defence Act Amendment

[English]

The Chairman: Order, please. The hon. gentleman's allotted time has expired. Does he have unanimous consent to answer questions?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, my question is as follows: I admit that the hon. member for Saint-Denis' eloquence is proverbial, if I can thus express myself. He entertained us and was interesting. Why did the hon. member not show the same eloquence in favour of Canadian milk producers yesterday when I brought forward a motion to adjourn the business of the house to discuss the matter?

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Chairman, I know that I am probably out of order, but I will answer briefly. If the hon. member knew the work performed at the Quebec caucus, if he were aware of the representations made by the Quebec members at the national caucus, in short, if he knew the work done in a special committee of the Liberal caucus of Canada concerning farming policy—he is just coming from Montreal, he said so—he would not speak as he is doing now. Soon, however, he will recognize what has been accomplished, by the hon. member for Lotbinière, Richmond-Wolfe and Lévis, Messrs. Choquette, Asselin, Guay, in short, by all those who represent rural constituencies.

Mr. Choquette: Another \$30 million for agriculture.

Mr. Prud'homme: Then, the hon. member for Villeneuve will see that farmers will be delighted to meet unbiased members of the Liberal party who do not wish to be demagogic with respect to the dairy policy of the Liberal government.

Mr. Caouette: Ineffectual work.

[English]

The Chairman: Order, please. The committee has heard the question and the answer, both of which are out of order.

Mr. Bigg: Mr. Chairman, the same old story is coming from the Liberal side of this house; there is no need to discuss this bill further.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bigg: It is always encouraging to receive applause at the beginning of one's speech. I am quite sure that when I have finished there will be little applause from that side of the house. I had not intended to begin

on an emotional note, but the last speaker would be disappointed if I did not pay some attention to his remarks. Let me say a word or two in this regard. That hon. member was trying to present the same old argument. In doing so he was attempting to drive a wedge between loyal English speaking Canadians and loyal French speaking Canadians, and there are many in both categories.

It is not fair to say that because a man spoke on the flag debate or now speaks on the defence debate, he is necessarily a wasp. Let me remind the hon. gentleman that on June 13, 1940, I was not baring my little bosom to the spear in the outskirts of London. I was within 30 miles of Paris, and I was with a very specialized arm of the services, the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.

Some hon. Members: Near the rear.

Mr. Bigg: I do not believe unification as it has been explained so far is at all necessary to meet the needs for men of tremendous experience, training and specialization. I am not one of those, nor shall I ever be, who would refuse to serve my country because of the colour of the uniform—and I know something about serving in a colourful uniform, as many hon. members are aware. I like to put first things first.

When I spoke on this debate the other day I was referring to the survival of Canada for Canadians. We must attack this whole suggested method of survival at its root. Are we willing as a nation to defend Canada to the last man? My answer is an unequivocal yes. I believe everyone who has accepted Canadian citizenship, whether of French, Ukrainian, German or any other origin, would accept anything that would increase the efficiency of our armed forces.

We are debating this bill because we want to satisfy ourselves that in the long term planning for the defence of Canada it will be sound in every last detail. I am not against any revolution which is evolutionary and will streamline our active forces.

As my last reference to personalities during this debate I should like to say that I find it a little tiresome to be lectured about my dedication or motivation by an individual whose great claim to military experience is two years at Camp Shilo and three years in Lafèche Caverne. I speak from experience because I was on the outskirts of Paris in 1940. I think that everyone should give credit to those who were there for having decent motives.