

National Defence

beyond the limits imposed by the appropriation bill. In the event of an emergency parliament would not wish to impose any restriction.

Mr. Coldwell: Parliament would be called and could deal with the emergency and authorize the maximum—

Mr. Claxton: Yes, but I do not think parliament would even authorize the maximum except to say there shall be no limits.

Mr. Fulton: That is right.

Mr. Coldwell: Parliament would decide it in wartime. It seems to me to be unnecessary in peacetime to have this provision in the act.

Mr. Claxton: My point is this; in peacetime it is not possible because there will not be that money available. There will not be any more money available than parliament agreed to at the time the appropriation bill was passed, you see.

Mr. Coldwell: Yes, I see.

Mr. Claxton: In wartime parliament itself would not want to impose a restriction. Therefore, from the practical point of view we are better without it.

Section agreed to.

On section 17—*Continuation of existing constitution.*

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): I heard something said about reprinting the bill. Has it been reprinted?

Mr. Claxton: It has not been reprinted. It is being rushed through just as fast as it can be.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): I am not criticizing. It just is not available?

Mr. Claxton: It will be available late tonight or early tomorrow.

Section agreed to.

Sections 18 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

On section 21—*Commissioned officers.*

Mr. Herridge: I should like to say a few words in support of the remarks of the hon. member for Greenwood with respect to the question of chaplains having commissioned rank. What I have to say I say from a certain amount of experience with the armed forces and from observations during the last war, and from conversation with veterans of all three services. I think the suggestion made by the hon. member was a good one. It has always appeared to me that by giving a chaplain commissioned rank you are separating him to a great extent from the rank and file of the regiment, the group, company or ship. I could never imagine one of the apostles

having a batman to clean his boots, or somebody springing to attention, and saying to them, "Sir". I have comments made to me on many occasions by troops in various places and in various stations on this question. I realize the necessity of army discipline but I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, it would be good enough if the chaplains had warrant rank instead of commissioned rank. That would not separate the chaplains as officers from the men probably so completely as it does at the present time. I would like the Minister of National Defence to inform the committee what a chaplain receives as an honorary colonel, as an honorary major, and as an honorary captain; what allowance he receives per diem and what services he is entitled to, such as batmen and so on.

Mr. Claxton: Mr. Chairman, the point raised by the hon. gentleman who has spoken is of course one of considerable interest, which obviously does not come under this bill, but I should be very glad indeed to make some comment on it now.

In the first place, the point of view which hon. gentlemen have expressed is one which has often occurred to many of us. I must say that when I came into this office three years ago and was seeking to unify the forces as much as possible I discussed with representatives of the various churches and services the possibility of having a single chaplain service for all three services, and of having no ranks for all chaplains. I took this up with representatives of the Catholic and of the Protestant churches who are represented by a special committee dealing with the armed forces. I consult with the Vicar Apostolic of the armed forces and the representative of the Protestant churches with regard to all matters regarding the chaplain service and religion in the armed forces. I should tell you that their view unanimously was opposed to the view set forth by the hon. members. They felt that in the military organization rank is of importance. People know where they stand in relation to each other. For the chaplains to exercise their functions properly they must have not only the respect which is attached to their cloth and to their service, but the status which comes from their having that rank. Further, if the directorate of military engineering or of infantry training is to be headed by a full colonel the chaplain service, being equally important, should be headed by an officer of the rank of colonel or equivalent. I can assure hon. members that I voiced the same point of view as they have. I found the representatives of all the churches and of all the services unitedly opposed to me in that contention.