

*Supply—National Defence*

In addition, I understand that we ought to be able to save our present costs of maintaining our forces in NATO, which I understand amounts to \$500 million a year. Is that correct, sir?

**Mr. Hellyer:** I should not want to comment on the figure.

**Mr. Herridge:** The minister does not want to comment.

**Mr. Hellyer:** It depends how you apportion it.

**Mr. Herridge:** I used the figures that I read. However, here we are denying to our old age pensioners an increase of \$25 a month.

We are very concerned about the education of our young people. We, in the New Democratic party, suggest that we could use this approximate sum of \$500 million a year for those purposes. In addition to that, other savings could be effected. These could be achieved by a change in the requirements for foreign forces and defence policy, to provide greater economic aid to those areas that require it throughout the world.

**Mr. Churchill:** Would the hon. member permit a question? He used the phrase, that there would be a savings of \$500 million a year. I suggest that no actual saving is to be effected anywhere. Did the hon. member not mean that the defence estimates might be reduced by that amount and be available for these other purposes?

**Mr. Herridge:** Yes, possibly I did not use the correct words. The reduction of \$500 million could be applied to the uses I have suggested. Of course there would be other savings brought about by reduced need for expensive equipment, such as landing ships, and so on, for which at present we have to pay. That would be reduced by a certain proportion.

**Mr. Crouse:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak briefly on the minister's estimates presently before the house. In his opening remarks he used, in effect, these words: The fact that our progress toward a completely unified force is well in advance of what might be hoped for reflects the spirit of enthusiasm in our task which has been undertaken. It is evident, Mr. Chairman, that this spirit of enthusiasm is not shared by the enlisted personnel of our armed forces as evidenced by the manner in which they are presently forsaking the services. I would say to the minister that his

program has not been one of integration, but one of interruption or, as my colleague suggests, one of disintegration. We have had interruption of the planned program in the navy. We have had interruption of personnel enlistment. We have had interruption of the role of the Royal Canadian Air Force, as the supporter of Canada's mobile defence force. I believe that Canadians generally are beginning to wonder just what is happening in our defence department.

For example, no keel has been laid for a service vessel since the minister introduced what is commonly called in Nova Scotia the "Hellyer plan". He has yet to produce one practical alternative for defence in mine warfare. He started a program to cut back personnel, which snowballed to the extent that our services are now suffering from manning problems. As a result we see him introducing a re-enlistment bonus program. I am pleased to note this, because I would point out to the minister that this was proposed by the Progressive Conservative party when we met at Moncton, prior to the election of 1965. We are happy to endorse this. I think it will be helpful. I am glad to see that the minister has adopted in one of his policies something previously advocated by Progressive Conservatives.

Under the economical guidance of the minister the department made a decision to buy 125 improved versions of the Northrop CF-5. This, I understand, will be the R.C.A.F.'s new multipurpose aircraft which will be acquired at a cost of \$215 million to the Canadian taxpayers.

Just how good is this aircraft? In a recent exchange with the Associate Minister of National Defence in regard to this subject I learned that this aircraft is to be modified. Apparently there is need for a great many improvements. We are told that the United States defence department rejected this aircraft after carrying out extensive proving trials with a number of them. The faults listed were not all in keeping with Canada's international or intended role, for which purpose this aircraft is being bought.

The CF-5 is intended for deployment anywhere in the world in support of Canada's mobile defence forces. However, according to all reports it is difficult to refuel this aircraft in flight. Four of these aircraft made the trip from the United States to Iran, taking eight days in transit, with ten refuelling stops.