

National Defence Act Amendment

● (4:10 p.m.)

Crediters. Not at all. But we did discuss this debate and everybody found it horrible.

And the Conservatives are responsible for it because we have been ready to vote on this bill for two weeks now. If the bill is defeated, all right then, it will be defeated; if not, then it will pass.

It seems to me that under our democratic system we should at least have the privilege of taking a stand by voting in the house. The Conservatives are free to vote against Bill No. C-243. But as it is, they are preventing the house from voting on this matter, by going on with this marathon of speeches.

I sincerely think that I am now giving to Canada as a whole a true image of what is going on in parliament. This debate is disgusting to the people, costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to taxpayers and settles absolutely nothing. If the unification of the forces does not answer the purpose in ten years, it will still be time to change something.

We are neither angels nor saints. Legislation passed today can be amended in a year if it is not effective then.

The Canadian army is not now what it was in 1914-18. The means to fight are not the same as those which were used then. Everything has changed since 1914, even since the 1939-45 war. Weapons are not the same, means are not the same, systems of communication are not the same. Everything has changed, everything has evolved. Only the Conservatives are not following the times. They remain firmly seated in their place. They keep their conservatism: Let us keep outworn doctrines, obsolete methods, let us stand still; Let us show some stability. And what is the meaning of stability? To move neither forward nor backward, but to remain always at the same place? But this is exactly what the Conservatives are doing at the present time.

The hon. member is making fun of Canadians, he is showing a complete lack of concern for the Canadian taxpayer in trying to prolong the debate. Tomorrow he will shout "closure" when a motion is brought in to put an end to the debate.

Mr. Chairman, we are going to accept that closure, to muzzle those irresponsible members of the house. We are certainly going to vote in favour of it.

[*English*]

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Caouette: Certainly.

Mr. Churchill: Would the hon. member accept a question? A question now and again helps out a debater who is running short of ideas.

Mr. Hellyer: You could have used some yourself last night.

Mr. Churchill: In view of the really grave problem that the hon. member raised yesterday concerning the dairy industry, and the opportunity that was afforded the government to debate the matter in the house yesterday, was it not the fault of the government that we continued on the unification bill? Second, does the hon. member not realize that the Liberals, whom he so slavishly supports on every occasion, do not really want his assistance; otherwise they would have permitted the debate on the dairy industry yesterday?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, as for the first part of the question asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, I will say he is right. Yesterday, I believe, the Liberals dodged their responsibilities and I charge those of the province of Quebec—I can see some there—who were too scared yesterday, and it is very much in order to say this, to get up and stand for the farmers, for the milk producers of Canada. This I will repeat throughout the whole province of Quebec, and in any case the whole province knows about it.

I make an exception for those from Montreal who never saw a cow being milked in their lives and do not understand the dairy industry situation, but the others from the province of Quebec are responsible if the government's dairy policy is not more generous.

The second part of the question is to the effect that we have an understanding with the Liberals, to support them or to have them support us on another occasion; there is no question of that and there will never be any question of that. And the hon. member is very well aware that we have voted more often with his group against the government than for the government since 1962. It is a fact. We are not bound to the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre or to the Liberal members. The Liberal members from Quebec know that we are not bound to them. We are free. We can say whatever we like and we can vote as we see fit. But we want to vote in the best interests of the Canadian people.