

Interim Supply

the decisions of parliamentarians. I will now resume reading the article:

The appointment of General Allard and the replacement of Rear Admiral Landymore by Rear Admiral O'Brien, an Irish Catholic, has angered the defenders of the bastion.

The counter-revolution finally reached the House of Commons. Messrs. Landymore and Brock have been haunting the corridors of parliament for the last two days—

From October 20, but that continued until today.

—and they spend their evenings with Conservative members of parliament, engaged in perfecting a strategy to make the government retreat.

Even if it is sometimes painful to change at a single stroke the spirit of a body as closed as the Royal Canadian Navy, the Department of National Defence is quite determined to win the battle.

Heretofore, no French Canadian could make his way in the navy, but nobody ever decreed that the naval defence of this country was the exclusive privilege of Anglo-Saxons, explained our informant.

It is not by voting resolutions recognizing the equality between the two groups that Canada will come out of the current crisis uninjured, but by crushing reactionary forces in facts. We in the Defence Department are ready to do our part", concluded our informant.

Mr. Chairman, I read that article to refresh the memory of the house and to show where we stand in the discussion. We would like to add, for the information of the minister, that the time has come for Canada to become itself, to become Canadian, to assume its responsibilities and refuse to be led by its officials.

As I said, it hurts to cut the umbilical cord but the government has to do it, without heeding the complaints; a vote must be taken and the house will then be able to put an end to this senseless discussion.

If I tried to raise the screen behind which might be hidden the true reasons of this discussion, which has been raging far too long, it is only to inform the general public and show the true side of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. It is also to get the opposition to take part more frankly in the administration of the country's business. I hope it will understand, once and for all.

[English]

Mr. Gundlock: Mr. Chairman, earlier in this debate the Minister of National Defence forcefully asked us, "Do you want to hold up the cheques for civil servants and other government payments?" We have certainly no desire to do that, and that is my answer to him.

This whole debate seems to have centred around national defence. I do not pose as an

expert in any shape or form on national defence but there are some aspects of the question that affect the country as a whole. Even as a member from the prairies, and completely ignorant of the over-all aspect of national defence, I wonder why it is that the first to suffer is the navy.

We have tremendously long coast lines in Canada on both our Atlantic and Pacific shores and along what some of us still think of as the old northwest passage. In peacetime or in wartime our naval ships can be of great service to us. Even aside from their defence role, from the point of view of oceanography there is a part for them to play in exploration, and in this connection I point out what another country has achieved by using submarines for exploration work.

Mr. Hellyer: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Gundlock: Yes.

Mr. Hellyer: Is he aware that the navy is getting a larger percentage of the defence budget now than it did under the previous government? Is he aware that it has been getting more money in absolute terms for at least five years than it did during the previous five years and is getting a larger share of the research and development budget than the other forces combined?

Mr. Gundlock: Yes, Mr. Minister, I am aware of this but, as I said, I do not pose as an expert on this subject. What worries me is the reduction in naval personnel and in the number of ships that are in service. The cost is not the answer. Everything costs more these days. I am quite aware of the increased cost figure but what is more serious is the decrease in personnel and equipment. I do not know how one describes the equipment of the navy, but I use the word "bottoms". The last place that a cut should be made, whether in wartime or in peacetime, is the navy. It is the cut in personnel and equipment, the cut in what I call bottoms, that is worrying the Canadian people and disturbs me.

● (7:30 p.m.)

I have had some association with the army and to a small extent with the air force. I appreciate their problems. There is a real problem in the air force relating particularly to pilots. I should like to compliment the minister on his efforts to do something about that problem. I think perhaps he has, but much more needs to be done.