

*Committee on Defence Expenditure*

When New France was ceded to England, there were approximately sixty thousand French-speaking Canadians. There are now more than four million of them. This increase has been made possible by the respect we have held for our family and our religious traditions. These traditions of ours are dear to us because they are based on common sense and on the undeniable fact that a nation reaches its fullest maturity only if it shows respect for the fundamental cell of any society or any country, that is, the family, as one of my colleagues was saying a few moments ago.

An examination of the explanatory notes printed alongside the text of the bill the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has introduced shows that—

It merely transfers the hearing of divorce petitions, in the case of persons residing in these two provinces, from parliament to the Exchequer Court of Canada and it provides further that the said court shall hear such divorce cases only at Ottawa.

This is childish! It is well known that Ottawa is not far from Montreal, nor is it far from Quebec city. The adoption of such a bill would mean in principle the establishment of a divorce court for the province of Quebec on the border of that province.

I note that it is six o'clock and I end my remarks satisfied that I have prevented the passage of the bill.

(Text):

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour for private and public bills having expired, the house will resume at eight o'clock the business which was interrupted at five o'clock.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

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### AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

### DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

#### APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. St. Laurent for the appointment of a committee to examine defence expenditures and commitments, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Claxton, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Knowles.

**Mr. Adamson:** Mr. Speaker, before the debate adjourned at five o'clock for the house to consider private bills I was discussing the adequacy of our aircraft production, in view of the very special job which we as Canadians

had elected to do, and I was endeavouring to point out the problem of producing fighter and interceptor aircraft which would be effective against modern bombers.

My point, and I wish to repeat it, is that I believe these matters, technical though they may be, involved though they may be, difficult of solution though they may be, are subjects with which this parliament, and particularly the defence committee, should deal. I think it was a defect of the set-up of the committee last year and, particularly in view of the amendment moved by the Minister of National Defence, more so this year, that the defence committee will be dealing with matters of expenditures, and more particularly with the misappropriation of sums of money. I am of the opinion that the job of a defence committee is to see to it that the defences of this country are adequate. We represent the people of Canada; we in this parliament have a responsibility which we cannot delegate to experts or others. While under the British system of government and opposition the executive must take responsibility for the decisions made, nevertheless those decisions and the reasons for them are a subject on which we, and particularly the committee, must share responsibility and must be informed.

In the United Kingdom there is a device by which a technical member of the armed services reports not only to the committee but directly to the cabinet on matters of a technical and operational nature which the British government has discovered is too much for the minister who has the political responsibility in the house to deal with. These questions which I am bringing up tonight are technical questions which should be dealt with on the technical level. It is unfair and unwise to expect the minister to have all the answers to all these questions.

We now come to the question of whether members of the defence services should speak, where they should speak and how they should speak. I believe that under our system, flexible as it is, there is a place for the technical members of the defence services to speak on these problems, and that is in the committee. It is for that reason that I have raised the question of the effectiveness of our air protection.

To deal with it in detail, these are the sort of questions which are asked me and for which I have no answer. My constituents feel that there should be some answers to them. With regard to the Avro I was asked: How seriously has the production lag of the