

**Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Minister of Agriculture):** I am so experienced that I will undertake to draw this question to the attention of the minister immediately on his return from his duties in London.

**Mr. Olson:** May I ask the Acting Minister of Agriculture how long that will be?

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS

##### PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF LAURENTIAN SINGERS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax):** May I direct a question to the Secretary of State, who is not afraid to answer anything. Will the hon. lady who is in charge of our centennial celebrations ask the centennial commission to consider inviting other non-Canadian groups as fine as the Laurentian Singers, now in the public gallery—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. McCleave:** —to join in this Canadian celebration?

**Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Secretary of State):** I thank the hon. gentleman for the compliment, and I should like to join him in welcoming these visitors.

##### INQUIRY AS TO APPLICATION OF BILINGUAL PREMIUM POLICY

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Auguste Choquette (Lotbinière):** I have a question which I trust is in order. After consulting with my very good Conservative friend from York-Humber (Mr. Cowan)—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Choquette:** —I thought I would direct the following question to a minister of great competence, the Minister of National Revenue. Is the government prepared to apply the 7 per cent premium policy to bilingual employees of the House of Commons?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board):** This is a question which I believe is more appropriately addressed to you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

#### National Defence Act Amendment

##### NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT AMENDMENT

##### AMALGAMATION OF NAVY, ARMY AND AIR FORCE

The house resumed from Tuesday, April 18, consideration in committee of Bill No. C-243 to amend the National Defence Act and other acts in consequence thereof—Mr. Hellyer—Mr. Batten in the chair.

**The Chairman:** When the committee rose last evening, clause 2 was under consideration.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** It had been my hope that it would not have been necessary to participate again in this debate. I say this because as last week concluded it appeared the minister intended to spend a quiet week end considering some of the recommendations which had been made by members of the opposition, so that when the present week began it would be possible to arrange a reasonable compromise along lines which are usually followed by parliamentary institutions in a desire to resolve difficulties created by controversial measures of the kind now before us.

Unfortunately the attitude of the government has hardened instead of softened and the opposition is now faced with the inevitability of closure. This it seems to me is the antithesis of the process of parliamentary discussion, having regard to the nature of the bill now before the house. We have not moved beyond clause 2 in our consideration for the very good reason that that clause is revolutionary in its implications and in the effect it will have on our troops, on the defence of this nation and on the discharge of our obligations under international commitments. Some speakers have indicated that clause 2, which is the heart of the matter, is so revolutionary that it can only be compared with the great leaps forward which are taken by totalitarian régimes from time to time.

It was the irresponsible attitude on the part of the minister, supported, obviously by other members of the government—because no one on that side has disagreed with his viewpoint on this subject—which caused senior officers to retire prematurely rather than become identified with such a policy with respect to national defence and external affairs obligations undertaken by this nation.

I say it is customary among parliamentary institutions to reach some kind of consensus or compromise when there are such fundamental differences of opinion, and I enter the