

Inquiries of the Ministry

to answer my question of last Tuesday as to whether he is proposing a further inquiry, or whether he intends to propose implementation of the principal recommendations of that report this session?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): I am sorry, but I am not, Mr. Speaker. The matter will be placed before my colleagues in the cabinet at a very early date, however.

SHIPPING**NOVA SCOTIA—ABANDONMENT OF TRAWLER AFTER FIRE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (Queens-Lunenburg): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence, and in view of the fact that I did not have time to give him notice, perhaps he may take this as notice. When the fishing trawler *Karen B* recently caught fire about 100 miles east of Halifax and was abandoned by her crew, why did H.M.C.S. *Gatineau* leave the burned out *Karen B* before arrival of the Halifax based tug *Foundation Vigilant*?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Chair has taken notice of the question and suggests that it be put on the order paper.

Mr. Crouse: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the fact that this ship was left abandoned on the high seas has resulted in the hull being claimed by a foreign country for salvage against the insurance company, the agents and owners. The fact that the Canadian destroyer abandoned this ship has resulted in this situation. I believe this is a most urgent and important question because we could have another burned out hull on the ocean tonight, and we do not want to see this practice followed in future.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has referred specifically in his question to an incident which has already occurred and about which I assume not very much can be done at this time. The second part of his question, if I interpret it correctly in the way he poses it, now becomes hypothetical.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**INQUIRY AS TO FURTHER REDUCTION IN STRENGTH OF ARMED FORCES**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I directed a question [Mr. Bell (Carleton).]

to the Prime Minister in the absence of the Minister of National Defence and the Associate Minister of National Defence. Today I shall direct it to the Minister of National Defence. Is it a fact that there is under consideration a further 10 per cent reduction in the effective strength of Canada's defence forces so as to keep up with the present rate of recruitment, and in view of the forces being under strength?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker; but I suggest it is obvious, even to my hon. friend, that if escalation of wages and emoluments in Canada continues at the present rate, and the defence budget remains stable as has been planned, it will be necessary in the years ahead to reduce the number of people and increase their productivity in order to provide adequate compensation for the work being performed.

Mr. Lambert: As a supplementary question, from the nature of the answer I take it the minister will agree that such a reduction is under contemplation, or is being considered?

Mr. Hellyer: I do not think that is a fair interpretation, Mr. Speaker. I think some reduction may take place, but whatever reduction there is, it will be through normal attrition because, as my hon. friend knows, during the next three or four years a large number of world war II veterans will be leaving the forces, and it will be difficult to maintain fully adequate strength to perform all tasks without planning on a reduction.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): As a supplementary question, based on the minister's statement which he made just a minute ago, do I understand a ceiling has been placed on the amount of money which will be expended for defence purposes, and that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) will not give the Minister of National Defence some leeway in protecting the security of this country and fulfilling our obligations to NATO?

Mr. Hellyer: The amount for the current year is stated in the estimates, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Royal): As a further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of National Defence how one measures the productivity of a member of the armed forces.