

*Interim Supply*

from many of them. Since servicemen are forbidden to speak out, usually it is their wives who call us or write letters to us. I can assure the minister that his statement is just not correct. There are a great number of people on the lower decks of the navy who are very concerned about the issue of unification.

The statement has also been made that the burgeoning economic situation in Canada today, is driving people from the services. This is not so either, Mr. Chairman. What is happening to these people, as they will quite frankly tell you, is that they fear what will happen to their careers. Nothing has ever been sufficiently spelled out to them to let them know where they are going so that they can look ahead five years and think what promotion they will have at that time, with added security for their wives and children. I do make that point in all sincerity.

I make this appeal to the minister. I know it will be difficult for him to do so but it would be of immense service to the country and he would get more marks for it than anybody else if he would consider the committee approach to this matter. As I say, if his ideas are as sound as he says they are, no one will ever take them away from him.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, although I am distressed about the attacks made on such people as Admiral Brock, who sits above us, or Admiral Landymore, men who were out where the action was in the North Atlantic during the second world war, you can never take the red badge of courage from a man who has earned it. No words can ever do that. All you do in trying to do so is to cut yourself down a little bit more in size and in dignity.

Would not the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence agree that it would be better to have a national defence policy hewn out by members of all parties? Perhaps some of us would disagree on various points, but at least we would be satisfied that we had been given the chance to put forward ideas as reasonable men and to have those ideas treated as reasonable men would expect them to be treated. Surely every one of us in this house has heard a thoughtful remark that has suddenly changed an opinion. That has happened to me a hundred times and I am better for it as well as for having listened to other opinions.

● (9:20 p.m.)

I suggest that the minister could accomplish much by referring this matter to the give and take of the committee system. When I have

[Mr. McCleave.]

seen the defence committee in action its members have appeared to be a really hardworking crowd. They were not being fractious or political in their views. They were trying to judge what is a paramount issue, national defence.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Chairman, I listened with great interest to at least part of the remarks of my hon. and genial friend from Halifax. I am sorry I missed that part which apparently was devoted to myself, but I shall have the pleasure of reading those remarks in *Hansard*.

I was at a luncheon today where I heard what I thought was a very amusing story which perhaps is not irrelevant to this debate, even if it may be considered irrelevant to what I am going to say. The story was told about a small factory in Great Britain with 100 employees, which under the urgings of the shop stewards and with the encouragement of management, had decided to work out a voluntary medical scheme to cover employees. They got all the workers to sign the applications but one; 99 out of 100 signed. But they could not get the hundredth signature. The hundredth man was a sturdy, rugged individualist who would have nothing to do with this collective, voluntary scheme. His fellow workers and the union leaders tried to get him to join but they failed. Finally the manager said he would try his hand and he called in the worker and he said: "Tom, why is it that you will not sign up with the other 99?" Tom said, "Why should I"? And the manager said, "Because if you do not, you will be fired tomorrow". Tom picked up a pen and signed at once and the manager said: "Now, Tom, why did you keep us waiting for two or three weeks before you signed?" And Tom said: "This is the first time the issue has been made clear to me".

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

**Mr. Pearson:** There have been 91 speakers in this discussion on interim supply—at least, there were 91. I think I am the ninety fifth or ninety sixth speaker. I doubt my ability to make this issue clear for the first time to the members of the house but I shall do my best.

**Mr. Starr:** Try.

**Mr. Pearson:** I will do my best, Mr. Chairman, to make hon. gentlemen on the other side happy by trying to persuade them to agree that the time has come to finish this debate on interim supply and get on with the business of parliament if for no other reason