

Minister of National Defence to the Canadian army that with respect to staff officers and up, bilingualism was to be a promotional factor in that force?

Mr. Hellyer: That is a horse of an entirely different colour, Mr. Speaker, if I may say so. Bilingualism is a promotional factor. The more skilful people are and the more talent they have, the more useful they are to the armed forces and the more likely they are to be promoted. Certainly bilingualism is one of those factors which are taken into consideration.

Mr. Nielsen: One last supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to give the Minister that opportunity to explain. At the time I raised the issue several months ago with the Associate Minister—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a question would he please ask it. We are getting into a debate and not asking questions.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I was going to say that at the time I raised the original question with the Associate Minister—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Nielsen: —I asked—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member, being a distinguished lawyer, knows as well as I do how to frame his questions without placing argument before the question.

Mr. Nielsen: I was merely laying the groundwork, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of National Defence or his colleague, the Associate Minister, a question which was not answered at the time the Minister of Public Works held the office of Associate Minister. Has the same order now been extended to cover the two other armed forces, the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force, on the level of staff officers and above?

Mr. Hellyer: I would have to check the reference to an order. I do not think there is any such thing as an order. I think it has been circulated that amongst promotional factors bilingualism is one, which it should be, and certainly so far as I am concerned this factor would apply to all three of the armed forces. It is an important factor, but whether this has been put on a piece of paper I could not say and I do not think it is really germane.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Georges Valade (St. Mary): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Since the Minister has said that bilingualism is a factor in promotion I will put my question to him in French.

[*Translation*]

Could the Minister of National Defence tell us whether the word "nonsense" he used with regard to bilingualism in the armed forces actually reflects the opinion of the present Liberal government? Does he mean that it is nonsensical to be bilingual in the armed forces?

[*Text*]

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, the word "nonsense" was carefully applied to the rumour which was being circulated and which was picked up by my friend opposite.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I think the nonsense was supplied by the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. While I enjoy these interesting exchanges, nevertheless it is my duty to point out that questions should be questions and not arguments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence.

Could he tell us whether—

[*Text*]

Mr. Skoreyko: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is it the same question?

Mr. Skoreyko: It is a question of privilege. The Minister of National Defence has charged me with circulating a rumour in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

An hon. Member: There go the trained seals.

Mr. Skoreyko: Eventually and at the proper time I am prepared to provide and will provide the evidence necessary to convince the Minister of National Defence that what I am saying is fact. I simply ask is he aware of a recent promotion in Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, namely of the general manager of that corporation in Ottawa; and what are his qualifications? Would he answer that?