

National Defence Act Amendment

why did the minister bother calling the committee together? Surely that was simply a waste of time. The Minister of National Defence is the same man who boasted when on this side of the house that when he became minister he would set up a special defence committee to hear evidence and expert opinion. The Minister of Transport, I am sure with the support of the Minister of National Defence, said that the opinions of these men would be worthless because we have never had unification. Let me draw an appropriate analogy. Apparently the evidence and expert opinion of a top medical practitioner would be worthless in respect of a new treatment because it was new and had never been used before. That is the pith of the argument used by that intelligent Minister of Transport and, of course, endorsed by the Minister of National Defence. If what they suggest is true, then the defence committee wasted its time.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Let me pause here for a few minutes without taking too much time of the committee—and I am sure this is relevant. I have come to the conclusion, in my 10 years as a member of parliament, that in many cases—I do not say all, because I want to be fair—committees of the House of Commons are a farce because the government controls committees. I will draw an analogy. I know more about the general subject of committees, because I was not a member of the defence committee, but I have read the reports and will quote from them. Take the committee on northern affairs. That committee heard evidence for a week. The government members were in the majority and were hand-picked by the minister. They whitewashed the whole picture as far as our national parks are concerned. This sort of thing went on in the defence committee and goes on in every committee in the House of Commons. Hon. members opposite talk about the great intellectuals on that side of the house and how they will improve our committees system. They know as well as I do the extent to which politics are played in our committees.

An hon. Member: Committees are loaded with government members.

Mr. Woolliams: An hon. member says committees are loaded. They are loaded in more ways than one. The government members on committees whitewash the reports of committees. If there are politics in the subject before the committee, it is swept under the rug. I would think that the hon. member for

Medicine Hat, because of his length of service, experience as a parliamentarian and as a rules expert, would have seen through this subterfuge. Listen to what the Minister of Transport had to say, as reported at page 14667 of *Hansard*:

It is like every step forward, and I believe this is a step forward; it is a step into something in which nobody has any experience. I suggest that generally we are apt to get the most imaginative views from young people who have a sense of adventure and not from people who fought the last war—

I say to the minister that I have a great deal of respect for our youth, those in colleges and universities, and always have, because the strength obtained through knowledge is the strength of the nation. I recall that in 1935 to 1939 the Oxford Group wandered around the western world preaching and selling peace like insurance agents selling insurance policies. One by one the freedoms of the western world were drained to the depths by these people. If it had not been for Winston Churchill and other great leaders of the western world I would not have had the opportunity tonight to express my views, which this government does not want to hear anyway. I agree with a former minister of national defence of our government, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, when he said, as reported at page 14667 of *Hansard*:

I am fed up with this stuff from non-combatant people who are making fun of fighting men.

I am a red-blooded Canadian and I am glad the former minister of national defence had this to say and put it on the record of *Hansard* for others to read. He had this to say about the great debate in which we are engaged—and it is a great debate:

Mr. Churchill: I thank the minister very much. But when I spoke in rather a personal fashion I was not speaking for myself, because I do not care much what is said around here. However, I am disturbed about the attacks that are made upon men who served much better than I did in both wars. People are making scurrilous remarks about them, talking about them as being out of date and all the rest of it. They are attempting to pretend that these men were not good servants of their country, and that is what I object to.

That is what I object to in reference to this debate. I object to the standard of debate that we have seen from the front benches, the executive, of this government. In my opinion the speech of the Minister of Transport is, in plain, ordinary English, a disgrace. I am sorry to see the Minister of National Defence endorse that type of drivel, particularly in view of the ambitions he had, about which I have read in many periodicals in the last few