

Committee on Defence Expenditure

It makes a great difference.

The amendment of the Minister of National Defence was to instruct the committee—

—initially to give priority in their examination—

—to the Currie report. On the other hand, the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes) moved instead that Mr. Currie should be—

—authorized to continue his inquiries and conduct a similar investigation—

—during the sittings of the committee. That subamendment was declared out of order.

Then, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), a C.C.F. member, moved:

—to give consideration to the desirability of recommending that Mr. Currie be asked to conduct a further inquiry into any other expenditures and commitments covered by the terms of this resolution.

Both subamendments are wholly *ejusdem farinae*—to the same effect. The Progressive Conservatives and members of the C.C.F. do not seem to desire that Mr. Currie shall appear before the committee to substantiate his allegations of wrong doing in the army. Either they are afraid to have him as a witness or they realize that there is not enough already in the report to justify their commitments.

Mr. Wright: The police prosecutions have substantiated them.

Mr. Pouliot: That is the opinion of the hon. gentleman. We may differ with him. He may be right and I may be right. He is right in name but I may be right in fact.

Mr. Speaker, I have read with great concern the last report of the R.C.M.P. in which it is said that criminality has increased by 43 per cent in one year. That is very bad. Human nature is the same in the army as in civilian life—no better. No certificate of good behaviour is required by the army and the toughest guys are often the best soldiers. The responsibilities of parliament and the duties of members to control expenditure are necessary things in parliamentary life, but one should not lose any sense of proportion. Now, according to the Currie report, and if what he says is right, the total amount that has been wasted would be \$50,000 out of \$2 billion. That means—

Mr. Fleming: That is not what he said.

Mr. Pouliot: Well, that is the calculation that has been made by most of the speakers. That means \$5 for each \$200,000 of expenditure; \$1 for each \$40,000 of expenditure; 1 cent for each \$400 of expenditure; and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a cent for each \$100 of expenditure.

An hon. Member: Peanuts.

[Mr. Pouliot.]

Mr. Fleming: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Pouliot: Surely.

Mr. Fleming: Will the hon. member, in the light of what he has just said, favour the house with his comment on this expression in Mr. Currie's report as found at page 714 of *Hansard*?

My view would be, however, that the generally lax administrative situation would give rise to waste and inefficiency far more costly in loss than that covered by actual dishonesty.

Would the hon. member favour us with his comment on that pungent statement in Mr. Currie's report?

Mr. Pouliot: My comment would be this, and it dates back to a long time ago. One day in this house I said that the brass hats were mummies wrapped up in red tape. To my great humiliation the prime minister of the time asked me to withdraw. It may apply to Mr. Currie.

Mr. Fleming: He is not a brass hat.

Mr. Pouliot: What the hon. gentleman has said shows clearly the importance of the subamendment sponsored by the Minister of National Defence, to bring Mr. Currie—

Mr. Knowles: Mine is the subamendment.

Mr. Pouliot: Yes, but the first subamendment was by the Minister of National Defence to give priority—

Mr. Fleming: That was the amendment.

Mr. Pouliot: —to the report before the committee. Then, when the motion is accepted or is voted on, the hon. gentleman and all other members of the committee will have full opportunity to get some evidence from Mr. Currie, and to be informed about the total amount of the money which has been wasted, according to what he has said. Until then and until his figures are checked and corrected, if necessary, it will be impossible for anyone, on the face of the report, to say what it is. But \$50,000—

Mr. Fleming: What does the hon. member say it is?

Mr. Brooks: He was just speaking in respect of Petawawa.

Mr. Fleming: The hon. member has stated there was a figure put on—

Mr. Pouliot: I would ask the hon. member not to be hurt by what I have said. He may have a great surprise when he has the opportunity to hear the evidence that will be given by Mr. Currie before the committee. I hope that he will get full information. Undoubtedly he will do so. Then he will