

Supply—National Defence

At least our good friends the Liberals have been consistent; they did nothing about those families and they are doing nothing about the 25 families who are being left to suffer the life to which the government of this country has condemned them.

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Chairman, I must say as a new member sitting here tonight I was amazed at the revelation of how the mood of the house can change so quickly in respect of what seemed to me a rather insignificant detail. Let me suggest that the expansion of this base involves more than 25 families, with all due respect to the hon. member for Kootenay West. However, with respect also to my colleague the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, exerting some of the independence that he counselled the other side of the house to have, and knowing that I have more Irish in my blood than a lot of people in Shannon, let alone the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre suggest that there is a third way out of this morass that we now find ourselves in, which I think would meet with the approval of some of the members in the back benches.

Perhaps the minister and his associate could assure the house that nothing further will be done in respect of this expropriation until the whole matter is considered and studied by the committee, which is where this matter should be examined in detail. With that type of assurance, that the merit of this proposed expansion and the dispossession or displacement of the 25 families will be studied by the committee, I think this whole matter could be settled. If that kind of assurance could be given, I suggest it would meet with the objections raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre and the hon. member for Yukon, so that we could study the suggestions and detail in committee and get on now with the debate.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, I will give the undertaking that nothing will be done for several weeks and until the committee has had an opportunity to look at the situation, if that meets with the general wish of hon. members.

I must point, out, however, that as minister I have no control over the committee or the order of business it undertakes. We will undertake to make witnesses available on this subject as soon as the committee desires. On that basis we will be glad to give that undertaking.

[Mr. Herridge.]

Mr. Churchill: Will the minister go a little further and give us the assurance that nothing further will be done with regard to the 25 families involved in the camp Valcartier expansion until one year from today, and only then after the matter is brought again before the House of Commons for consideration?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre should take a lesson in moderation from his young colleague who is trying to be helpful and reasonable. Those are two qualities which my hon. friend could use in much greater abundance.

I have offered to meet the suggestion that was made by the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings because I felt it was reasonable. I cannot agree with the suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre because I feel it to be unreasonable. All night he has suggested that because for 50 years we have not needed a range capability at Valcartier there should be no change. As much as he would like me to say that the procedures of the last 50 years will not be changed for all time, I am not in a position to do so. As a matter of fact, there are changes that have to be made and I think that the expansion of the facilities at camp Valcartier to provide adequate training exercise ground for the units stationed there is essential in the interests of national defence.

An hon. Member: Why send this to a committee?

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I am not easily intimidated by the clacking of the other side of the house. I listened to the sage advice of the Minister of National Defence. The suggestion that this matter be referred to a committee is fine, but what will then happen when the committee brushes it aside or perhaps does not even consider it because, as the minister said, it might not come before that committee? The committee cannot make a decision. It can only talk about the situation, examine the facts and look at all the particulars, but it cannot make an effective decision. The decision can only be made by the minister and his cabinet, and that is why we are discussing the issue here rather than in a committee.

● (9:50 p.m.)

If the minister will promise that this matter after discussion in committee will be brought back into the house for the approval