

*Supply—National Defence*

press reports and announcements of the sweeping reductions to be made. No official word was given to the individuals; they had to sit and wait until the fateful letter arrived giving them three months to clear out, and in some cases less. Some received their letters while serving overseas. The individuals chosen had no chance to plan ahead or to begin the organization necessary to obtain employment. Servicemen who wear the uniform often live for years in isolated bases, often in public housing. They are divorced from the normal way of life and have a real problem in readjusting.

One of the basic reasons for the low morale today is the insecurity caused by an uncertain future. The serviceman never knows when he may receive a "you are through" letter. Servicemen knew that many of the early retirements were unnecessary and that normal retirements within three years would have reduced the forces by the amount claimed necessary by the Minister of National Defence. They also knew that the savings claimed by the department were just for press releases. They believe that the personnel selections were made by the officers of the minister and not by the personnel staff of the services. It is my opinion that the average military person, whom I have come into contact with, feels no real pride in belonging to the military forces of Canada. The average serviceman feels he has lost the respect of his fellow Canadians, and believes they have no interest in his well-being.

The huge amount of propaganda put out by the Department of National Defence prior to integration has convinced the serviceman that he is nothing but a football to be kicked about by Liberal politicians. Today servicemen badly need a new minister to trumpet their worth and to give them pride in serving their country.

I have noticed that in recent years the servicemen's votes have been predominantly Liberal. After the treatment they have received from this minister they now wonder why they voted this way. I agree that they are privileged to vote as they wish, but I noted some difference in the last election and look forward to seeing a further change in the next, whenever that may be.

In my opinion, in the minister's remarks at the outset of this debate he overlooked the most important factor in any institution: the personnel, the human factor.

To prove some of my statements, Mr. Chairman, let me say that during the recent

election campaign, when the minister was good enough to come to speak in Trenton on behalf of my friend the Liberal candidate, the attitude of the servicemen to the minister was clearly shown by the heckling he received from the members of the armed forces. I am sure that night will linger in his memory for some time. Some of the servicemen had to be removed by service police.

**Mr. Hellyer:** That is not true.

**Mr. Churchill:** He says that is not true.

**Mr. Hellyer:** It is not true.

**Mr. Grills:** Will the minister come down to Trenton and tell me that it is not true? I could say a little more about this if he likes. I have knowledge from reliable sources that the minister did not intend to come to Trenton. About ten days prior to his coming to Trenton I had the privilege of speaking in the same hall in which he spoke and I am sure that he was drafted to come down in an attempt to save the situation which was deteriorating fast for the Liberal candidate. He came on short notice and made the best he could of the situation.

Servicemen are now so discouraged that they are writing letters to members of parliament—I have some on my desk today—asking how to get out of the services. They are completely discouraged. On November 26th—or it may be the 28th; I would have to check the date—a new policy was brought in whereby servicemen must wait six months before they can be released. If these men are happy in the service and are not getting out in great numbers, will the minister tell us why that policy was brought in? Many servicemen are asking to get out at this time, so many that it has become alarming.

Mr. Chairman, I could say a great deal more about this situation but I do not think I should take up any more time of the committee or embarrass the minister further. However, it is high time he came down from his ivory tower and changed his arrogant attitude towards service personnel in this country, or resign in favour of someone who does appreciate their worth in the service of Canada.

**The Chairman:** Shall vote No. 1 carry?

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** Mr. Chairman, I want to take a little time of the committee to discuss some aspects of the very important questions of national defence covered by the estimates now before us. May I preface my