

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the only basis on which we could know the opposition's position is the way its members voted unanimously in the committee and recommended this bill.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, the point of order which Your Honour raised is quite correct, but I submit I am entitled to ask general questions without going into details of the bill. I ask the Prime Minister, is he now prepared to bring the bill forward for immediate discussion so that we can settle once and for all whether the autocratic tendencies to stifle criticism of the Prime Minister or the views of the taxpayers are prevail?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that the question as asked is not in order and should not be asked.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. member for Prince Albert.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION TO ARMED FORCES FOR MANNER IN WHICH PROMINENT PERSONS GUARDED

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I feel sure that the question I wish to direct to the Minister of National Defence will receive the support of all hon. members who have had members of the armed forces present at their homes during recent weeks. While yet unconvinced that the course was necessary I would ask the minister, on behalf of all who had members of the forces at their homes, to convey to the Canadian Armed Forces thanks and appreciation for the manner in which all ranks have discharged their responsibility beyond the actual call of duty and to let them know that their efficiency and courtesy during difficult days and under uncomfortable circumstances have done honour to them and to our country.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the right hon. gentleman having raised the question and I should like to say that I will be most happy to convey his commendation to the forces. Perhaps no compliment to our armed forces could be conveyed to them more felicitously than in the words of the right hon. gentleman and I shall be very pleased to pass it on.

ARMED FORCES—ANNOUNCEMENT OF PAY INCREASES—ENCOURAGEMENT OF RE-ENLISTMENT

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. If you will permit me, I should like to thank him for the news with respect to pay raises for the armed forces which we heard this morning. While we

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welcome the raises, I should like to ask whether the minister could indicate to the House what special considerations were given in the structure of the pay increases to encourage a higher rate of re-enlistment?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that effective October 1, 1970, there will be an increase of 6.06 per cent in the salary of members of the armed forces of the rank of colonel and below. Some of the specific provisions will be with regard to those specialties in which there is a special need to keep competitive with the private area. I refer particularly to some aircrew and airborne staff, and also with regard to sea and air duty. There will be increases in the allowances available in those areas to assure that those particular specialties do not fall behind.

Mr. Forrestall: Because it is quite apparent that the minister has not addressed himself to the question of incentive bonuses, can the minister indicate to the House if this current series of pay increases is in any way designed to narrow the disparity that exists between pay increases to the armed forces over the last eight or ten years compared with pay increases to the Public Service over the same period?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the hon. member's conclusion. I would point out that particularly in the case of certain groups such as air crew and submariners and also other specialist tradesmen there has been a specific increase beyond the increases made available to the forces generally. With regard to the general position of the armed forces, the government has had under review for the period of the past year a series of proposals to try, in the first place, to bring the manner of remunerating the armed forces into close comparison both with the Public Service generally and with the private sector. We hope to have this review completed in time for the increases which might come into effect in the next calendar year. At that time efforts will be made to put them on a comparable basis.

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AUDITOR GENERAL

REPORTED DISSATISFACTION OF STAFF MEMBERS WITH SALARIES

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. Is the minister aware of reports of dissatisfaction among the staff of the Auditor General which reportedly resulted in a meeting of members of the staff this week over their present wage and salary scales? If so, would he look into this matter which it seems to me may further handicap the work of the Auditor General?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the question of the administrative arrangements governing the staff of the Auditor General was quite extensively investigated last spring by the Public Accounts Committee and the record of their proceedings