

Supply—National Defence

the force in connection with which the Prime Minister won the Nobel Peace Prize. I refer to the role that Canada should be playing in the peace keeping field. If our efforts in this direction have been successful and the aims accomplished, I believe the minister has an obligation to say so. If we do not intend to carry out this role, we should also be told this.

● (10:00 p.m.)

That these exchanges and the reluctance to answer very simple questions lead to a great deal of extended debate that is not necessary. The minister should be fair enough to realize that many hon. members who have spoken in the last few days have probably, like myself, received reports from a number of acquaintances in the services who believe that morale is not high and who have reason for so believing. Many of them left the forces because they were not sure they were going to have a lifetime career in the service; they believed this was no longer possible. I believe these complaints are legitimate and I strongly suggest that the minister consider them with at least some degree of respect.

I do not wish to hold up these estimates any longer but I do believe the minister should tell the country whether we are equipping ourselves for the peace keeping role that we hope to fill or are doing exactly what the minister criticized the former government for, and for which they criticized their predecessors in government, namely being like the tail on the dog and being wagged by the joint chiefs of staff who had a pre-conceived idea in regard to wars that took place a long while ago, and were not really willing to make changes. If this is the situation, I wish the minister would tell the committee, and if it is not the situation I think the minister should tell us this also.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, I think the type of forces being developed are just exactly those required to meet even more effectively in the future any commitments that might be made on them, ranging from the whole spectrum of reinforcing the central front to peace keeping activities. This is something that was brought out in our United Nations peace keeping activities in order to meet the requirements, whatever they were. These requirements have been different in every single case in which we have participated in United Nations peace keeping activities. The reason we have been able to carry them out so successfully is that we have

[Mr. Peters.]

such well balanced troops and equipment. The high mobility of our troops will enable us to carry out these activities on an even more effective basis.

I know it is ten o'clock, Mr. Chairman, but I wonder whether the committee would consider passing item 1 tonight on the understanding that when we reach item 15 I will answer any questions of concern to any individual member of the committee.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall vote No. 1 carry?

Mr. Churchill: No, Mr. Chairman. There is no great haste. The minister has brought this upon himself with his 45-minute speech tonight and his violent attack on the hon. member for Calgary North.

Progress reported.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

HEALTH AND WELFARE—MEDICARE—INQUIRY AS TO LEGISLATION

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we all noted with interest this afternoon the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) that nothing would please him better than to be here at ten o'clock tonight. I understand that he is busy and not able to be here. I trust that the minister who will reply for him will be in a position to give a clear answer to the question which I have posed on two or three occasions.

The question I asked the Prime Minister last Thursday, which was not allowed on orders of the day and is therefore on the late show for tonight, had to do with the statement made on two or three occasions by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) to the effect that medicare payments would begin on July 1, 1967. In the light of that assertion by the minister, therefore, I have asked the government to give us an indication as to the date by which medicare legislation would have to be enacted in order to make this possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me make quite clear what it is I am trying to get at. I am not posing a legal question or, as Mr. Speaker suggested last Thursday, seeking an interpretation of a statute. After all, there is no statute yet with respect to this matter. What