

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership

provincial jurisdiction the federal government already had all the information it needed in order to bring forward the kind of enabling legislation which would permit parliament to pay sums of money to any province which wanted to set up a medical care insurance plan, and leave it to the individual province concerned to determine the conditions and the type of plan it was ready to offer. I submit that the appointment of the commission has been merely a stall to avoid the necessity of facing this issue.

Action is needed with regard to agriculture. We were told this afternoon that the eastern farmers are to have feed grain. We were told there is to be a two-price system for wheat. These proposals are certainly not before us at the present time and nothing has been suggested as a remedy for one of the main complaints of farmers of every kind in this country, namely that all across Canada they find costs increasing while, on the average, the prices they receive are going down.

I see Your Honour getting a little restless and I would therefore suggest we call it six o'clock.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, when we adjourned for the dinner recess I was in the process of giving some of the reasons why we in the New Democratic party feel that the government and the official opposition have failed to give the kind of decisive leadership that will enable this country to cope with the major problems confronting Canada. I was just going to discuss the question of the acquisition of nuclear arms and the government's failure to give us any clear and decisive statement on this matter.

The government's constant delay in making a final decision ought not to obscure the fact that they have been moving steadily, step by step, toward the acquisition of nuclear arms. We have the Prime Minister's statement this afternoon that negotiations would continue with the United States so that nuclear arms would be available for the Bomarc and the Voodoos. They may not physically be accepted into Canada until they are needed, but they will be available. From the statements which have been made in the last week or ten days there is no doubt that nuclear arms will be acquired by our NATO forces.

Mention has been made of the ministerial meeting of NATO in May. However, I would

[Mr. Douglas.]

remind the house of the statement of the former minister of national defence, one which has never been repudiated by the Prime Minister, to the effect that at the May ministerial meeting of NATO, should NATO reaffirm a nuclear role for Canada, then Canada will equip her NATO forces to discharge her obligations.

Reference has been made to the Nassau agreement. It seems to me that this is sheer window dressing. There is no likelihood of France's agreeing to making NATO a multi-lateral nuclear power. I would further add that making NATO a multilateral nuclear power is certainly one of the most serious ways of increasing the membership of the nuclear club.

I say that the government has not given us a clear statement. If the Prime Minister or any member of the government had come into this house this afternoon and told us that the government was prepared to negotiate Canada out of that nuclear role in NORAD and in NATO I think we would have been able to take a different position with reference to this whole question of confidence in the government. However, they have not done so. We feel that the only difference between the Conservative government and the Liberal opposition is that the Liberal opposition are prepared to accept nuclear weapons now, whereas the government is delaying the final acceptance of them but is undoubtedly committed in that direction. As was said by the former minister of national defence, it probably means a delay of only some four months.

In supporting a motion of no confidence in the government we in this party wish to make one thing perfectly clear. This does not involve a vote of confidence in the official opposition. They speak of decisiveness. One has only to look at the amendment which they moved. They have refused to take a definite stand of any sort on any question of policy. They have refused to put forth any constructive proposal. Instead, they have contented themselves with negative criticism. The fact is, of course, that the Liberal party have never taken a stand. They always believe that a moving object is harder to hit. They are in favour of medicare in Ontario; and in Saskatchewan, where the government are trying to put medicare into operation, they fought it tooth and nail almost to the point of civil insurrection. In the province of Ontario they are in favour of progressive labour legislation and in Newfoundland, under a Liberal government, they have the most repressive labour legislation that has been passed in this country in half a century. The same thing is true of their stand in reference to nuclear arms.

An hon. Member: But you are going to vote with them.