

Interim Supply

government, but in the eyes of the world we must look a complete, but somewhat unimportant, satellite of the United States.

I hope the Minister of National Defence will not allow this vote to be taken without some comment. He may not wish to give opposition members the satisfaction of a reply but he owes the people of Canada a reply outlining the government's attitude at this time in these very rapid developments in the defence policy of the United States.

The Minister of National Defence has taken a posture on these huge expenditures on obsolete weapons. He is not willing to compromise on this attitude. Obviously it is a misdirected policy. I think the policy should be changed. If, in order to change its policy, it is necessary for the government to change the minister who occupies that portfolio, then this should be done. We need a new attitude and a new policy in the Department of National Defence. If one reads the editorial pages of some of the main newspapers of this country that traditionally support either the government party or the opposition party one will see a clear indication that people in all walks of life supporting all political parties say that this government's defence policy is misdirected, useless and in need of a thorough and complete overhaul. For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, we are delighted to have the opportunity to support this amendment.

Mr. Pearkes: I am going to reply to the criticisms which have been made because, as I pointed out this morning on the orders of the day, a great deal of this criticism has been based on a speculative report which can only be described as a leak from a meeting of a committee which is being held in the United States and which was held in camera. However, I want to contradict flatly the statement which was made by the hon. member for Assiniboia a few minutes ago that Canada was not being consulted. Canada has been consulted step by step and Canada's opinion has carried weight. I can say quite frankly that I have been speaking almost daily with the secretary of defence or Mr. Douglas who is his deputy in Washington. I am fully informed of the proposals which are being presented to the committee on appropriations at this time. But until that committee has heard all the evidence and until the committee has reported upon what its recommendations are—and I say "recommendations" advisedly because, as far as Canada is concerned, nothing will be done without consultation with Canada—I am unable to say anything. I am not going to talk about matters which are based purely on a newspaper report which, as I say, purports to be a report of a committee held in camera.

[Mr. Argue.]

Mr. Argue: The minister has said that the report is a leak or that this was a confidential inquiry in camera. Does the minister deny the report? Does he deny that there is going to be made a very slashing reduction in the United States appropriations for the Bomarc missile?

Mr. Pearkes: As I said, I have no comments to make at this time.

Mr. Hellyer: I have just one comment based on the minister's statement of a moment ago. If he has been as well informed as he has led this committee to believe, I cannot understand—nor, I am sure, can my colleagues—why, when the United States air force itself decided to suspend operations temporarily pending a re-evaluation, the government did not accept the advice given them by those on this side of the chamber on January 26 last. That is the very least that should have been done.

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Chairman: The question is on the amendment.

Amendment negatived: yeas 23; nays, 82.

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost. Shall the resolution carry?

Mr. Martin (Timmins): I have a few remarks that I should like to make before this resolution passes, Mr. Chairman, and I wonder whether I might call it one o'clock.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few remarks on the subject raised by the leader of our group, the hon. member for Assiniboia, when he spoke this morning, the recent incidents that are very much in the minds of the Canadian people at the present time, namely, the racial violence in South Africa.

I should like to impress upon the government in particular the importance of one aspect of this question which I do not think has been stressed so far. The incidents of wanton butchery the other day, reprehensible though they are, are overshadowed by what could develop from these incidents. History down through the years is dotted with examples of people in such straits as the