

Abandonment of Defence Projects

up to speak twice yesterday evening. I was informed by the deputy chairman of committees who was then in the chair, not long before ten o'clock last night, that after the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Gregoire) had finished, I would be next on the list.

I found out today that another list had gone in. I made inquiries and found I was down on this list fifth, sixth or seventh from the position I thought I was going to be in, and then I was finally recognized.

I would also like to say that nobody asked me to give up my place in favour of the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer), or made any suggestion to me in that regard or anything else along that line. Therefore this whole motion is one which I find very difficult to understand.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that his remarks were out of order on two counts. In the first place he was reflecting on a vote that this house has just taken, and in the second place he was blaming Your Honour for a decision which was taken by vote of the house. He was out of order and he owes an apology to Your Honour.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I owe no apology for drawing your attention to the fact that you, sir, departed from the regularly appointed plan we have always had, of accepting the nominations of the party whip.

Mr. Speaker: I certainly do not wish to pour any more oil on the fire, but I believe that I have acted in accordance with tradition and precedent. If I may just take one minute I think it will settle the question. Beauchesne's fourth edition, citation 121, paragraph 1 says:

There should not be a list of speakers with an order of precedence in the House of Commons. Any member who wishes to speak may rise and endeavour to catch the Speaker's eye. He who is first seen has the right to speak. By old parliamentary usage, a member who wishes to make his maiden speech enjoys the privilege of being first seen by the Speaker, if he rises at the same time as other members; but the privilege will not be conceded unless claimed within the parliament to which the member was first returned.

(2) the succession of speakers is left entirely to the Speaker. If his call is disputed by some member who thinks he rose before the Speaker's choice, a motion may be made under S.O. 35—

—which is now standing order 29—
—that "he be now heard."

Among my papers I have a signed note from the chairman of committees in which is assigned the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Gregoire), following which was the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness). In the circumstances I had no other choice

but to act in accordance with what I considered to be the right thing, and tradition.

The hon. member for Calgary North.

Mr. Olson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker; the right hon. Leader of the Opposition complained that no member of his party was given an opportunity to explain their position. If this is true, then the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness) is not a member of his party, and I think the house has a right to know that.

Mr. MacEwan: What party do you belong to now? You should be across the floor.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): It seems with considerable difficulty I am finally going to be able to make my speech.

Mr. Speaker, I could devote all the time that is available to me to a discussion of the arguments and considerations which, in my opinion, made it desirable that Canada should acquire nuclear warheads for certain weapons systems for the use of the Canadian forces. However, for a variety of reasons I am not going to follow that course.

First of all, I spent some two and a half years putting forward these considerations and arguments, and I do not think there is anything to be gained by repeating them once more at this time, especially in view of the fact that the present Minister of National Defence repeated a number of them in his speech yesterday. I can only regret that he and the other members of his party did not come to this same decision some one and a half to three years earlier than they did. This might have avoided the whole subject of nuclear arms becoming the matter of partisan political argument which it did and has become.

I will not follow that course for another reason. Most hon. members are aware that all of the polls held on this subject in the period from six months to a year ago indicated the fact that a considerable majority of Canadians who had any opinion on it were in favour of the acquisition of nuclear arms. Therefore there is no need to make further efforts to convince the general public of that fact. Furthermore, in my view this matter was settled by a vote of the house in the early part of the session, and therefore should not have been revived, as it has been at this time.

There are a few things I would like to say. The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) cited several people, whom he looked upon as experts in this field, as saying nuclear arms for Canada were not needed and were not desirable. On any military matter, and particularly on the subject of any type of weapon you will have a variety of opinion so far as the experts, real or so-called, are concerned.