

Abandonment of Defence Projects

tions. We have unused resources in Canada. We have men who are unemployed and factory space which is not being used. I would like to see these resources put back to work and our output increased, so that then we can direct some of this additional output in the direction which my hon. friend suggests. I believe we should do that, rather than make a diversion from one requirement to another.

This is the proper approach when we have these tremendous unused resources. We should see them put back to work effectively and efficiently, increasing output, and then use some proportion of that output to alleviate hardship throughout the world and undertake many of the projects at home and abroad which I am sure all hon. gentlemen would support.

In respect to the subamendment, the question has been raised of the servile imposition of atomic arms on the territory of the "state of Quebec". First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think that the "state of Quebec" is still part of Canada, and one of the propositions which has been put forward, which I think most of us subscribe to, is equal rights and equal responsibilities. Now, it is part of the responsibility of this government to plan as best it can for the defence of Canada, including a contribution to the western alliance.

Part of this commitment, part of the role we have taken on in partnership with the United States, is the air defence of this continent. We are particularly placed in respect to that because, geographically, we cannot separate ourselves from the United States. We are part of the same land mass and we cannot extricate ourselves from our traditional, historical and geographic position associated with our allies and neighbours to the south.

We have accepted responsibilities. They are to our advantage as well as to the advantage of others, and we should never forget that. As I pointed out to the special committee on defence, the United States would have been willing to have placed the two Bomarc squadrons on their territory, but in order to facilitate us and in order to provide some semblance—as it was believed at that time—of protection for the cities of Montreal and Toronto, the stations were moved north into a position further away from the built up areas, in order that interceptions could take place at an earlier time.

This made perfectly good sense from our point of view, and it was a decision which was concurred in by the government of Canada. No one forced it on us, nor was there any servility involved. We made that decision; no one else could make it.

An hon. Member: General Norstad.

[Mr. Hellyer.]

Mr. Hellyer: Hon. gentlemen opposite, when I say "we" I mean we in the broad sense. I mean "you". The decision was made by the government of Canada on behalf of the people of Canada. The people of Canada are proud people, and when they take on a responsibility by decision of their own duly elected government, they feel some pride and responsibility in carrying through with that commitment.

I have stated before, and I believe it strongly that, having led the United States to believe that if they provided the missiles, if they provided the large part of the cost of this weapons system, which is much larger than just the Bomarc stations themselves, and having encouraged them to make such large expenditures as part of their over-all defence program with the obvious thought in mind of making them effective when they were in place, then we had a responsibility as citizens of Canada to carry through with our part of the bargain.

Completely apart from the military effectiveness of the weapons systems themselves, we undertook a solemn obligation, and our neighbours and allies would feel we had let them down and deceived them badly if we did not do what we led them to believe we would do. It is important for us to live up to our word, because our voice is only as loud as our word.

Another point in respect to these weapons systems is that these are defensive weapons systems only. They cannot start a war. They cannot be used for aggressive purposes. There is only one potential use for them, and that would be after a general war had broken out. It is very easy for hon. gentlemen to say that there will be no general war. This is the view which is widely held and we all hope and pray it will be so; but let me just add this one word of caution, that if at the present time, with the present existing weapons stockpiles on both sides of the iron curtain, there were a general war by accident, madness or miscalculation, those weapons systems would save millions of lives.

I do not say this will be true two, three, five or ten years from now. It will depend on the weapons systems available on both sides of the iron curtain; but I am saying that, as of this moment, if there were a war of madness or miscalculation, those weapons would provide very effective and considerable interception of attacking bombers—

Mr. Churchill: What about missiles?

Mr. Hellyer: And save a great many lives. The hon. gentleman knows they are not effective against ballistic missiles.

Mr. Churchill: Don't mislead the public.