

and other countries. If I gave that impression this afternoon in anything I said, I assure you I did not intend to do so.

It was pointed out this afternoon that statements of principle are all very well, but we do not hear very much in the house about what we are going to do to convert those principles into performance. The member for Peace River (Mr. Low) mentioned that even the language we use in these international documents is ambiguous. I confess that at times at international meetings, where differences of opinion are often important and where the necessity for agreement is so great, there is a temptation to seize on words which may seem to express the lowest common denominator of difference. I do feel, however, that in the recent meeting of the north Atlantic council we did avoid that difficulty and danger in the language of the communiqué in which we expressed our views. It is straightforward and to the point. I would have thought it could have been understood by all the members in this house. If there are any particular words which seem ambiguous to my hon. friend I hope he will let me know what they are, and I shall do my best to make them clear to him.

**Mr. Blackmore:** I certainly will, on your estimates.

**Mr. Pearson:** Then the hon. member to whom I have just referred remarked, and his remark was repeated by at least one other hon. member, that he was very worried about all this talk of the surrender of sovereignty. What did we mean, and particularly what did I mean when I used that expression? He went on to say, if I recall correctly and if I am not correct I know he will correct me, that North America must preserve its freedom of action; that we were in danger of weakening ourselves by giving away our sovereignty.

I have never been very worried about this danger. I believe, however, that we should not refer so often to the word "surrender" in connection with sovereignty. What we are trying to do in building up international life and international organization, as I see it, is to put our sovereignty to work, to make it work for us. The only way to do that, as I understand it, is by agreement with like-minded countries, so that we will gain far more from that agreement than we may lose by giving up some of our individual rights. That is the only justification for a surrender of a national right, that we get something more valuable for it. I suggest that is the basis of a good deal of political development. Indeed, it is the basis of the development

which led the colonies of British North America to give up some of their sovereign rights in order to form the Dominion of Canada.

The member for Peel asked me whether we discussed, in London, the question of civilian defence. We did not. It was not one of the subjects on the agenda of this particular meeting. Of course, it is one of the most important subjects that face us in the field of defence. But the first consideration of this subject internationally would be through one of the technical committees, I assume, which have already been set up by the north Atlantic organization. He went on to ask us what our particular role might be in this new concept of what we now call balanced collective defence; and how much it is going to cost us. Those are pertinent questions indeed, but I am sure the hon. member will appreciate the fact that the north Atlantic organization has been in being for just over a year. We signed our pact just about a year ago. During that year we have accomplished a great deal. I believe it has been an important and effective year, but we have not yet reached the point where we can estimate the detailed obligations of each member of the pact from the principles which we have adopted. That is going on now through the agencies which we have set up. I confess, Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer his question at this time in a form which I believe would satisfy him. I would only add that I should think that, whatever the cost may be, it will not be too high, as he admitted, for any member of the group to pay if it preserves peace and guarantees security. I would also feel, as the Prime Minister has indicated on previous occasions, that the cost of a group insurance policy should be less than the cost of eleven or twelve individual policies.

The member for Peel also mentioned China. He wondered whether we had discussed that at the North Atlantic council meeting. I should possibly have pointed out this afternoon that, in addition to our North Atlantic council meeting, there was in London at that time a meeting of the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain and France. They discussed a great many questions which were not on the agenda of the North Atlantic council, among them China. I am not, of course, in a position to reveal to the house what their conclusions were, although they were good enough to let us see them, because that is something which they will have to give out themselves. The hon. member for Peel was particularly interested in the possibility of there being some change in United States policy towards China as a result of these discussions. He mentioned a statement of the United States secretary of state