

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—ALLEGED NEED OF DEFENCE POLICY TO DEMONSTRATE WILLINGNESS AND CAPACITY OF CANADA TO CONTRIBUTE TO WORLD PEACE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Forrestall:

That in the opinion of this House the government, having reduced our defence capacity by erosion of our NATO commitment, reduction of our active and reserve forces, and mismanagement of our material and supply requirements, has downgraded our armed forces and led to a questioning of our credibility by our allies.

This House therefore urges the government to declare a defence policy that will clarify the role of our armed forces at home—with particular reference to our north and aid to the civil power—and which will demonstrate our willingness and capacity to contribute to world peace by honouring our alliances.

Mr. Roberts: When I was speaking just before the luncheon break I was trying, at the end of my speech, to give a short sketch of the situation in which Canada finds itself, and to do so in a constructive way. I spoke of how the threat to Canada has evolved, and on the basis of that I attempted to indicate what kind of priorities we should give to our defence policy. The world of the 1970's is very different from the world of the early 1950's when the NATO alliance was established. The defence of Canada has changed and the nature of our perspective has changed. In the post second-world-war period there was the cold war rigidity. We are now in a world which appears much more flexible, a world which is sometimes described as multi-polarized.

Even in the last few weeks we saw dramatic steps forward in adopting a less rigid, more flexible international world perspective. There has been the announcement by Mr. Nixon regarding some hopeful perspectives with regard to ABM. There has been the visit of our Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to Russia, and a signing there of agreements which will open up channels of communications between our two countries. There has been the entry of the Chinese into world affairs, demonstrating their desire to participate more closely in the international community than has been evidenced in the past. In our own case, there is our interest in internal order, which we did not emphasize so strongly in the 1950's, a concern regrettably made necessary by recent events. There is the whole problem of sovereignty in relation to the Arctic, and a concern over our strong economic interdependence with some of our allies.

In that changed perspective I suggested that the emphasis we should give to our defence policy was as the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) said, a continuing dedication to the concept of peacekeeping and a

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continuing dedication of our armed forces to maintain their capacity to serve in that way. Our concern should be not to fundamentally revise our NORAD commitments but to wait and see, certainly not to make great expenditures on equipment in the NORAD area. With regard to NATO, we should continue our policy of reduced commitment which is designed, in a flexible way, to use our capacity for things other than simply our participation in NATO defence.

But, more particularly at the end of my remarks I was trying through you, Mr. Speaker, to suggest to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) that we should examine very carefully our role in anti-submarine warfare. I say this for two reasons, the first being that the technology of anti-submarine warfare, with the use of nuclear powered submarines, has entered a new level of research and development, one so costly that in my view it would be doubtful if we could participate in it and bear the financial burden for very long without rethinking our role. My second doubt is related to the basic strategy of mutual deterrence.

• (2:10 p.m.)

This strategy is that both we in the west and Russia depend on having a second strike capacity which can inflict such damage on any potential attacker that that attacker would be effectively discouraged from launching an attack. An important basis for that second strike capacity is the maintenance of a relatively invulnerable submarine launched ballistic missile. If we, through our efforts in anti-submarine warfare, could reach a stage where we could threaten that second strike capacity on the other side, we would have reached a very unstable level of deterrence. Therefore, it seems to me inappropriate for us to spend vast sums of money on making effective our anti-submarine warfare capability because success would be contrary to our interests. We should not be seeking to undermine the Russian second strike capacity because of the danger involved that their consequent insecurity could lead to pre-emptive acts destructive to peace.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that in the maritime field, instead of concentrating our efforts on anti-submarine warfare we should be making our maritime forces into a "super Canadian Coast Guard." I believe this is the role they should play, and it will become one of increasing importance in view of the new developments in the Arctic. It is a role which would fit in well with what the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) described as the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty.

In the new climate of international affairs Canada has a great opportunity to play a useful role through both its foreign and defence policies. Our defence policy should provide us with flexible military capability adequate to maintain our society at home and to participate in peacekeeping operations through the United Nations and, more moderately but still effectively, be sufficient to support our allies in the western alliance in the maintenance of our mutual security interests.