

National Security Measures

think to be right simply because our allies are in disagreement with part of it? I suggest that we must be the final determinant of what our defence policy should be. Having come to that decision, it was only right to do what we did, namely to consult our allies on how these force reductions should be implemented, in what area and in what sector.

Mr. Forrestall: There are only two minutes left for you to enlighten us.

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that I have only two minutes remaining in which to enlighten him, and I regret that very much because it would take a lot more than two minutes to enlighten the hon. member. Given the impossibility of the task I will not even try. What I will do instead is to come back to one remark made by the hon. member for Greenwood when he discussed NORAD bomber defence. I agree to some considerable extent with what he said. There has certainly been a diminishment of the bomber threat. At one time I shared his view completely that we could dismantle our protection and defence system; but I also feel that while it is wrong to over-emphasize its role there is still the necessity to maintain a detection and surveillance system, if only to make sure that the bomber threat is a second strike threat and not a first strike threat. At the moment we are in an era where there are considerable technological developments taking place in this particular area, for example, in AWACS—airborne warning and control system—and in over-the-horizon detection systems. I think in view of the uncertainty over what this technology is likely to produce it is best at this time to make no dramatically new decision in the NORAD area.

Where I hope the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) will take a searching look at our commitments is in the realm of anti-submarine warfare. The present concept of strategy that we in the west and the Russians accept is that we should both have a guaranteed second strike capacity. The nuclear balance depends upon both sides knowing that they have the capacity, no matter what comes in the worst way from their point of view, to be able so significantly to destroy the other side that neither party would voluntarily launch an attack upon the other. Within the design of that strategy it is enormously important that the basis for that guaranteed destructive capacity on both sides is the missile attack capacity presently held by submarines. I think it is extremely dangerous for us to try to implement policies that would destroy the credibility of a guaranteed response as a second strike weapon by nuclear submarines. We have not reached that stage yet, and I hope we never will.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but it is one o'clock. I gather that before the Chair calls it one o'clock the President of the Privy Council, after having had consultations, would like the consent of the House to revert to motions. Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Mr. Roberts.]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

DESIGNATION OF DAY FOR COMMITTEE WORK

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I should like to request a short order to the effect that the House adjourn next Thursday so that the standing committees can make progress with their work and that Thursday, May 27, 1971 be deemed to have been one of the days referred to in standing order 52(5). May I read the order:

That in order to permit the Standing Committee of the House to make progress with their work, when the House adjourns on Wednesday, May 26, 1971, it shall stand adjourned until Friday, May 28, 1971 at 11 o'clock a.m.; and that Thursday, May 27, shall be deemed to have been one of the days referred to in Standing Order 58(1).

● (1:00 p.m.)

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, we agree to this, but I want to say that shutting down the chamber is a serious matter to us. There are many of us on this side of the House, including myself, who do not like this idea as a matter of principle. We tried it before and it did not really accomplish much. This time there is a fairly good mood of co-operation and we have a lot of work to do, some in respect of very contentious bills. We will try it again, without any prejudice to the future. I hope it will serve to concentrate attention on the committees and we can really get down to business. I hope the minister will watch the scheduling on Thursday so there will not be any serious conflicts, and so that some unnecessary committee work can be reduced or eliminated.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Bell) has said, we are reluctant to give up a day's sitting of the House, but I think it is fair to say that all of us who have been involved in the negotiations about this matter agree that we need a few days for important committee work. As for this one day, to which we have already agreed, we support the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is so ordered.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Anything else, while the mood is so agreeable?

Mr. Speaker: It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

At one o'clock the House took recess.