

hope that the hon. member could reciprocate my courtesy by waiting until I had completed my remarks.

• (1640)

We were talking about security and the apparent irony of Canadians discussing security in the context of countries that have been overrun every decade of their history. We were also talking about geography. Thanks to geography we have been free. Here again I thank the good Lord—and I mean that seriously—that we have been free from many of the conflicts that have shattered the world, particularly in this century. We do not—and I might add in parenthesis that I regret this—have a big standing force. As a former parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence, I deplore the very small size of our regular force. It is inadequate. Their equipment is inadequate. I said that openly before. In this context, for Canadians to talk about security and disarmament seemed ironic, but it was very important that we did so.

During those hearings it became increasingly apparent to us that our security is perhaps ephemeral. It is no longer something we can take for granted. Where geography may have helped us in the past, perhaps geography in this context will be our worst enemy in the future because we are near the big force. I am not sure we can be lucky enough, even if we wished, to avoid what happens to the United States. That is, whether we wish to or not. If I have time, I will talk about our agreements with NATO and NORAD. We no longer have the luxury of feeling immune from what is happening in the world today. The biggest service that we as parliamentarians can do for our constituents is to tell them that we are not as safe as we thought we were. The world is not as safe as most of us wish it were. What are we going to do about it? The argument has been made by several people that the arms race will lead to higher tensions.

As I said, we had experts on both sides debating this point. This is why there was a majority report that I signed. The majority of us listening to those experts thought back to the days in 1939 when the Prime Minister of Britain came back from Munich and told us there was no problem, that we could afford to disarm. I remember in those days Winston Churchill was called a warmonger because he had the nerve and the audacity to shake the British out of their complacency and tell them that he did not believe there was going to be peace. He was a "warmonger". He was despised by many. Too late we listened to him. I am not saying that is the situation today, but it could be.

The situation today is perilous inasmuch as those who describe the reality of the situation are now too being called warmongers. That is totally counterproductive. I do not want to repeat what has already been said in this debate. One of the futilities of the House of Commons is that we tend to repeat what was said by our colleagues. I do not want to do that. I want to take another perspective because we are going to be asked what Canadians want in the future with regard to arms control and a nuclear freeze.

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I want to give my perspective not only as a Member of Parliament representing 91,000 constituents, but as a Member of Parliament who happens to have two sons of military age and two daughters, if they wish to join. Am I going to urge that we disarm, that we put a freeze on nuclear weapons, that we stop the Cruise missile testing in Alberta so that I can save not only my kids but all Canadian kids from that? If I were to do that, I am convinced that I would be foolish, to say the least, and perhaps reprehensible. I would not be living up to my obligations. What we need to do is to be extremely realistic. If, God forbid, Canadian men and women have to go to war again, I want to make darn sure that they are properly equipped.

What does properly equipped mean in the Canadian context? I said a few moments ago that to my regret we have a very small standing force. I am not at all convinced that they are adequately equipped. I do not point any fingers; it is a sign of the times. It is a sign of economic restraint and many other things, but it is a fact.

We cannot defend ourselves. We cannot do so if the adversary is the Soviet Union. Therefore, whether we like it or not, we will depend very heavily on our allies. What do we give them in return? The first thing we have to do is give them our will. That is important. We must give them our political will if we cannot afford too much of an economic will. We have to give them the political will to help them. If necessary, give them the few miles they want in Alberta to test their missiles, which by the way, and let us be very clear, are dummy missiles. There are no nuclear warheads on them. What we are thinking of doing, and only thinking, is to allow our best ally to check the mechanism of a weapon which could very well be the salvation not just of the United States, but of Canada.

Mr. Blaikie: The only dummy around here is yourself.

Mrs. Appolloni: Is it immoral to try and defend Canada as best we can? As I said at the beginning, the hon. member for Oshawa was good enough to put away these red herrings in the interest of a good, productive debate.

Mr. Blaikie: I wish you were.

Mrs. Appolloni: The one thing about this committee, despite the fact we had three different parties represented on it, was that there was no rudeness, no catcalling, no garbage coming from any side, as I hear this afternoon in the House. Too bad we do not have that atmosphere in the House of Commons.

Coming back to disarmament, the answer to disarmament is brotherly love. If we had brotherly love, for goodness sake, we would not need any kinds of weapons at all. Unfortunately, that does not exist. It does not exist in this House of Commons. Can you imagine if this existed in the arena of nations and they were at each other's throats, if not at other parts of their anatomy? This is the reality of the situation. We may not like it, but we have to live with it.

We were talking about security. That, too, was a very interesting debate. The hon. member for Victoria (Mr.