

Supply—National Defence

according to which this country aimed first at defending Canada and second, at helping to maintain peace throughout the world.

I think those are two very commendable objectives, but they are expressed in terms that are too general. I expected the minister to set forth, in this important speech at the beginning of consideration of the estimates of that very important department of our country—

[*English*]

Mr. Brand: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege. The simultaneous translation system is not working. I am sure many members who cannot understand the very fluent French of the hon. member for Sherbrooke have difficulty without the simultaneous translation, and I am sure they do not want to miss the hon. member's very excellent words.

The Chairman: Order. The Chair has already noticed that there is no simultaneous translation and steps are being taken to have it restored. Perhaps the hon. member would proceed for a moment or two without the simultaneous translation.

● (4:20 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Allard: Mr. Chairman, I was saying that yesterday I expected the Minister of National Defence to take the opportunity, at the very start of consideration of the estimates of his department, to set forth in this house and for all Canadians, a well-defined policy.

We find that in the physical organization, the minister and the officials of his department have shown great concern in the past few years, they have obtained some success, up to now, in the physical organization as concerns integration of the armed forces. Very well, I grant that.

But what Canadians want to know is the short term and long term policies of the government and of the Department of National Defence.

It seems that they are acting blindly. "Marlbrough is going to war", but where is he going, when will he be coming back, and how far does he want to go?

You often get the impression, when considering the estimates of national defence, that you are somewhat like a Don Quixote swinging his blade in the wind. One does not know, one does not feel and one is not told in this house what is involved, on an efficient basis,

[*Mr. Allard.*]

in most of those expenses or at least in the more substantial amounts.

Obviously, the principles laid down by the minister were too general. They do not take fully into account the Canadian reality, the wishes of this country, and that is why the Canadian people, who have a lot of common sense, made their position known by returning three minority governments in the last three elections. The Canadian people do not know where the administration of National Defence is going.

National defence is a very important matter in this country. One feels that the ordinary citizen, the worker, the farmer, the white-collar worker as well as the ordinary member like me is treading on dangerous ground when it comes to national defence policy.

Well, Mr. Chairman, this afternoon I want to point out very humbly to the minister and his colleagues a few facts, a few principles on which a Canadian military policy should be based.

The first principle is that Canada must organize its own defence and co-operate with its allies according to its means and a reasonable proportion of its national budget.

No useful purpose is served—because too often we feel tempted to forget our limitations—by wanting, in the concert of nations, not only in the peaceful field of external affairs but also in international military circles, to take and participate in initiatives which are beyond our capacity from the standpoint of defence or even financial means.

At the present time, there is no immediate crisis or impending world conflict which is inciting our country to spend too much for military purposes. Far from it, because the minister said in his speech last night that, on the international horizon, the situation did not look alarming and that relations between the communist block and the allies seemed much improved.

We should, therefore, take advantage of this period of relaxation, this period of conciliation to reduce our military expenditures and devise a true long-term military policy for Canada. A greater part of our resources and revenues should be used to fight poverty first in Canada and then abroad. We should reduce our military expenditures and increase family allowances, old age pensions and our help to famine-ridden countries.

That is what Canada should do, Mr. Chairman, but it does the opposite.