

Firing of A.B.M. Warheads over Canada

Mr. Whicher: I say, further, that when we in this country have the opportunity to have people defend us, our way of life, our democracy, our children and ourselves, without costing us a single nickel, we should accept it with no questions asked whatsoever.

This is, of course, a very serious problem. We have in years gone by had the opportunity, if one might call it that, of waging war. Certainly, during the last two world wars we did a very creditable job and, as Canadians, we should be very proud of ourselves. But now the time has come when, because of the great advancement in weapons, we simply must appreciate the fact that not only can we not wage war offensively but we cannot wage war defensively. We must have the help of our neighbours.

The only major powers in the world today which have the capability of waging the kind of war that we are speaking about tonight are our neighbours to the south, the Soviet Union and communist China. I ask my hon. friends to my left this question: If they had to choose between the Russians and Americans, would they prefer the Russians, or the Americans? I think any member of this house who has any degree of common sense whatsoever would agree that, in spite of the fact that the Americans are not always 100 per cent right, they are much more credible neighbours than any other country in the world could possibly be.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Whicher: Several ministers and members of the opposition have raised the point that the anti-ballistic missiles which are to be placed on American territory in the next several years are defensive weapons. I ask this question: Is there anywhere in the world, under our way of life, that man does not have the right to defend himself? If somebody goes into your house with a gun and tries to hold you up, do you not have the right to defend yourself by firing back?

This is the question facing our American friends. They are not going to fire the first weapon as far as these anti-ballistic missiles are concerned. They are strictly a defensive weapon. The missiles that may be going over our heads will be either Russian or Chinese. The ones our American friends will put up will be in defence of not only the United States but the whole continent of North America, which includes Canada. I think we should appreciate the situation and should not be wishy-washy about it.

[Mr. Whicher.]

As my friend, the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh) said, we can make our choice in life; we can be either pro-democratic, pro-American, or pro-communist. There is no use trying to walk the line which divides these ideologies. We cannot stay on the fence in this regard. We cannot tread on broken glass in this respect. The Czechoslovakians tried that; the Finnish people tried it; the Polish people tried it and the Germans tried it. Is there anybody in this house who would suggest that Berlin would not be in Soviet hands today were it not for the power of the United States? Is there anybody who would suggest that the whole of Europe would not be in Soviet hands were it not for our friends to the south? Thank heaven we have them. Thank heaven these people are willing to put up not only the money but the weapons in order to defend our way of life.

We have an obligation not only to the people of this country, not only to our children, but to those who died in the last two world wars, those who fought for our way of life. I appreciate my hon. friend saying that he is of the younger generation, and of course he is. He suggested that his generation had grown up since the last war. But there are many people in this chamber, and in Canada, who remember the great sacrifice that was made by Canadian troops on land, sea and air to defend our way of life. The Americans are not asking that we do this. They are willing to do it for us. They are willing to not only extract the necessary money from their taxpayers' pockets but to supply the weapons and the men to defend our way of life.

• (11:10 p.m.)

In conclusion, let us remember that this is of course our country, and we must have the say as to what happens in it. We must remember also that this is our continent, that besides being Canadians we are North Americans. If we can justly say that we are North Americans, then we must also remember that our friends to the south are also North Americans and they are not just interested in the defence of the United States. As a matter of fact, they are not just interested in the defence of North America. They have made many mistakes, but this is not one of them by any means. I think they have justly tried with their power, their might and their goodness to defend the democratic way of life all over this world.