

Supply

Let me shift to another argument, to use the term loosely, that was provided by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in this matter which is even more bizarre than the other arguments. He said that Canada was opposed to this resolution because it wants an immediate resumption of negotiations rather than the declaration of the freeze. What sort of Alice in Wonderland thinking is that? A freeze and a resumption of negotiations are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the UN resolution which we now have before the House underlines the urgent need to resume negotiations. The resolution points out that such a nuclear freeze would constitute a first important step in the process that would include negotiations and eventually nuclear disarmament itself. The point is that action on this resolution would prevent the further escalation, both in quality and quantity, of nuclear weapons, while the negotiation for eventual nuclear disarmament takes place. That is why the members of my Party and Canadians all across the land are in support of this resolution.

The article in the November 19 issue of *Newsweek* to which I referred a moment ago was written by businessmen, including the heads of Bell International and a half dozen other major international corporations which I will not list now. This article underscores the point that it is business groups in the United States as well as democratic party politicians and other segments of American society that are in favour of a nuclear freeze. One reason among others that the writer of the article gave for taking such a position at this time is that there is the mutual capacity of the Soviet Union and the United States to kill each other many times over within the context of a freeze. When there is that balance of terror, as it has been called, he said that they were apprehensive about a costly and dangerous competition that neither side could win but that both could lose. He is dead right.

● (1125)

Those words and the thoughts behind those words are what this Government should be paying attention to. If we are to leave a world in which our children can grow up and live without fear of annihilation, we must rid this planet of nuclear weapons. If we are to do this we in political life must seize all the occasions which make it possible, acting with realism and with hope. The motion before us, which is a motion before the United Nations, is just such an occasion.

I conclude with this thought. Humanity's urgent quest for peace requires leadership. Leadership can and must come on this matter at some point from the superpowers. But in the meantime it must come from others, and it should come from Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any questions or comments? Debate, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner).

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the motion which the House has before it today addresses a matter which is of the deepest concern to Canadians, and indeed to all members of the human family, the need

to halt the dangerous and ever-increasing nuclear arms race which threatens the very survival of this planet as we know it.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, we cannot ignore the gravity of the situation. United Nations Resolution L-32, which the House is being asked to consider today, is useful in that it stresses the urgency of reducing nuclear arsenals and calling on the superpowers to commence constructive negotiations. The number of nuclear arms in the possession of the two superpowers runs into tens of thousands, the equivalent of about 5,000 times the explosive power used during the Second World War or 100,000 times that of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

There are other examples or comparisons that could be used, Mr. Speaker, to illustrate and bring home to us the destructive power and the horror of nuclear weapons.

Inevitably, these images of the devastation of which man has become capable are always present in our minds when we consider ways of achieving durable peace and security.

[English]

The motion of the New Democratic Party calls upon the Government to reverse its own position and indeed, in the words of the motion, reverse the position taken by my Government and former Liberal Governments on a question of fundamental importance to Canada and to the NATO alliance, of which Canada is a founding member. In addition, in view of the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union announced on November 22 their intention to meet on January 7 and 8 in Geneva to consider negotiations on a whole range of weapons issues before them, an announcement which I and the members of our caucus welcome whole-heartedly, I find it surprising that the New Democratic Party would now want the Government to adopt as policy a resolution which has as its objectives, first, the resumption of negotiations and, second, prevention of continued increase in and qualitative improvements of existing nuclear weaponry.

The first objective of the motion has now been met with the announced meeting of Mr. Shultz and Mr. Gromyko. The second objective will be the substance of their meeting. It is quite conceivable that progress can be made.

● (1130)

In my view, this motion and the resolution on which it has been based have been overtaken by events. The motion draws attention away from the fact that the New Democratic Party does not support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and indeed is committed to taking Canada out of that alliance. NATO is an alliance of democracies. When it was established in 1949, the founders agreed that it was to be a political alliance as well as a military one. Its existence has led to the longest period of peace in Europe this century. This motion presumes that the foreign policy supported by successive Liberal Governments and by the Canadian people has been unsuccessful and wrong. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I should like to take this opportunity to talk about some of the steps which the Canadian Government has taken over the