

Abandonment of Defence Projects

Quebec. For instance, there is one nuclear base at Bagotville, another one at Val d'Or, one at North Bay and another one in Labrador.

We do not know exactly what the government means or intends to do when it says that those nuclear bases will cost Canada absolutely nothing but that the Americans will pay for all organization and even operation costs.

As for us, we have taken, in this house as well as outside, a stand against nuclear arms, neither through sentimentalism or parochialism, nor for regional or local reasons only, but rather because we feel that Canada must lead the way to peace instead of putting up with methods that will not fail to bring us inevitably to nuclear war.

Mr. Speaker, when we agree to have nuclear bases in Canada, supposedly because it is one of the steps in the defence program—we will not have offensive weapons, just defensive weapons—is it not true that by creating the defensive nuclear bases announced—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I waited until now to interrupt the hon. member, hoping that he might soon revert to the subject of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), which is very limited in scope and does not allow for a general debate.

I take the liberty of reminding the hon. member that the house already came to a decision as to the general problem of nuclear arms when a vote was taken on the occasion of the debate on the speech from the throne.

For those reasons, I would suggest to the hon. member for Villeneuve that he try to limit his remarks to the amendment proposed by the hon. member and which is already before us.

Mr. Caouette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the other hand, with all due respect, I wonder, while the amendment states here, at the end—

[Text]

—and deplores that such steps have been and are being taken without seeking the views of or awaiting recommendations from the special committee on defence.

[Translation]

Is not the question of nuclear weapons precisely a question of defence dealt with by the defence committee?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It may be noted that I cannot start a debate with the hon. member. Even though the remark he just made is correct, we must stick to the various basic points of the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill).

[Mr. Caouette.]

There are three points mentioned in the amendment and there is no reference to nuclear weapons.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, I shall then stick to these three points. But I still maintain that these three points will unavoidably be replaced by nuclear weapons, in Canada.

At any rate, I will limit myself to the three points mentioned in that amendment, and first the discontinuance of the frigate program, a defence program, when the government has announced, for instance, expenditures of the order of 400 and some odd million dollars. And the other day, the minister said that these outlays were restricted to about 100 million dollars.

We are wondering what is the positive program of the government. And if they do not need those amounts for defence, will they apply those appropriations to help this country get for example a merchant marine, which is not that flourishing at the present time? The shipping of Canadian products abroad could be done with Canadian ships instead of using or allowing foreign ships for that purpose as is now the case. These amounts taken out of arms or war ship production should be affected to the Transport Department or other departments, and not necessarily to the National Defence Department, but to others in order to strengthen the Canadian economy.

In regard to the cancellation of the conversion of the R.C.A.F. station Penhold for jet training, the same thing could apply here, and these sums could be used to set up some peace industries, to create a climate of peace, of confidence and not of distrust as it is the case today.

The third point deals with the abandonment of other defence establishments. Mr. Speaker, we suggest that the government should assume its responsibilities in view of the situation very chaotic indeed, which prevails in Canada.

We might use those sums of money for practical construction programs. We realize that all countries of the world, after having improved their economic conditions following the war or the declaration of war in 1939, improved their economy, not only as far as frigate construction was concerned, but also in production improvement. So when we compare the 1939 production in the United States with the 1943 production in that same country, that is a period of four years, taking for granted that production was 100 per cent in 1939, we realize, according to official statistics, that in four years, the production of electrical steel in the United States increased by 383 per cent, railway cars, 391 per cent—for electric equipment, the increase