

recognition that has been given to the maxim that we cannot achieve world peace if we cannot also achieve economic and social justice on the global scale.

The United Nations has estimated that some 130 million children in our world are denied access to any form of education and that 800 million adults are considered illiterate. One-half of the Third World countries have no safe drinking water supplies, yet the technology is available to provide it within 10 years. We could do the same to prevent the hunger that is killing hundreds of thousands every year.

The World Health Organization tells us that 10 children die each minute as a result of contracting measles, diphtheria and tuberculosis and that only 10 per cent of the Third World's population is even immunized against disease. We also know that air and water pollution is responsible for increased illness and death from diseases such as asthma, cancer and heart disease.

Yet, we continue to spend billions of dollars on weapons that are capable of destroying every living thing on our planet. In my opinion and that, I am sure, of most reasonable Canadians that is the ultimate in insanity.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians have lent their support to the notion behind the motion which is before the House by signing petitions that call for the House of Commons to adopt the statements I have included in this motion. They recognize, as I do, that declaring Canada a nuclear weapons free zone will not change the world overnight. International tensions and relationships are too complex, unfortunately, for that to happen. However, I argue that by adopting this motion Canada would be affirming to the international community its position that our stated principles of the fact are to become our policies of today.

Under the rules of the House this motion will receive five hours of consideration during the time set aside for Private Members' Business. The motion is also a votable item and I ask Members on all sides of the House to give serious consideration to the debate and to the motion and to consider supporting it.

In conclusion I would like to quote from a working paper entitled "Making Canada a Nuclear Weapon-free Zone" that was made available by Project Ploughshares. In my view it sums up the argument very well. The document says:

The point of any state becoming a NWFZ—

—a nuclear weapon-free zone, Mr. Speaker—

—(or joining an international NWFZ) is not to seek immunity from nuclear war. Once war breaks out, all bets are off and any country, whether nuclear weapon-free or not, will be vulnerable to direct attack—the relevant circumstance being whether or not the nuclear combatants will consider it to their advantage to attack or not to attack—and all suffer the post-war devastation and nuclear winter.

Treaties count for little in war, and they certainly count for nothing in the sharing of the effects of war. Similarly, while a Canadian NWFZ would eliminate any willing Canadian role in nuclear warfighting, this also is not the point of a NWFZ—after the war few Canadians could either be around or inclined to celebrate the virtues of non-involvement in global self-immolation.

Nuclear Armaments

A NWFZ is not an attempt to make one immune to the effects of war, rather it is an attempt to influence national and international behaviour before war breaks out, thus helping to reduce the likelihood of war. A NWFZ is a peacetime measure to restrict the spread of nuclear weapons, to withdraw political and technical support for the nuclear arms race, and to build trust between nations and regions of the globe.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I think that is a sentiment which has been expressed by the vast majority of Canadians, both individually through petitions to the House of Commons and through the actions of representatives at local and provincial government levels. This is the first time in the last several years that the House of Commons has had an opportunity to express its view on this very important matter. I look forward to the coming debate.

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young) for putting this motion before the House. I believe that it is too seldom that we take a look at one of the most important aspects of our civilization, in the words of Tolstoy, war and peace.

We have been asked to consider today the advisability of declaring Canada a nuclear arms free zone and to encourage cities, provinces and states throughout the world to undertake similar action. In a perfect world the need to consider such a proposal would not present itself. Unfortunately, we well know that the world in which we live is far from perfect. Given the nature of modern submarine and missile technologies it is not fanciful to see a direct potential threat to Canadian security and sovereignty.

We must, therefore, take a realistic and pragmatic approach to conditions. The Hon. Member who just spoke is filled with good intentions and I admire them. However, we must be practical and deal with reality. To do otherwise would be more than foolish, it would be dangerous for Canada.

In the face of the known threat, of which nuclear arms are a major component, Canada has joined with other countries which share similar values and interests in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an alliance founded in a concept of collective defence. The primary role of the alliance is to safeguard the security of member nations by deterring aggression. This deterrence capability, which is weighted and balanced against the forces of the Warsaw Pact, relies ultimately on nuclear weapons. Although the alliance has pledged never to resort to force except in response to attack, it remains united in its determination to deter any aggression against its members. The Hon. Member who has just spoken wishes to do away with the deterrence. Our Government continues to believe that it is through participation in these collective defence arrangements, rather than retreating into the uncertain security of a nuclear weapons free zone, that we can make our most effective contribution to preserving peace and security for ourselves and others.