

Abandonment of Defence Projects

sort. I am speaking as an islander and I wish the Solicitor General well in his attempts with the Minister of National Defence to convince treasury board that this is not necessary.

Mr. Robert Temple (Hastings South): Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate I have the pleasure of speaking as a member of the defence committee. As a member of that committee I believe that its deliberations have been of value and help not only to the members of the committee but also, I believe, to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer). Over the course of the meetings since June 27 we have had a variety of witnesses, all of them learned men, no doubt, in their art. However, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), as I understood his remarks this afternoon, apparently does not believe that the defence committee has been of much value, in that it has not been allowed to get to the bottom of things and no one has listened to it. He also says that the government has spread confusion and unrest, particularly by not waiting for the decisions of the defence committee and specifically by scrapping the general purpose frigate program.

I submit that the committee has had the opportunity of examining a great deal of the defence policy of Canada and especially with reference to the general purpose frigate. Since the committee's first meeting on June 27 it has heard many times about the general purpose frigate, about its speed, about its performance, about its cost and what it can do. We found out that the cost for eight frigates is \$452 million, considerably up from the \$300 million forecast a year or two ago. We can say, of course, that this is because it requires munitions, stores and various other equipment, but as we found out on October 15 the total cost is \$452 million.

On October 18 we learned about the speed of the proposed frigate vis-à-vis a nuclear submarine. When a frigate that is supposed to go out, detect, locate and destroy enemy submarines can only travel 27 knots per hour it is not going to be very effective against a nuclear submarine that can travel 40 or 50 knots per hour submerged.

Mr. Langlois: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is somewhat off the subamendment at the moment.

Mr. Temple: Mr. Speaker, I am coming very quickly to the matter of the subamendment. As a matter of interest, though, I thought that the subamendment was a little bit at variance with the amendment. However, members of the house have ruled that the subamendment does in fact bear a close

resemblance to the amendment so I do not think I am too far off base. I have spoken briefly about the speed of the frigate compared with the speed of a nuclear submarine. We also found out that the proposed general purpose frigate was somewhat inferior in speed to the latest Leander and Whitby class frigates produced in the United Kingdom.

This afternoon the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre also said that the Minister of National Defence was scuttling the navy. He said that the Royal Canadian Navy was shattered and the effectiveness of the armed forces was reduced. I should like to ask this: Am I correct in taking from the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) that we would help the navy, we would help the defence of Canada, we would increase the effectiveness of the armed forces, by continuing with the acquisition of eight obsolete general purpose frigates?

Now, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that was what the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre implied. In fact, there was more than an implication; there was a definite statement that Canada should have eight obsolete general frigates. When the hon. member makes these remarks, I would refer him to the testimony of Commodore Plomer, General Foulkes and General Simonds before the committee, all of whom held opinions to the contrary about the acquisition of the general purpose frigates. I think, Mr. Speaker, it has been obvious to the members of the defence committee for quite some time that we should not go ahead with the acquisition of the general purpose frigates. I think the testimony that came out in the committee was of great help to the Minister of National Defence and his department.

No doubt my hon. friends across the aisle wish to hear some remarks about nuclear arms being based in Quebec. I shall leave that part of the subject to other qualified members of our party. I merely wish to say that I believe the committee is doing good work, will continue to do good work and that if the committee, the Department of National Defence and the minister continue to co-operate we will do a lot of good for the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Gregoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, coming as they did after our subamendment on nuclear arms in the state of Quebec, I was rather surprised to hear the arguments put forth by the present Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer). However, there is surely one point that nobody could have forgotten. Last April a member of the United States cabinet, namely the defence secretary,