

Adjournment Debate

which he has not told us about if he was trying to fulfil this protocol, or else he does not think this is a crisis for world peace. It is one or the other. The agreement clearly says that without delay they will exchange views if there is a threat to world peace.

I say all this against the backdrop of 1968 when the Russian tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia and our government made that strong statement about it being regrettable. The question which the Prime Minister did not answer still remains. The Canadian people are looking for a strong statement from our government. The least the Prime Minister could do, without affecting the internal affairs of Poland, without messing around with a quarrel inside Poland and without being accused of interfering with the internal affairs of Poland, would be to demonstrate our concern about what the Soviet Union is doing by breaking off that friendship protocol. After all, that is supposed to be a bilateral agreement. At the time, it was announced, it was trumpeted across Canada as an agreement dealing with technical, scientific and high Arctic exploration. Those were the concerns. Actually, what the Prime Minister does is use that protocol to continue liaison with the Soviet ambassador in Ottawa. That is what he said. That is not what I said; it is what the Prime Minister said. He admitted it freely; he was not even asked to give that information. Mr. Speaker, we have reason to be concerned that the delay in the Prime Minister's sending a communique to the Soviet Union has to be because of this friendship protocol. I believe the people of Canada want to see a clear demonstration of the solidarity of the Canadian people in opposition to what the Soviet Union seems to be planning and want to see a clear demonstration of our opposition to that. One demonstration would be, without interfering with the domestic affairs of Poland, to break off that friendship protocol.

● (2215)

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Duclos (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) stated in the House on December 9 that the government has been seeking to establish a collective attitude within NATO vis-à-vis the events in Poland. That is why the Secretary of State for External Affairs flew to Brussels, to participate in a meeting of Atlantic alliance foreign affairs ministers, during which the Polish situation was reviewed.

I am pleased to announce that those discussions resulted in a unanimous approach concerning urgency plans, but unfortunately I cannot disclose the details of those plans. In addition to that, the ambassadors of member countries of NATO in Brussels have been instructed to follow up the situation in Poland and to review a series of political, diplomatic and economic measures which could be enforced should the situation deteriorate. In the meantime, it would not be appropriate to disclose whether the Canadian government is contemplating any measures.

As for the suggestion that the Canadian government would abandon what has been described as the friendship protocol between Canada and the U.S.S.R., obviously, I cannot for the moment say whether such an action would be appropriate. However, to avoid any confusion, I should underline that the protocol is not in fact a friendship protocol, but rather a protocol concerning consultations during which the Canadian and Soviet governments agreed in 1971 to improve communications between their respective countries, both under normal conditions and in times of crisis. It was never designed as a means of revealing Canadian state secrets or of betraying the confidentiality of communications with allies and friendly countries. Indeed, it was never used for this purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I seriously deplore that there can be such demagoguery in this House on such a serious matter as we have had on the part of the hon. member this evening. He behaved the same way when he asked this question a few days ago. Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member really believes that his protocol between the Soviet Union and Canada is not in the interest of Canada, I wonder why he did not rise to denounce it during the eight or nine months when his party was in power. He kept his mouth shut at the time, and I deplore the fact that we cannot in this country do the same as our southern neighbours when serious issues of foreign policy are raised, and act in a non-partisan manner and avoid the kind of demagoguery that we have seen tonight.

[English]

ENERGY—GASOHOL—INQUIRY WHETHER CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO REMOVAL OF EXCISE TAX

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): I have a topic of major concern and it has to do with our energy supplies in Canada.

It is well known that our ability to produce liquid portable fuels in this country is declining. We are currently importing about one out of every five barrels we consume and the prospects are that in five years we will be importing roughly two barrels out of every five barrels we consume. I want to stress a question I raised in July concerning encouragement by the federal government of the production of ethyl alcohol with the idea of making this country self-sufficient or bringing it closer to that by making use of some of the renewable resources we have. Ethyl alcohol is capable of being produced by a large variety of the crops we grow. There are two or three areas I should like to cover in terms of dispersing some of the myths presently associated with the production of ethyl alcohol. One has to do with the food myth. Many people think it is immoral to take grain and produce alcohol from it.

● (2220)

In actual fact by producing ethyl alcohol we can add to the total food supply in this country. I think it is well known that many countries around the world are capable of producing a lot of starch and sugar, but that is not what is in short supply as far as food is concerned. What is in short supply is protein,