

Nuclear Armaments

in Esquimalt Harbour. What would happen to Esquimalt Harbour and to the whole area of greater Victoria if there were an accident aboard one of those visiting submarines? The study which Greenpeace will be releasing next week will detail the kind of devastation that would take place if that were the case. However, it is important to say that as devastating as that would be, perhaps the most significant factor is not the possibility of a local accident but the fact that by having those submarines in Canadian waters Canada is contributing to a very dangerous policy of the United States.

I should like to quote from the Ploughshares working paper on a nuclear weapons free zone. In part it reads:

Naval nuclear weapons represent a growing danger to world peace. Increasingly, these weapons are becoming warfighting weapons designed for use during a conventional or nuclear war. As such, they are widely recognized to be one of the most likely causes of a nuclear war. The provocative "Maritime Strategy" recently adopted by the U.S. Navy actually calls for attacks against Soviet nuclear submarines early in a conventional war. One purpose of this dangerous plan, according to Admiral James Watkins, former U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, is to "alter the nuclear equation" in favour of the United States prior to a major nuclear war. As Professor Barry Posen of Princeton University has commented, "of all the possible Navy strategies, this one is the most likely to cause the other side to reach for nuclear weapons".

• (1740)

What we are doing by having American nuclear submarines capable of having nuclear arms—the American Government will neither confirm nor deny there are nuclear arms but we can be sure that they do have nuclear arms—is that we are contributing to that very dangerous kind of policy. We have the CF-METR base, the Canadian Forces Marine Experimental Test Range at Nanoose where American submarines are involved in nuclear related anti-submarine warfare exercises. Just last year the agreement for the American use of that base was renewed despite the objection of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast. The request for a public investigation into the use of that base was denied by the Government. It went ahead and negotiated it. That very seriously compromises what the Prime Minister said about not having any nuclear weapons on Canadian soil.

I would urge Members opposite to think of future generations, think of Canadian responsibility, think of what Canada can contribute to the whole possibility of a nuclear free world. I urge them to support this motion made by the Hon. Member for Beaches.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, as a Member for Vancouver East, I am particularly proud to be taking part in this debate on the motion presented by the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young). I would like to read the motion once again:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should consider the advisability of declaring Canada a nuclear arms free zone by prohibiting the deployment, testing, construction and transportation of nuclear weapons and associated equipment through and within Canada, the export of goods and materials for use in the construction and deployment of nuclear arms and further, the Government should encourage cities, provinces and states throughout the world to undertake similar action.

I am particularly proud because I come from the City of Vancouver which, under the past mayor, Mayor Mike Harcourt, was one of the original municipalities in Canada to declare itself a nuclear weapons free zone. My colleague, now the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Ms. Dewar), has been an outstanding Member in this same struggle. She has actively promoted this concept with municipalities throughout Canada. We are asking the Government to take specific action as outlined in the motion.

When I drive into Vancouver coming from the airport I must say I am always very moved by the highway signs which inform me that I am about to enter a nuclear weapons free zone. It is my fondest hope that some day this concept will be enforced not just on land but beyond the shoreline of the Port of Vancouver so that no ships bearing nuclear weapons will be permitted by the federal Government to enter Vancouver harbour. I know there are many other people, citizens of the Vancouver area, who share this desire, many of my constituents in particular.

In asking the Government to consider the desirability of declaring all of Canada a nuclear arms free zone, New Democrats are not embarking on a remote, academic, technical debate about an unimaginable future. We are concerned with the present. This debate is about an issue that affects the families and individuals of all constituencies across Canada. I am particularly concerned about my riding of Vancouver East. Even as Members of this House debate, the nightmare of a nuclear Armageddon is affecting the daily lives of many young children, youths and adult citizens who live, work, study and play in our communities. I know that these young people and their parents in my community of Vancouver join thousands of fellow citizens to march each year to show how strongly they are committed to peace and to the kinds of goals expressed in the motion.

For two generations the human race has lived under the shadow of the bomb and at the sufferance of the powers and principalities that control the bomb. This single inescapable fact has had drastic consequences for the ways in which we think about the present and plan and contemplate for the future. The psychological damage that nuclear armaments have already inflicted on ourselves and our children is not hypothetical. It does not depend on someone, somewhere, someday making a slight miscalculation. It is here. It is now and it is all around us as we talk.

I want to speak as my colleagues did about schoolchildren, children who have not even reached their teens who already wonder out loud whether they will have the chance to grow into adulthood. I want to speak about youngsters I have seen playing in the schoolyards of Vancouver East, children whose watercolours on classroom walls offer bleak, sombre testimony to their vision of a nuclear winter. I want to speak about children who go peacefully to bed only to wake up screaming from nightmares of World War III. This happens to young children in all our communities. Most Members of this House are familiar with recent surveys conducted in this country, the