

On the point which was made by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar that the armistice talks have already strayed into the political and non-political field, I would merely point out that the three main points still in dispute are, first, prisoners of war--a complicated and a very difficult question--the second, airfield construction and repair, and third, supervision of the armistice. The exchange of prisoners of war is a legitimate subject to discuss in military armistice talks, and indeed was one subject which the United Nations Command insisted should be included in the military agenda. It would be hard now to accept the argument that the subject is non-military.

Points two and three are plainly within the military field. Indeed, the only really political subject on the agenda of the armistice talks is point five, recommendations to the governments concerned on both sides, which has been settled quickly and effectively, and which has resulted in agreement, at least in principle, that political discussions should take place over the Korean political settlement.

Certainly, all governments, and that includes the Canadian Government, with forces in Korea, agree as to the desirability of bringing that war to an end as quickly as possible; but, as I have said before, on honourable terms which do not betray the purpose we had in intervening there in the first place. That purpose was--and remains--to defeat aggression there, nothing more. And we have not done that yet.

It is for that reason that the Government supports as a possible first step to peace and the defeat of aggression, the armistice negotiations now being carried on. But also, we must realize that if these negotiations fail, or if the armistice is successfully concluded and then a further aggression is committed by the Communists, a new and possibly a very dangerous situation will arise.

I said in this House last April that if there were massive air attacks from Manchurian bases, retaliatory action might be required against those bases in order to safeguard our forces in Korea. But I then went on to say--and this remains our position--that the decision to authorize such action would have to balance very carefully local military considerations against the risk of precipitating a further extension of the war, with all its grim and incalculable consequences. We are not convinced in this Government that general retaliatory measures such as blockading of the Chinese coast, which was advocated by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra last May, or helping Chiang Kai-shek back on the continent, would be as effective in ending the war in Korea as they would likely be of extending it to China. We feel this way because the best advice that we can get leads us to the conclusion that such measures as that might bring us to the position where, in the words of General Bradley, we find ourselves fighting the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time and with the wrong enemy.

War of course may be forced on us by the Chinese Communists. That is another question. We shall have to take cognizance of that situation if and when it arises. Meanwhile, we should do nothing to extend the war that we can avoid doing. Meanwhile, also, discussions are going on between the governments most concerned--that is, the governments with