

United States and of Canada would be at stake, all our continental, all our NATO defence arrangements and our whole system of collective security which we have built up over recent years would come into play. - In that kind of situation, and I limit it to that kind of situation, how could we be neutral?

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) himself admitted this in his statement. I should like to quote from what he said, as reported on page 2877 of Hansard of April 6:

"Now, if the Minister were merely saying that if a world-wide conflagration breaks out, particularly bearing in mind the power blocs that exist in the world today, because of our geographical position, to put it in the vernacular, we would have had it, one could hardly argue with him."

His leader, the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), had this to say, as reported on page 2356 of Hansard:

"Perhaps the Minister is right. Perhaps if they-- Referring to the United States of America. "were engaged in a major war it would involve us automatically, because of our geographical position with them."

I think that in the circumstances which I have mentioned that is self-evident, but I do not from that draw any such deduction as has been drawn by certain members of this house, most noticeably this afternoon, the most irresponsible being that by the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer); I do not draw any deduction from that statement of automatic assurance of support or willingness to intervene on behalf of or with the United States in any war, major or minor, on the continent of China or any place else where that kind of intervention would take place. Whether support in those circumstances could be counted on from Canada would depend entirely on whether our commitments under NATO were involved, whether there was aggression under the United Nations Charter.

I want to be quite clear about that. Anything that I said in Toronto and anything that I have said here-- I hoped I had made this quite clear the other day but apparently it was not clear enough for the hon. member for Three Rivers--does not mean nor could it fairly be interpreted as meaning that whenever the United States is at war we are bound to participate. It does not mean that we have any obligation to participate in any war except a war against aggression within the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Now when I say that, and I am merely repeating what I said the House the other day, the hon. member for Prince Albert complains that this--I use his own expression-- is watering down our support for United States policy which I gave in my Toronto speech. I do not think it is watering down anything at all. What I tried to do the other day, and what I am trying again to do tonight, is to squeeze some water out of the interpretation given to that Toronto speech by careless commentators. Nevertheless, whatever I may have done in the way of squeezing water out, the speech still seems to remain too strong