

International Peace and Security

What is to be the role of the institute in providing advice to government in its arms limitation negotiations? How can it be entirely independent at one time and then act in concert with the Department of External Affairs in conducting treaty negotiations on the other hand? That gives rise to certain difficulties to my way of thinking.

Our view on this side is that the institute should be as independent as possible. It should not be part and parcel of the Department of External Affairs or have particularly close ties with the Department of National Defence. There have been, Sir, considerable negotiations. I have copies of rather voluminous correspondence between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) on the matters I have just laid before you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to see that these negotiations have been relatively successful. They have been slow, as all government negotiations always appear to be. But it does seem that we have now arrived at some form of common ground. I look forward to the presentation which will follow shortly to be made by the Deputy Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in which some of these conclusions hopefully will be outlined.

In my view, the institute itself should not become a large and overwhelming institution. It should confine its role to that of co-ordinating and recording the work of others. There is a good deal of ongoing thought already in Canada on the question of peace and disarmament in universities and other institutions across the country, as well as elsewhere throughout the world.

● (1440)

One of the most important functions which the institute can do almost immediately would be to institute a central library for publications and for private material on these subjects. The collection and dissemination of factual information, as well as ideas and approaches which in all probability can be just as important as factual information, can be a function of the institute without requiring a great deal of money. It is something which can be accomplished fairly quickly.

We have heard speeches during this debate which suggested certain locations within Canada for the institute. My colleague outlined the good points of his home City of Edmonton as a physical location for the institute. However, it would appear that the most logical place for it would be here in the nation's capital of Ottawa. I do not see any necessity for moving it outside Ottawa. It would be central here, would have access to Government Departments and would be close to the embassies representing other countries throughout the world. It is a sensible, logical place for its physical location.

I would like to make a few last comments on the appointment of the board of 17, as I understand it. Although it has been said before, it is important that there be a good cross-section of expertise on the board. Of course, there should be people with expertise in diplomatic matters and people with knowledge of military affairs. As the Hon. Member for Edmonton South said, there should be people who are used to

handling ideas. We would look in the first instance to universities for people who have these particular talents. I would hope, at least at the start, that the institute would be a Canadian institution rather than trying to be a completely international institution. By far the majority of the directors, at least initially, should be Canadians, perhaps with some representation from other countries which should be kept rather small.

My final comment deals with the executive director of the proposed institute. This is a key position because, as I said before, he will have control of day-to-day affairs and I suspect much of the policy matters of the institute. My nomination for this job would be the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, who unfortunately is unavailable. The possibility has crossed my mind that other ex-Liberal Prime Ministers could be candidates for the office—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please.

Mr. Nickerson: I have only one sentence more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The Chair has been reminding Hon. Members most of the morning to try to abide by the Standing Orders and to deal with the principle of the Bill. Most of the speech of the Hon. Member, as interesting as it was, dealt with particular aspects of or clauses in the Bill. For the information of the next speakers, I would like to remind them to speak to the principle of the Bill. The only way that Hon. Members may get to the nitty-gritties or to the clauses of the Bill is to pass second reading and have it go into committee.

Mr. Nielsen: No, no.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): I am suggesting this just from a procedural standpoint. I quoted Beauchesne's this morning, but it appears not to have stopped Hon. Members from dealing with particular clauses in the Bill.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, since I will be the final speaker for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition on this Bill, it may be that I may exceed the regulation 20 minutes, but I would presume that if that happens, consent would be forthcoming to allow me to complete my remarks.

As spokesmen for my Party have made clear, we welcome the establishment of a Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. Indeed, our Leader indicated to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) last April 9, after receiving the draft Bill from the Prime Minister, that the requirement in Canada for institutional restructuring and innovation in this field is beyond question. However, as has been made clear to the Government both before and after Bill C-32 was introduced into the House, we view the Bill as proposed to be fatally flawed in respect of the lack of independence of the centre, its lack of accountability to Parliament and the potentially negative effect that private funding of the centre might have on existing, indigenous centres of research.

In a lengthy letter of April 9 to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) detailed these con-