

Supply—National Defence

burden with you any more. We are withdrawing. We are going back across the Atlantic."

Is that the language of realism in this year of grace and international disturbance, 1961? Is this the lesson that we have learned in recent years in the international field, that Canada can withdraw, live unto herself and take the attitude of a pious nation that has no great concern with the problems of other nations a little closer to the areas of aggression in the world today?

So, Mr. Chairman, let it be clearly understood that, so far as the government is concerned, we believe in the honourable implementation of Canada's obligations. We believe as well that it is a good thing for Canada to have allies. We believe in saying to these allies that we are not going to turn tail and leave them in the lurch, that we are not going to be parties to signalling any retreat from NATO. We stand squarely for NATO. We recognize it is not perfect. We recognize that it is a human instrument and there will be difficulties as long as it operates through human beings and as long as we have strife and the threat of aggression in the world today. But with all its shortcomings this is the instrument that has preserved not only Canada's freedom but the freedom of the western world, and we want that freedom to be preserved. We are not prepared to accept the invitation of the C.C.F. to dishonour Canada's obligations.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, the amendment that we are invited to support has brought out into the open in the House of Commons, in respect of this vital matter of collective security, the position of the C.C.F.-socialist party. It is now perfectly clear and perhaps it is just as well that it should be so.

I do not always agree with the Minister of Finance but on the argument he made tonight I agree with him 100 per cent. As the minister has said, we are being invited by this amendment to run out on our commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to the principle of Atlantic collective security. That course would not only be humiliating for Canadians, it would be disastrous and would have effects which would be felt far beyond the borders of our own country at this particular moment when the threat to our security persists and the danger is still present as it was ten or 11 years ago when we founded NATO.

The danger has changed, the threats have been modified and I have no doubt in my own mind that the organization which we founded in those earlier years should also be altered and modified to meet these changing threats and changing dangers. But the threats

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

and the dangers are still there and in the circumstances they require an organization for collective security.

Mr. Regier: What about the United Nations?

Mr. Pearson: I will come to the United Nations in a moment. My hon. friends to the right cannot arrogate unto themselves exclusive virtue on this matter of support for the United Nations. We will consider that in a few moments.

This amendment, Mr. Chairman, is really a withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This is a vote of no confidence in Atlantic collective security, and we are opposed to it. With all its faults—and it has had its setbacks; as the minister pointed out, it is a human organization—NATO has done great things for freedom and security in the last dozen years. Perhaps if it had not been for NATO and for what it stood during these dangerous years in the late forties and early fifties when the eastern steamroller was moving across Europe, perhaps if it had not been for this demonstration of western solidarity and collective security, the hon. member for Assiniboia would not be able to move this amendment in this free parliament tonight.

My hon. friends in the corner say, what about the United Nations? Well, there is nothing contradictory about supporting NATO and supporting the United Nations, and there never has been. If the United Nations could only give us on a universal scale the kind of collective security we want, and we hope one day we will get, there would be no need for NATO. I hope it may come to that, and we will be able to scrap NATO in favour of a bigger, better, universal organization. This is the purpose of the charter of the United Nations, but we have not realized that purpose. Until we do realize that purpose we are entitled, as free members of the international community, to band ourselves together in regional organizations for collective security. What we have done under NATO is what I hope we will continue to do as long as NATO performs this collective function and as long as the necessity for collective security persists.

When I support NATO I never feel that this is any reflection on my wholehearted support of the United Nations. I never have felt that way and I do not feel that way tonight. I agree with what the hon. member for Assiniboia has said that we should do all those things under the United Nations that we can do. We should build up security. But until we can do these things in the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization still has value for us.