

Supply—National Defence

Now, let us look a little further. The position that has been taken by the hon. member for Assiniboia, presumably the official position of the C.C.F. and New Party, is that—

Mr. Argue: Quite correct.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):—Canada should now withdraw from NATO. Let me ask the committee to consider one or two facts in this regard. First, think of what Europe was like, and think of the position of the free world before NATO. I saw a good deal of western Europe and most of the countries there just before the North Atlantic Treaty was entered into. For Canada's part in the writing of that treaty I think all must take satisfaction, and for the part that Mr. St. Laurent played in that we give him full credit. It was an honourable page in Canada's history.

Mr. Hellyer: And the Leader of the Opposition. Do not overlook his part.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): May I continue? It will not be necessary to offer these coaching suggestions. I know something as well of the part which the present Leader of the Opposition played in bringing about the North Atlantic alliance, and all of us on this side of the house give him full credit for the part he played in the Canadian role in that alliance.

What was the situation then, Mr. Chairman? The fact is that until the alliance welded together the countries of western Europe to face the power of an aggressive communist bloc there had been no front presented to the westward march of the iron curtain and one country after another had fallen behind the iron curtain and had been reduced to the role of a satellite of the U.S.S.R. It was to erect an effective barrier against the westward march of the iron curtain that the North Atlantic alliance was brought into being.

Has NATO fulfilled its hopes? Yes, Mr. Chairman. It may not have fulfilled them all. NATO is not a perfect instrument. It is a man-made instrument and it has human imperfections and plenty of them. But the fact is that NATO has rendered to the free western world an inestimable benefit. Had it not been for the NATO alliance the history of the world in the past 12 years might have been very different.

You do not bring about great results such as have been achieved under NATO without sacrifice and without cost, and Canada's participation in NATO has not been without sacrifice or without cost on her part. But whatever part Canada has played, and it has been an honourable one, in bearing the cost and the sacrifice has been our contribution to the preservation of freedom in the western

world. It was not simply a case of preserving our own hides as a nation. It was a case of making our contribution as an important nation in the free world to the preservation of the freedom of the west because we had seen that countries, if they chose to remain divided, could expect to fall one by one like ripe plums into the U.S.S.R. basket. So let us be under no illusions about the effective role that NATO has played in the preservation of the freedom of the west.

It is all very well, Mr. Chairman, to talk about the failure to implement article 2 of the NATO treaty. It is quite true that this article has not been employed in the way that its terms would have suggested or in the way in which the nations probably expected it would work at the time they entered into the alliance. There have been difficulties in the economic field but the fact is that the O.E.E.C. played a very important part in filling the gap that the implementation of article 2 of the NATO treaty was intended to fill. That organization is now in the process of being transformed into the O.E.C.D., with more effective participation intended now by Canada and the United States as full members instead of merely associate members as they were before. The O.E.C.D. is wider in its membership than NATO. It embraces not only the members of NATO but the neutral countries of western Europe as well.

So it cannot be said that there is any great gap left in the economic growth of the North Atlantic area by reason of the failure to give literal implementation to the terms of article 2 of the NATO treaty. The fact is that O.E.E.C. and then O.E.C.D. have played a very effective role in this respect.

The immediate question, Mr. Chairman, is: Shall Canada default on her obligations to NATO, to the other allies in this alliance? The C.C.F. party may think that Canada does not need allies in this world. Perhaps there have been other countries in the past that entertained that idea. Some of them woke up to a dreadful day of reckoning. I think most Canadians will feel that in the kind of world in which we find ourselves today it is not a bad thing for Canada to have allies. How long would Canada have allies if she now chose the role which she is invited by the C.C.F. to take and became a defaulter and renounced the obligations she entered into in favour of her allies? This is the issue presented by this amendment tonight.

Shall we say to those who have entered into this defence partnership with us: "We are leaving you, we want no more of you. We realize that you have got to carry a burden but we are not going to share that