

*The Address—Mr. Picard*

think Canadians should consider what are the interests of their own country. We have our Atlantic and Pacific shores to defend. If war ever breaks out we may be subjected to a submarine menace that will be much worse than it was when the Germans controlled the Atlantic with a few submarines. The Russians evidently have more. We have none, and it is no secret that the allies cannot cope with that menace at the present time. Everybody knows it.

This is a field which should be investigated by the government before we commit all our strength overseas. It is necessary for us to build up our air defences for use in Canada and not send everything abroad, because nobody can tell now where the front line will be. It may well be here in Canada. With the development of air power an attack may come from the north and we may be among the first to be hit. I heard a most distressing and discouraging opinion from one European, which shows some of the ideas they have over there. He said: "You are quite lucky. In the first attack you will probably get about nine atomic bombs and some of your cities at any rate will be through with them. In our case we will not be considered that important. We will just get 500-tonners. As in the last war we will have our wounded, and our buildings will be down; but we will have to live through it because the Russians will want to keep us while on the other hand in trying to invade the United States they will fly over your country and in passing by they will drop a few on you."

One way or the other I think we might very well be in the front line. Nobody can predict where the front line will be. The first incident took place in Korea. The next one may well be in the Middle East, and nobody knows where the third attack will come, in Europe or on us if they ever decide to do so. I doubt that they will, but that is another matter that will take too long to go into. However, if the blow ever should come it might very well fall directly on us; then we would be the first line of defence. Therefore I think the government, so far as their defence policy is concerned, should consider Canadian interests first and train and keep at home as far as possible all the air squadrons necessary to defend our country. Like everyone else I know what we hear here and there about what is being done by way of constructing radar chains throughout the country. That is one thing, but once you know the enemy is coming you must have somebody prepared to meet them.

I think it is time we knew exactly, in definite terms, what is the government's

policy for the defence of the country; not only our commitments abroad but how we intend to defend our country, because we do not know where these people will strike if they ever decide to do so.

That brings us to the much greater consideration of whether they will. I am one who said a few years ago that I thought Russia wanted twenty years of peace; perhaps of cold war, but not of shooting war, in order that they may bring to a higher level the standard of living of her population. I stated then that I thought she would not provoke a definite incident which might ignite the powder. I may be wrong. A lot of people think I am. A lot of people think Russia will strike any day, within a year, two years or three years. Personally I still do not believe that such an element in Russia will be the one to dominate the policies of the Politburo. I still think they will want to continue the cold war, try to raise the standard of living of their population and bring about a higher degree of productivity.

Then with the manpower they possess, and with which we can hardly cope, they will be able to attack provided they wait long enough and do not act on the spur of the moment as did Hitler, or consult astrologers and so on. I believe that guided by hard tactics alone they will wait until the moment they believe they will have a chance to win a victory. There are those who fear that the people on the other side may provoke an incident. I hope the reason and strength of mind of the people of the democracies will not bring about that situation.

I think that sooner or later, and the sooner the better, we should have a statement from the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) on the general defence policies of the country, not something piecemeal or a statement made outside of the country.

No matter what has been said, I am one of those who think such statements should be made in the house. I believe there should be enough liberty of speech in the house—and I think there is—that when a member feels the way I do on this question he ought to say so. No matter how much one may think the government may be better than its opponents, I think it is not to the advantage of parliament or of democratic institutions when such things are done as the minister, whom I respect and like personally, did by a slip of the tongue, if we may call it that, in announcing policies abroad rather than in the house.

This house has gone through many attacks. Parliament in general and our democratic