

NATO—European Defence Community

years ago; but then we did not dream that we would have the kind of world to live in that we have today. Because of that fact these commitments of course have become necessary.

The last point I want to make in connection with these commitments and obligations is this. This government and we in this parliament will make a grievous error—the results of which will be reflected upon them and upon us and upon the Canadian people in general—if, while this vast network is being instituted and established, they and we do not tell the people of Canada exactly what we are doing, why we are doing it and what would be the alternative if we refused to do it. Those are the things that are bothering the public today. Those are the things about which the public may perhaps be less informed than we in parliament could make them. Therein, in my opinion, lie the germs of certain dangers in this country which may become greater as the period of intense activity is prolonged. We may as well face, frankly and openly, the fact that our resources of perseverance, resolution and determination are going to be called upon to an extent beyond anything the people of this country have ever experienced before, in order to carry on during this critical time of what we call the cold war.

I have said before, and I say it again, that it is difficult for democratic governments and parliaments when they are trying to superimpose, upon a normal basis of the peacetime economy, a vast defence preparedness program costing not millions but billions of dollars annually, to do it without that support which during war is known as wartime mass psychology. That is something which, thank God, we have not in Canada today. Having in mind those two important features, I think our present situation calls for a greater measure of taking into the complete confidence of the government and of parliament Canadians in every walk of life and calls for telling them in plain, unvarnished, understandable language exactly what is being done, why we are doing it, the cost to each one of them in the process, and the alternatives that we would face were a different policy to be pursued by this country in its quest and search for peace.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced we have a heavy responsibility with respect to our international affairs. I think the situation has become more critical than ever of recent times. At this vital stage of the proceedings when we, and those powers associated with us, are trying with every bit of diplomatic skill which can be summoned to their aid to see whether the ship of peace cannot be

kept sailing in untroubled waters, I hope that we in this parliament, regardless of where we sit, will take our responsibilities seriously to the point where we will back up those who are with us, without too much carping criticism of those in other lands who are trying to carry the heavy burden and responsibility of saving the peace. So far as it is possible, let us try to march together, arm in arm, in measured tread, not towards war but towards a great adventure, that of saving the peace of the world in our time.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, I suppose that anyone who rises to discuss this protocol and the implications attached to it must be conscious of some responsibility. In introducing the resolution approving of the protocol this morning, the minister said that this was probably the most important matter which would come before the house at this session or at this time. I agree with him in that respect. I would say that I think it is the most gravely important matter that we have had before parliament this session or that we are likely to have before parliament for a considerable time.

I want to say at once that, in view of the world situation, defence agreements among the anti-totalitarian nations of the world are essential. I noted that the minister said—and in this I think he was expressing a word of caution—that the ratification of the protocol would not be followed immediately by its deposit with the United States government, as is required. In other words, to that extent Canada will follow a wait-and-see policy. Personally I think that procedure is wise. This protocol in effect extends our obligations under the North Atlantic treaty. It brings into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as it were, under the European defence plan, contingents of troops and other forces which will be raised in Western Germany. As the minister pointed out, the protocol states:

The present protocol shall remain in force for so long as the North Atlantic treaty and the treaty setting up the European defence community remain in force and the parties to the latter treaty continue to give, in respect of themselves and the European defence forces, guarantees to the parties to the North Atlantic treaty equivalent to the guarantees contained in the present protocol.

In other words, the defence forces which are mentioned as included in this protocol are, as the minister stated, in existence only on paper as yet. But it is an important consideration when we are discussing the protocol.

May I just remark in passing, Mr. Speaker, something that I have remarked before, namely that we are today considering what the minister says—and in this I agree with him—is probably the most important document that will come before this parliament