

*Abandonment of Defence Projects*

we merely try to add a pittance to the total fire power of the western side does not make sense.

Perhaps, then, we should see whether our efforts are going to help to add to the control of that fire power. Do we have a voice which will enable the fire power which exists on the western side to be more effective in our defence? Again, no one on the government side, in fact no one in this house, has ever attempted to suggest that we can pretend, through any alliance we make or any action we take in this house, to gain for ourselves a voice which will be effective enough to increase our defence by giving us a control over the total weapons of the western world. If we are to look at the matter realistically, if we cannot contribute to total defence because there is already too much, and if we cannot share in world control of these nuclear weapons which are already so complete in themselves, then obviously if we are to make any contribution to our friends, our allies and the world at large we must make it in a role where Canada can play an honourable and responsible part, maintaining our voice in its proper perspective, protecting as best we can our right to be heard in world councils, and our right not to be dictated to by anyone, whether they be friend or anybody else.

I will not attempt, Mr. Speaker, to deal tonight with the methods by which we might attain some of these objectives under NATO or United Nations auspices. In the field of defence only, I would suggest that concern with weapons, if we are to have our own voice and control of them, must be confined to those weapons which we can handle, use, hold and control by ourselves. Whether the make-up of our own particular forces differs from that of our allies does not matter. Whether we are merely one unit of ten identical units on the western side should not matter too much. But if we have our own distinctive unit made up of our own contribution, in co-operation proportionately with our allies, it seems to me that this is the most we can hope to contribute to our defence and the defence of the western world.

Therefore I suggest that any proposal that we take nuclear weapons can only complicate the question of control. It can only complicate our relations with our allies and friends, and unless handled with tremendous skill lead to suspicion that we are asking too big a voice, and therefore alienating our friends, or that we are asking too little a voice, and therefore losing our self-respect. Certainly to demand less than our fair share of the voice of the western world is to surrender some of our sovereignty. I note, as I am sure all hon. members noted, the remarks and reassurances of

[Mr. Nugent.]

the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) that the arrangements made for acquiring nuclear weapons on Canadian soil have not involved loss of sovereignty. This is very encouraging Mr. Speaker if we can place any reliance on it. However, a little review of this question of nuclear weapons and the difficulties posed by control does little to reassure us on this score.

The Prime Minister has referred in this house to the long arguments and the frustrating attempts to reach agreement in this regard. To put it very simply, that degree of control of nuclear weapons which is consistent with our sovereignty has always been taken as a further expansion of the nuclear club which would unsettle world conditions and really not increase our defence. Any control less than that, any nuclear weapons on our soil over which we did not have full voice, must of necessity involve a loss of sovereignty.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we be reminded that one of the purposes of our defence policy is to protect our sovereignty. For at least four years the previous government wrestled with this problem, but were unable to solve it because it was not capable of solution without loss of sovereignty. I am suggesting that despite the assurances of the Prime Minister, and despite anything that can be said along that line, we cannot accede to the proposition that Canada, in accepting nuclear weapons, has not given up its sovereignty. Common sense rejects it. The experience of the number of years we have spent in trying to arrive at a solution but could not find one is further evidence. France pulled out of her close alliance with the United States on this same subject. I should like to refer to the answer given by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) in this house.

It will help us to understand where we are with regard to this nuclear question. I asked the right hon. gentleman whether he was ashamed of acquiring nuclear weapons. His answer was that it was a mistaken policy—that we were in error when we entered upon any agreement to take them. But, he said, having entered upon an agreement it was necessary to take these weapons. In a further question I reminded him that a further agreement was necessary before these weapons were made available; would this not give us a way out? The Prime Minister replied that this was perfectly true, that it had taken the previous government four years to make up its mind whether or not to accept that agreement and that, meanwhile, we had spent a billion dollars on this equipment. That exchange is to be found on page 791 of *Hansard* for June 7.