

Supply—National Defence

number of reasons; for one, it had a useful purpose.

When the minister reduced the strength of that reserve unit at the University of Sherbrooke, he should also have considered the strength of reserve units in the other provinces. Money had been expended on this unit and it should have been maintained in Quebec. It had the effect of encouraging Quebecers, particularly French Canadian students, to participate in the defence of their country. There were complaints in the past to the effect that French Canadians were losing interest in the defence of their country and were not doing their share. A great deal of efforts went into obtaining a naval reserve unit at the University of Sherbrooke, and now we are dealt this back-handed blow. Re-establishment of this reserve unit at the University of Sherbrooke would mean that French Canadian students would get their fair share.

[*English*]

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Chairman, earlier this afternoon the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre made an appeal to history, always a very rash and dangerous thing to do. The hon. member's appeal to history was to prove what I suppose all of us know, that the history of mankind has been painfully bloody ever since it was first recorded.

But history can be appealed to in another way also, and I would suggest to the hon. member and to those who think like him that you cannot pick up the thread of history at this point and say that this is the end, that it is at this point that you will make your appeal. Because history will now tell us that never before in human existence have great powers had at their disposal such tremendous powers of destruction by which they may eliminate not merely civilization but mankind itself. This, I submit, Mr. Chairman, is the supreme fact of today, and it is a fact which is entirely overlooked by those who propose plans for military expenditures and those who criticize them on specific points.

It appears to me that this great fact of history renders virtually all this debate quite senseless, without value. It is sometimes imagined that science has placed tremendous power in the hands of the war makers, whereas I think we have already had historic evidence that, so far from doing this, the juggernaut of science and technology has overwhelmed war and military planners and

renders and rendered them, helpless and impotent. Consequently we must get the idea through our heads, and the sooner we do so the better, that we must devise a reasonable and practicable method of dealing with our neighbours in this troubled world.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Let us examine for a moment, Mr. Chairman, the arguments that are advanced for Canada's so-called defence expenditures. I think they have to be divided quite sharply into two categories. One with which I propose to deal more extensively later is the category which concerns our commitments under the United Nations for peace keeping services throughout the world, and the other is as a contribution to the power of the great neighbour to the south, the United States of America, to aid it to contain communism and to protect the west from the evils of communism. Let us boil it down to real facts, because we talk about alliances, and so on. I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that this breaks down into a contribution to the power of the United States to protect the free world, and to another part where we should actually contribute forces which will be actually deployed in combat against communist areas of the world. I suggest that this is a very feeble argument, because any contribution that we can make on that score would be so minuscule as to be derisory.

We have passed the era in history where nations such as Canada can make a measurable contribution to the waging of war. Let us get that straight through our heads. Let us not look at the first or the second world wars, when things were different, because that is not the situation today. The argument is produced that the growth of armaments in the present world is due to their deterrent power. This may be true. Again, I suggest that Canada is in no position whatever to add to the deterrent power of the United States. In fact, it is ridiculous to suggest that we are in that position. The only occasion upon which that deterrent power has actually been deployed was during the Cuban crisis some two years ago when Canada was not even informed, let alone consulted. Our neighbour to the south realized that we could contribute nothing. Their deterrent power was the only power they had, and the only power with which they could accomplish what they sought to accomplish. Any contribution of ours would have been completely pointless and meaningless. I suggest it is in this context that we ought to be considering these defence expenditures.