

● (5:40 p.m.)

We can exert influence because of our membership in NATO. We would not be a member of the 18-nation disarmament commission of the United Nations if we were not a NATO member. If we want to have any influence on the terms of any détente which the United States is trying to work out with Russia, we will not do it by withdrawing our troops. I have had some slight association with the Russians. You cannot deal with the Soviet Union from weakness. This is something they do not understand.

Canadians are well thought of and reliable. Our opinion is highly regarded abroad. The influence we can exert in NATO would be highly respected. If we reduce our forces in NATO there is a great danger they will be replaced by German forces. The Germans make no secret of this. We are told the Soviet Union would be greatly alarmed by even a moderate German rearmament. This might provoke the Soviet Union into some misguided military venture. We do not want to be responsible for increasing the dangers of war.

A troop reduction at the present time could be infectious. Other countries may decide to do the same thing. This would play into Soviet hands. The Soviets are trying to hold up NATO as some kind of a force run by the United States and Germany.

Finally, if we are to have military forces, where can 10 per cent of them be better employed than by peace-keeping at the principal friction point between the only two great powers at present? A war between them could destroy Canada. We can well use 85 per cent of our other forces for U.N. peacekeeping and protecting the Arctic, against whom I am not sure, and other places.

We have heard a lot of vague generalities murky thinking, and platitudes from the Prime Minister and other government spokesmen. We have not yet heard any real reason why we should reduce our forces at present in NATO.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the house that a message has been received from the Senate informing this house that the Senate has agreed to the amendment made by the House of Commons to Bill S-28, an act to amend the Co-operative Credit Association Act, without any amendment.

NATO GOVERNMENT ORDERS

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Trudeau:

That this house supports the government's policy of continued Canadian participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the intention of the government, in consultation with Canada's allies, to take early steps to bring about a planned and phased reduction of the size of Canadian forces in Europe.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, like several others who have taken part or will take part in this debate, I have returned from a visit to Europe by the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. I would like to preface my contribution by stating that wherever we went we were assured that Canadian forces, whether on NATO assignments or on peace-keeping roles, were a great credit to Canada. I want to make it clear that although I propose a radically altered role for the Canadian forces, I believe that the Canadian armed services can make, properly directed, a decisively important contribution to the security of Canada and the world.

The basic problem of defence is to use the available resources to make the maximum contribution to the security of Canada and of the world. The security of Canada is tied up with the security of the world; it cannot be separated from it. We cannot buy security by piling up forces in a continental North American fortress if there is chaos and insecurity in the rest of the world.

It is our complaint that the government's current policy, so far as one can guess at it from the statements made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) elsewhere and in this debate, is directed at the wrong threats and therefore adopts the wrong priorities. The greatest threat to the world today does not lie in a likelihood of a massive nuclear attack on North America, or indeed of any sort of military attack on North America. With the massive invulnerable power of nuclear retaliation possessed by the United States, any such attack would be madness. To attribute madness to potential opponents is itself folly, which leads inevitably to colossal waste. Nor is the threat of an all-out attack by Soviet