

*Supply—National Defence*

out just where we are in defence spending and just what we are getting for our money. We are not going to get it merely by having the minister read a prepared speech to us today, a speech in extremely broad and general terms which tells us nothing. We are only going to get the information that the people of Canada deserve to have and have a perfect right to have if a committee of the house is established to go into the matter with full power to hear from responsible officers of the armed forces. The same procedure that is adopted in Washington could be adopted in Ottawa. You will note that in all these reports from Washington there is reference to the reports of this committee. Many of the meetings are held in camera, but the representatives of the American people are informed as to what the United States taxpayers are getting for their money in the way of defence. But here we get not a word.

If this is all, then I suggest the minister will have to do a very much better selling job to the Canadian people in the future than he has done in the past. There is nothing here to indicate that in Canada we have anything in the way of modern, up to date weapons of defence. There is nothing whatever to indicate that our Canadian defence authorities are even taking into consideration the developments which are taking place in other parts of the world. It may be that our government has decided that it is beyond our means to get into this particular type of struggle and competition. That may very well be true, but I would suggest again that when one of our allies—and more than an ally, I suggest; the United Kingdom—has suggested that it is willing to co-operate with the other members of NATO and the western world in research and development on modern weapons, then the Minister of National Defence would be on better ground if he came to parliament with a request for appropriations to enable the Canadian government to take advantage of that offer, rather than to come before us seeking appropriations for weapons which I am quite sure he would not dare deny are obsolete before they ever reach the armed forces. If the minister feels that is wrong, I hope he will try to justify these expenditures we are making. He has not done so yet.

We are told that we not only have the defence of North America to consider but also our commitments under NATO. I would suggest that the developments of the last few months have demonstrated pretty clearly that NATO as a military organization has almost passed out of the picture. In fact that is the obvious reason the three wise men or the three blind mice have been set to work to

discover a more effective role for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I think we can take it for granted that since the United States strategic bomber command succeeded in establishing bases on the perimeter of the North Atlantic area, the value of NATO from a military point of view has declined almost to the vanishing point.

I see the minister is shaking his head. He will shake his head until next year, when he will tell us that we all know NATO is no longer of any particular importance. Now we are told that it is one of our most important commitments.

We also have our commitment under the United Nations charter. It seems to me that this commitment must primarily be a commitment to take part in a United Nations police force to put down or deter outbreaks of war on a minor scale in different parts of the world. I think most people will agree that the United Nations is quite obviously not the organization that is going to stop a major global war, because members of the United Nations in that case will be the opposing forces. But it is of value yet in the prevention and discouragement of outbreaks of war on a small scale in different parts of the world, and for that Canada must maintain what the minister has described this afternoon as a mobile striking force.

But again I suggest that striking force must be equipped with modern weapons and must not be equipped with the weapons of world war II, even the more developed and streamlined versions of those weapons, because they would be quite incapable of meeting the situation we would face in playing our part in that particular commitment.

I think also that before we embark on any more military experiments we should make up our minds about one thing, and that is the western world's position vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. This afternoon the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich voiced the view that in his opinion, and the opinion of many others he quoted, the danger of a global war is perhaps more remote now than it has been for many years past. I think most of us can perhaps agree with that position, that on an objective view of it there is very little to encourage the Soviet union to embark on a full-scale global war because of the disastrous and inevitable consequences to both sides in such a conflict.

Therefore I think we have to decide just what our position is with regard to the Soviet union. I have been somewhat uneasy of late in noting the lag in thinking in the western world with regard to the real dangers from the communist world; our preoccupation with the development of military means rather