

Adjournment Debate

mark. In this year's Estimates it looks as if the program will receive \$8.8 million per year.

While the Minister was talking about increasing the funding for this program to \$15 million in 1989 what he has not talked about is that he has stripped the program of \$15 million over the last four years. He is now coming along and saying, "Well, we are going to throw some more money in here. It will look good to senior citizens. They will think that we are finally responding to their needs. Therefore, all the senior citizens will trot out and vote for us in the next election". The Minister is dreaming. Senior citizens know what the Government has done to them in successive Budgets. They have been around a long time. They bring a great deal of wisdom to bear. They have seen many Governments come and go. This Government will not be able to pull the wool over their eyes.

I see that my time has practically expired. May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member may call it six o'clock. He will have five minutes left in his speech when debate on the Budget resumes. I do not know when that will be. He will also have 10 minutes for questions and comments.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION—ARMS GAP BETWEEN NATO AND WARSAW PACT NATIONS

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, on September 21, 1987, I raised a question respecting the arms gap between NATO and Warsaw Pact nations particularly because of the agreement that was about to be reached with respect to short and medium-range missiles.

• (1800)

This question is one of the most important, demanding questions that could be raised with regard to national defence. We are not a neutral country. We are a member of an alliance, an alliance that establishes that an attack on one member state in the alliance is an attack upon all. That NATO alliance has been one of the major reasons why peace has been sustained in Europe since World War II. The effectiveness of the NATO deterrents has been established. For many years that deterrent has been based upon NATO having sufficient nuclear strength that any attack by the Warsaw Pact nations would have been futile, counterproductive, and self-destructive.

We have to face the fact now that, as the western nations, particularly the United States, are moving quite admirably in

the direction of nuclear reduction, we are losing some of the deterrent capability of NATO. We are losing it because we have always been seriously and critically inferior to the Warsaw Pact nations. It is a question of doubt in the near future as to whether the NATO nations will have the deterrent effect upon the Warsaw Pact that they have exercised for 40 years.

One sees that when one considers the type of disparity between the NATO and Warsaw Pact nations. Let us consider the following. NATO has 53 divisions of combat groups; the Warsaw Pact nations have 72. NATO has 8,799 tanks; the Warsaw Pact nations have 24,200 tanks. NATO has 1,834 combat planes; the Warsaw Pact nations have 2,997 planes.

It is clear that, on the basis of conventional arms alone, NATO is critically inferior to the capability of the Warsaw Pact nations. This is particularly so in the instance of the Canadian brigade. We support this Government. That can be greatly encouraged by the way in which the Government has increased the force of the Canadian brigade in NATO. This increase has not only improved the morale of our troops there, but improved the respect with which Canada is held by its NATO partners.

Just consider these matters, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian brigade, in spite of it receiving an additional number of combat troops, lacks even a field hospital to care for the wounded, should we be involved in combat. The NATO brigade is depending on the civilian hospital at Lahr, Germany. The Warsaw Pact nations have guns that can destroy any Canadian tank with a single shot. On the other hand, the Warsaw Pact nations have tanks that no Canadian gun can penetrate.

Therefore, I raise this issue in the House this evening to encourage the Government to continue or even to escalate the efforts that it is making to increase and improve Canada's defence capability on this continent, and particularly in Europe. As Canadians we have always believed that it is better to have the conflict there. That is one reason why for 40 years we have devoted ourselves to participating in NATO. But we have to see that this is a critical question now. If NATO is to be effective, it must have sufficient capability to deter potential Soviet aggression. I am not looking only to the short term. We know for now Moscow has a Government that is more interested in other priorities. That Government may not last forever.

• (1805)

We may very well, before many years have gone by, see the Soviet Union under an administration that will be interested in aggression. For those in the House or in the public concerned about the moral dimension of this, I quote from a papal message to the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in June, 1982, in which His Holiness said:

In current conditions, deterrence based on balance . . . may still be judged morally acceptable.