

Government Orders

• (1935)

It has been stated that the role of the Canadian military—and I stress Canadian—must and will be reviewed during the course of this Parliament.

As an extension of this objective, I would state that the Canadian government must also examine our national objectives under the 1993 bilateral agreement with the United States relative to cruise testing. Notwithstanding that agreement, as stated previously, we reserve the right to say no.

In the 1992–93 fiscal year the Department of National Defence spent some \$148 million in modernizing our air defence systems as well as an additional \$175 million for low level air defence systems.

It is possible to conclude that by allowing these tests to proceed we will constantly find ourselves in need of more sophisticated air defence systems as a result of the technologies we are allowing to be tested by the Americans over Canadian territory.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for affording the members of this House the opportunity to speak on this important national issue, knowing that when a decision is made he will have heard a broad cross-section of views from all of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Madam Speaker, since the early afternoon, I have been listening carefully to all the speeches on the need for these tests to be conducted within the Canadian territorial boundaries. Before putting a question to the hon. member, I would like to say a few words about the debate.

I think this piecemeal approach to Canada's national defence that we have had since yesterday could be dangerous. We should have a much broader outlook. It is always better to set a problem in a global context than to narrow our focus too much. This prompts me to say that I hope that eventually the Minister of National Defence will undertake a comprehensive defence review.

We are presently dealing with a more specific case. Earlier, the hon. member for Portneuf clearly described in his speech the technical aspects of the testing to be conducted over Canadian territory. It is aimed mainly at developing a technology that does not increase the power derived from nuclear energy. It is a guidance system that could have applications in other areas.

I think we must be careful not to get side-tracked on the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons. That is not the point. Of course, missiles can have a nuclear capability. That is true, but from the point of view of wanting to achieve disarmament someday—and no one can have anything against being virtuous—we should not ignore the power of our American allies in most of the military operations we take part in. We must also

work extremely closely with them. Co-operation could take such a form. Their power of deterrence has been tremendous.

This leads me to my question: Would we not be sending out a dangerous signal to the whole world if we were to object to and oppose these tests, perhaps weakening our alliance with our American friends? I am neither pro nor anti-American. I am just pro-peace and realistic. Would we not be sending out a dangerous signal if we were to say that we do not want this kind of testing to be conducted over our territory because we are for the peaceful resolution of conflicts? Has the U.S. policy not succeeded to some degree in recent years in advancing the cause of disarmament?

[*English*]

Mr. Gallaway: Madam Speaker, the hon. member raises an interesting point and makes an interesting quotation, that is that with respect to the Americans we must co-operate with them.

I do not know in terms of Canadian objectives that we must in all cases co-operate with the Americans. Certainly recent history has indicated to us that the Americans do not reciprocate with Canada. I can think of many examples the hon. member may not be aware of.

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For example, about a year and a half ago the American border patrol at all crossing points decided that it would take direct action against Canadian trucking firms. The method of doing that was simply to check the record of every driver crossing the border. It happens that a number of Canadian truck drivers have rather insignificant criminal matters in their past, such as the smoking of cannabis, impaired driving, or minor theft and assault charges. In any event, under American law the American border patrol can prevent them from entering the United States. That is one very trite example of the Americans not co-operating with us.

We heard about numerous trade matters during the election, including the seven appeals regarding pork bellies made by the United States. There are many times when we do not agree with the Americans.

The suggestion that we must co-operate with the Americans on military matters is not necessarily correct. I also believe that recent history, recent in terms of world history, specifically World War II, would indicate that the Americans did not co-operate with us in the sense that they did not enter into the battle until well after Canada did. So I do not think we must follow blindly.

I suggest to the hon. member opposite that he should consider that there are times when we can and we ought to say no to the Americans and this is probably a time when it should be a very definite no.

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. In listening to this debate today I am becoming increasingly