

NATO

Mr. Stanfield: It is a slander on the many and varied constructive roles that the Canadian people and Canadian governments have played in world affairs and in furthering world peace in the last 20 years. The Prime Minister says our foreign policy is under review; it is not yet determined and it will not be determined for a long time. He is going to be very careful about it. Foreign policy, says the Prime Minister, must determine defence policy. But foreign policy is not yet decided. Therefore anyone as naïve as I am would assume that defence policy will not be decided until foreign policy has been decided.

But in the same speech in Calgary the Prime Minister indicated that he and his government had settled upon four priorities of a new defence policy. They had not settled their foreign policy but they had settled the four basic priorities of a new defence policy. The emphasis was to be put, first, on the defence of Canadian sovereignty. I do not know what that means, but "sovereignty" seems to be a word that fascinates the Prime Minister. The emphasis was to be, second, on the defence of Canadian territory and continental defence; third, on our association with NATO and, fourth, on U.N. peacekeeping. These were the four priorities of a new defence policy announced by the Prime Minister.

The government has decided to redeploy, not reduce, troops to give effect to the new order of priorities, to this change in emphasis in our defence policy. I emphasize that at the press conference the Prime Minister, referring to NATO and NORAD, said that the total number of troops committed to these two alliances is not being reduced by virtue of Canada's present action. Do not let anybody misunderstand what we are talking about. We are not talking about reducing military expenditures and making that money available for other purposes. We are talking about a redeployment of the defence forces which are to be maintained. We are not talking about anything more than that at the present time.

The change is from emphasis on a wider defensive alliance to emphasis on continental or territorial defence. What other interpretation can be placed upon the priorities outlined by the Prime Minister in his statement of April 3 and repeated in his speech of April 12? Having made this decision, having changed the priorities of defence policy, having changed the emphasis of our defence effort and our military alliances, where does this leave the Prime Minister's declaration

that defence policy flows from foreign policy and that foreign policy is still under review? Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made nonsense of his own statement.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

● (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister has announced that we will reduce our defence participation in Europe and increase our participation in North America. How has this change in defence policy come about? From what new foreign policy does it flow? What changes have there been in our foreign policy that dictate this change in our defence policy? The only change in our foreign policy of which I know is that there has been talk of exchanging representatives with the Vatican. I do not know what redeployment of defence forces this would involve. I know also that initiatives are being taken to establish diplomatic relations with Peking. Does this mean that the Minister of National Defence is going to blast his way in to Peking or, failing that, into the Vatican?

There is not the slightest connection between this new defence policy and the new foreign policy that has been indicated. The Prime Minister is just playing with words. He has not been able to demonstrate that a Canadian soldier on Canadian soil will make a more effective contribution to the security of Canada than a Canadian soldier now with NATO in Europe. The Prime Minister has not been able to demonstrate that increasing our participation in continental defence in partnership with the United States will contribute more to world peace, world security and Canadian security than our broader and wider partnership including European countries. Surely these questions go to the very heart and soul of Canadian foreign policy.

What are the new considerations in foreign policy that have led to this change in emphasis in our defence policy? We do not know. The Prime Minister has not told us about the changes in foreign policy, if there are any. He has criticized past methods of developing foreign policy. He says that they were dictated by the defence decisions made by the governments of the day. I presume the truths announced by the Prime Minister are not only eternal but apply to himself as well. Yet here we have the Prime Minister of Canada today determining a new defence policy before he has determined his foreign policy.