

Easter Adjournment

progress being made and has actively co-operated in some aspects of the work being done.

Although development of the new systems is now at an advanced stage, it has not reached the point at which the two governments are able to decide upon the extent to which the systems for the air defence of North America should, at this time, be changed and improved.

As further time is required before decisions can be reached by either country, it has been determined that the best course of action to meet the requirements of both governments is to extend the present NORAD agreement for a further period. It has, therefore, been agreed between Canada and the United States that the NORAD agreement will be extended in its present form for a further period of two years commencing May 12, 1973, and that an appropriate exchange of diplomatic notes will shortly be exchanged for this purpose.

Hon. members already know that the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence has made a special study of the NORAD agreement and has tabled a report in the House on this subject. I am particularly pleased to be able to point out that the government's decision to renew the NORAD agreement is consistent with the recommendations contained in the report tabled by this committee.

As I have described in some detail the policy of the Canadian government on NORAD before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, and as the reasons for the government's decision to renew the agreement for two years are already in the public record as a result of evidence given before this committee, I do not believe it is necessary to elaborate further at this time.

In this statement I do, however, wish to emphasize that the government's decision to renew the NORAD agreement for two years will assist Canada in a meaningful way to achieve the central objectives of our defence policy.

● (1410)

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, first of all, may I express our appreciation to the minister for having made his statement available to us a good hour before the House met this afternoon. I also want to welcome the statement and to indicate to the minister that it is at least the minimum position acceptable to us in respect of sharing of responsibility for North American defence.

The importance of maintenance by Canadians of the sovereignty of our northern air space requires this minimum position. Our role should continue to be that of surveillance, detection and identification. Whatever the outcome of the present testing by the United States of such technological advancements as over the horizon, back scatter radar, AWACS and the improved manned interceptor programming, Canada will have to go it alone or go via this route. In other words, one way or another we must ensure that the means of maintenance of our own sovereignty are within our own control. We feel strongly that such planning can only be done, and we hope it will be done during this two-year period, not in the context of the NORAD agreement alone but also in light of our over-all bilateral defence arrangements with the United States. We

[Mr. Richardson.]

hope the contingency plans in respect of what Canada does at the end of the present two-year agreement will take that into consideration.

It is my hope that the standing committee will exercise its investigative prerogatives and call before it witnesses and all the agreements, protocols, notes and memoranda that exist—I imagine there are some three or four dozen—for the purpose of coming up with an integrated role for Canada in the defence of the North American continent which will achieve the purpose of serving our own national interests as well as the interests of our collective responsibilities. We recognize that our responsibility is not only to ourselves but also to our neighbours. We welcome this announcement and express the hope that the long-term implications of NORAD and continental defence concepts can be taken under very active consideration not only by the minister's department but by the standing committee in the months that lie ahead.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, we in this party did not accept the recommendation of the majority of members of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, and we do not accept the statement of the minister as satisfactory. In our view Canada should take advantage of the termination of the NORAD agreement and let NORAD die a natural death.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brewin: Our reasons are simple. NORAD was founded in 1958 and renewed in 1968 to meet an apprehended threat of an attack on North America by manned bombers from the U.S.S.R. Defence against the bomber was and continues to be the most important of NORAD's objectives according to General Lane, Deputy Commander of NORAD, who gave evidence before the committee as recently as March 2 last.

It is our conviction that the threat of attack by manned bombers is non-existent, again for simple reasons. In the missile age when both superpowers possess the ability to destroy the society of the other, even after an all-out attack by the one, in a response to the original attack, or second strike, there is no possibility of an attack by manned bombers, because to send over bombers to attack would be madness and, indeed, suicide as it would invite the destruction of the country that made such an attack. The minister recognized this in the statement he made to the committee the other day. Let me quote just one sentence from that statement:

The deterrence of an actual attack depends not on air defence capability, but in assured retaliatory capacity.

We agree entirely with that statement.

The contribution that Canada can make should be through detection and identification which may require surveillance and interception. This is an entirely different concept from that of NORAD. Canada should control and survey its own air space. It should co-operate with the United States and give information to the United States. But it is not necessary for this purpose for Canada to be locked into NORAD.

It was suggested by the minister before the committee that the committee report, and, indeed, the committee accepted the suggestion, that if Canada withdrew from