

*Communications Satellites*

Vandenberg air base last April when number four in the series was launched. I was impressed to discover that all four of the Canadian built satellites were still in orbit, functioning and producing useful information in the bigger function of atmospheric probing. The other statistics given to us at that time were also impressive. I discovered that Canada was number three in terms of functioning satellites still in orbit.

It was interesting to hear the briefing of the experts at the Vandenberg air base where NASA was charged with the responsibility of hurtling the Canadian satellite into orbit. Throughout the day's briefing, they were full of negatives. They said that many things could happen. We were told that so much of the technology was marginal in launching one of these complex gadgets into space that it was highly likely that this fourth launching would not be a success. Notwithstanding the misgivings and the warning that had been issued throughout the day, when the launching finally took place that evening with a thunderous roar, Alouette 4 went off into outer space. I think the statistics indicated it entered orbit within two miles of the designated point. This indicates that Canada has indeed achieved remarkable technological skill in sophisticated space technology.

When the decision was made in 1962, we were at the beginning of the decade of the sixties. We were moving toward Expo 67 and our centennial. Canadians were aglow with confidence. That spirit still prevailed in 1969 when the Parliament of Canada made its decision with regard to proceeding to develop our own communications satellite. Within the past two years, Mr. Speaker, that optimism, glowing spirit of Canadianism and confidence in Canadian technology has unfortunately deteriorated. This is one of the reasons I wholeheartedly support the motion we are discussing this afternoon. A government that has completely reversed itself in such a short space of time should certainly be responsible enough to the House of Commons to indicate by the publication of documents why it has now backed away from this positive and optimistic note and is moving in a completely negative and pessimistic direction.

I also support the mover's note that today we are facing a general climate in Canada of growing concern over the penetration of American technology into the Canadian economy. This is one of the major issues that seems to be before the country as a result of the leaks that have emerged within the past few days. Today, we are looking for documents which have not been made available to the public or to this House. I hope it does not become necessary to have another leak in the ship of state in order to get the information that Parliament has the right to expect, in view of the wholehearted support that it gave to the original intentions of the government. That support was based on more than the white paper to which reference has been made this afternoon. It was based on a detailed report which was referred to as the Chapman Report, presented in 1966, which supported wholeheartedly the concept of a Canadian domestic space program. The author of that report is now the Deputy Minister of the Department of Communications. He appeared before the committee when the proposed legislation was under discussion and no doubt we shall have an opportunity in due course to examine a number of officials, including Dr.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

Chapman, with respect to the reversal of that policy. As I re-read that report—and it has been necessary to go over the documentation—I see that this was to have been an entirely Canadian project. It was to depend upon NASA, the United States space agency, for launching only. This is the program on which the Allouette series was predicated. It was the anticipated basis with respect to the operation of Canadian satellites.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Today we find that the rules have changed radically, as compared with the proposals in the Chapman Report. I would point out that in 1967 the Science Council of Canada endorsed the Chapman Report. It was out of both these preliminary documents that the white paper of 1968 came forward in support of Canadian technology in such eloquent terms as were quoted by my hon. friend. To sum up the spirit of these reports—and they were examinations of the subject in depth—the conclusion was that Canada could not afford to become completely dependent in this field upon the super powers, whether the United States or the U.S.S.R.

What has happened since then, is, of course, that the policy has been reversed. This is why I had hoped the Minister of Communications might have been in attendance during this debate; had he been here he might have thrown some light on the current thinking of the government in this regard. The former minister originally shared the enthusiasm of the reports I have outlined today. He stated emphatically when the Telesat Canada Act was before the House in 1969 that a Canadian designed and built satellite with associated ground facilities would result from the passage of that measure.

It was then, Mr. Speaker, that the Hughes Aircraft Corporation of America got into the act—I am not referring to the act of parliament itself. They put in a bid on the project and it was then that the accent used by the former minister of communications (Mr. Kierans) took on a slightly southern tone. He began to talk of a 100 per cent Canadian effort as a case in Canada re-inventing the wheel. So, we were moving into an entirely new scheme of things after the bill had been passed unanimously by the House. Apparently there is a cost figure involved here which has not been explained in any detail by representatives of the government. We have been given some inkling as to why the government has changed its mind. Instead of a project with a 67 per cent Canadian content, United States technology playing only a minor role, they talk now of a 20 per cent Canadian content to be provided by such Canadian firms as Northern Electric and Spar Aerospace Products Limited of Malton, Ontario.

There has been a further development. The United States authorities themselves are now getting into the act and urging a joint United States-Canadian project. From what I gather from the meagre information available from government sources, this is where the matter stands at the moment. It is no longer a 100 per cent Canadian effort. It is now a Canada-United States joint project, with the huge Hughes Aircraft Corporation providing the technological skills and Canada reverting to the role she has assumed only too often of following in the footsteps of the United States giant. And this in spite of the fact that we have proof of our skill and competence in this area in four