

NORAD Agreement

minister would be willing to entertain some amendments to that later in the year.

I should like to say a few things about this motion. Besides the change in date there are several other things which need to be considered by the committee. I am particularly concerned, and tomorrow will be looking at today's *Hansard*, over the number of extra things which the minister added in his remarks, particularly with reference to space. I take it that by space he means generally outer space, the peaceful uses of space, space defence, and space surveillance. These are words which trigger a reaction in me, and I am sure in most hon. members—that we are moving quite a bit beyond the air defence of North America, and if we are going to do that we want to understand what we are getting into.

Among other things, we are getting into a very expensive infrastructure possibility. One only needs to worry about that by looking at the airborne warning and control system which the Liberal government got us into a couple of years ago, following which we found out that we have no control over expenditures. We are faced with paying a fixed percentage of an unfixed amount and we have no Auditor General who would look at the AWACS agreement within NATO and no Auditor General, so far as I know, who might look at a treaty change with NORAD, if there were such a change, which would leave us paying a fixed percentage upon unspecified costs of the NORAD infrastructure. The committee should be particularly alert to that possibility and the danger of committing us to unfixed amounts.

One thing that we need to get from this committee is a much clearer definition of the roles of the various appointments to and parts of NORAD than we have at present. There has been a vast change in the organization of NORAD in the last five and a half years since we last looked at this, such as the disappearance of the air defence command and the changed roles of the strategic air command because that command has changed completely. These changes were made without Parliament being consulted. I should like to see the new treaty or the re-signed treaty which this party supports in general. I do not know what my friends to the left might have to say about that, but in general we support the re-signing of the treaty now, subject to these suggestions.

The problem that we have is that NORAD have made changes in their organization without our getting them back for consideration by the Parliament of Canada. I should like to see that worked into the re-signed agreement.

The most important thing we established five and a half years ago is that this treaty should always be subject to parliamentary review. The minister of the day was opposed to that and thought it should run along until there is some reason for changing it or having it considered by Parliament. I will certainly encourage the committee to come up with a fixed term of probably five years when it should be reviewed by Parliament.

● (1430)

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a few comments on this referral. I am particularly pleased that this matter is being opened up for review by members of Parliament, because since taking office the government has shied away from reviews of our country's over-all policy in both foreign affairs and defence. Instead, the government seems to change its policy on a day to day basis. In this week alone we have heard from the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne) that he favours the increased build-up of a new sophisticated nuclear weapon for use as a deterrent, and then a day later we heard from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) that such is not the case and Canada is as firmly committed to disarmament as it ever was. There seems to be an interesting dynamic in the Liberal caucus, a dynamic that perhaps could best be resolved by a clear, definite policy toward defence in the form of a white paper review.

I should like also to draw to the attention of hon. members the fact that presently my party is undertaking a thorough review of its foreign affairs and defence policies in order to make sure that they are in tune with changing world affairs and events. Circumstances do not remain the same in perpetuity. We in the New Democratic Party realize this and hope that the government, and perhaps the members to our right, would also realize this and not dismiss such reviews as being boring and a lot of needless paperwork.

I believe the traditional reservations of the NDP concerning NORAD are well known to members of the House. We have often in the past questioned the need to defend ourselves against manned bomber attack from the Soviet. In the time it would take such a bomber to reach its targets, the world would have been destroyed four or five times over by intercontinental ballistic missiles. The role of intercepting manned bombers in an age of ICBMs is nearly as useful today as the armour worn by English knights would be as protection against the bullets from a machine gun.

Others have said that the existence of military alliances such as NORAD are contributing factors in heightening world tension. Indeed, recent events where a computer mistaking a goose or a flock of geese for an enemy bomber put North American air defence on red alert and brought the world to the brink of self-annihilation should give us all cause to question how appropriate NORAD is in its present form.

Canada has only limited resources, and we must be careful that they are spent as wisely as possible. We have assigned such a wide array of tasks to our military forces that they are now strained to the limit of their capabilities to cover all bases. Canada is not now and is not likely ever to be a military superpower. There are those in this House who believe that we need all the trappings of a military superpower. A country the size of Canada, with its population accepting all the trappings of a military superpower, is similar to a young boy who dresses up in his father's work clothes. Because he is not big enough, everything hangs strangely and looks out of place. The boy looks like a caricature of the person he is trying to imitate. So