

Lockheed Contract

years, but requires much planning and investment. It will cost much, but it has to be worth while.

Acquiring aircraft for coastal work, including the 200 mile limit, the Arctic, search and rescue, fisheries, pollution, and displaying sovereignty, will require much more than 18 propeller driven aircraft with technology which is five years out of date, leaving aside the outfit with which the government is presently dealing. If this corporation is reputable, of international standing, of international capacity, of international reputation and so forth, it should not require or even ask for any kind of loan guarantees, financing, or influence from the Government of Canada. That corporation should be here on its own terms as a private enterprise competing with all the others. However, it is not here on that basis.

There would be nothing wrong with the Minister of National Defence getting up and admitting that he made a mistake in even talking with these people, and indicating an intention to cut off negotiations. He would receive the applause and approbation of every member of this House on all sides. I do not see any point in continuing negotiations with an organization which almost requires a blank cheque. It may or may not go belly up after it has been given a blank cheque; that will depend on what President Ford and some U.S. senators and congressmen decide. I see no point in our discussing giving that organization a blank cheque so that it can have the money to build something we are going to buy. If we are going to do it that way, let us build it ourselves, or if we are going to give money to somebody let us give it to a Canadian company or some country which needs help.

I do not not understand why the government has hesitated so long. It has run scared, and judging by the performance of the Minister of National Defence yesterday, if some nut ever does push the button and we are plunged into a nuclear holocaust, I just hope that the Minister of National Defence is not there calling the shots. He continues to practise what has been going on with our national defence capacity in NATO and NORAD, and he even extends it to what is more a civilian operation with long range patrol aircraft. He continues that mentality. In other words we are the new Belgium and the new Poland. We are caught in the middle; we are dead ducks.

To suggest that these long range patrol aircraft could somehow be useful in protecting convoys and detecting nuclear submarines, really, for a rank amateur in defence matters that exceeds even my credulity. From what I have been able to read and discuss with people who know something about convoy procedures in the event of a third world war and with people who have some experience with nuclear submarines, the missiles which they can fire and the detection of them, I submit what is proposed to be in these Lockheed long range patrol aircraft will be totally inadequate and worthless.

If a submarine were dumb enough to surface and stand still for a while, perhaps some Canadian long range patrol aircraft might accidentally find it, but even with 12 of them in operation 24 hours a day, and six of them on stand by—and with the number of miles of sea to cover—who is the minister trying to kid? As I said, he is trying to play in a champagne league with a beer operation.

[Mr. Benjamin.]

This whole thing needs much more going into than is being done in the question period. It needs more than what the hon. member responsible for this motion is seeking, and I hope that the House will agree that these materials should be made available to parliament and to the public. I hope also in the course of arriving at that conclusion hon. members on all sides will take a pretty good hard look at other things we are doing through the Department of National Defence in areas we are involved in like NORAD and NATO, which do not really add to the effectiveness of those operations.

According to middle level and senior officers, if the nuclear button were pushed, those operations would not amount to anything. Perhaps after we adopt the motion, Canada and this government will look a little more seriously at the kind of role we can and should be playing in the areas of peacekeeping, fisheries surveillance, and pollution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Walter Smith (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, motion No. 97, dated March 31, 1976 and moved by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon), was opposed by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) because it was felt inappropriate to table in this House papers relating to negotiations leading to a contract until that contract had been executed. I would have thought this reason to be straightforward and clear to my friend, the hon. member for Victoria. However, I was mistaken.

I find certain similarities between negotiations of a contract, such as the one we are concerned with for long range patrol aircraft, and the defence prepared by an attorney for a client. Does an attorney make his defence strategy known before the case opens? I always thought not. Yet the hon. member for Victoria is asking the Minister of Supply and Services to make public all the clauses of the proposed contract, including the payment formula, the very heart of the negotiations. Does this sound reasonable?

As if too little had already been said about the matter, I must reiterate what has been said in this House on the matter of guidelines for the production of papers, tabled on March 15, 1973, and printed as an appendix to *Hansard* of that date at page 2288. The same guidelines were also tabled by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) on December 19, 1974, and were referred to a standing joint committee of this House for consideration. Indeed the seventh report of that committee presented to the House on Tuesday, December 16, 1975, was the subject of a motion debated in this House on an allotted day for consideration of the business of supply, on Thursday, February 12, 1976.

● (1740)

So important and of concern of so many is this matter of freedom of information that the committee asked to be authorized to examine the matter further during the balance of this session. It seems to me that having adopted the motion is proof enough of the seriousness of this important issue.

It has been said in this House by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that these guide-