

Adjournment Debate

In his Budget of last February the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) announced that \$13 million a year over five years would be set aside to support Canada's book publishing industry. This is an increase of about 25 per cent over the previous years. A successful industrial strategy can only flow from adequate cultural support.

These new measures are aimed at two very specific goals. First, we want to boost the self-financing and growth capacity of Canadian book publishers within their own domestic market by launching a book publishing assistance program designed to set them up on a sounder financial basis. This program will cost about \$8 million a year. Second, we seek to stabilize and rationalize the cultural success of books which have a significant cultural value but which cannot be financed solely by the forces of our Canadian market. Concrete evidence of this rationalization effort will be in the form of an annual \$5 million-odd transfer to the Canada Council.

As to the Canadian custom tariff on imported English books, I would remind the House that the Government did impose this tariff with much reluctance and in rather saddening circumstances. As you recall, Mr. Speaker, without prior notice last May 22 the United States administration chose to give undue protection to American shake and shingle producers by imposing—savagely, one might suggest—a 35 per cent custom tariff on similar Canadian products.

The American Government acted in full knowledge that the Canadian producers were competing fairly. Diplomatic efforts to have this unfair measure withdrawn or to obtain compensation have proven useless. The Canadian Government has therefore decided regretfully that a firm and appropriate response would be required to show to the United States the negative effects of a deteriorating situation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassert our commitment to the publishing industry and to emphasize the priority given to Canadian interests in international trade by our Government.

[English]

DISARMAMENT—UNITED STATES POSITION ON STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE (B). REQUEST JOINT PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION BE DRAFTED

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, on October 14, the day after the very important meeting in Reykjavik, I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) whether or not the Government of Canada would join with members of the Opposition in sponsoring a joint resolution to be communicated to our ally, the United States, indicating our support for the proposals on disarmament that would substantially reduce by 50 per cent the level of strategic arms and close to 100 per cent those arms of an intermediate nature. Such a resolution would incorporate the very strong and unmistakable commitment to honour the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty requirements of 1972 that there be no testing and development of space-related weapons other than those that are in laboratories or on fixed-ground sites.

I did not receive a proper reply from the Prime Minister. I am surprised because in the past, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) made it very clear that Canada held to the position that the ABM treaty must be interpreted in the most restrictive way possible and that there should be no attempts to alter, bend or shape the rules to allow for the testing, development and eventual evolution of a star wars system that would break the treaty.

• (1810)

Since that time, the Government has been backtracking on its original commitments. It has retreated from its original position. In fact, even this weekend, the Prime Minister in an interview given to an American network, said that he basically supports the concept of star wars and that he agrees with Mr. Reagan's approach of not putting it on the table as a bargaining chip.

I find it unacceptable and indeed tragic that a Government that purports to speak for the Canadian people would support the Reagan approach to arms control. This approach denies the world a chance to make an incredible breakthrough. In the last 30 or 40 years, how many opportunities have we had to reach a comprehensive test ban and to reduce the level of nuclear weapons by 50 per cent? How often have we had a chance to put some sanity into what is an absolutely absurd arms race?

The telling point in all this was that all that was needed was an agreement by the President of the United States that he would limit research and development on star wars for a period of 10 years. That is what the ABM treaty requires. It is not such a big concession. It is not such a major threat to security. Research would continue within laboratories but it would not get to the point where there would be a series of prototypes in outer space. At the same time, it would have meant that the super powers were again saying that they would not allow weapons in outer space. If the American President did not have the wit to see that, then surely his allies and friends in Canada should have told him that he should go no further, that he should get back to the bargaining table.

The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs have expressed optimism and are saying that we have put down a foundation on which we can build. It is clear that the only way that foundation will be reinforced is by changing the attitude of the United States administration. That change will only come about if its friends and allies are prepared to speak up and say that it is time for a change.

I rise during this Adjournment Debate simply to express both my deep regret and my feeling of betrayal that the Government has withdrawn substantially from its previous position. It is now complicit in the approach being taken on the issue of arms control, an approach that will prevent the world from making the breakthrough which is so desperately needed.