

Oral Questions

Prime Minister two or three years ago, a declaration was made by the Prime Minister that our contribution would be effective and it would be in accordance with the obligations which our allies expected of us. It is because of that, for example, that we have purchased the new battle tank and undertaken our commitments with respect to the long-range patrol aircraft.

● (1422)

At the present time, of course, whatever the new military long-term plan is, Canada will play its part, as each and every member of the NATO alliance will be expected to play its part.

POLICY RESPECTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON CANADIAN SOIL

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council: it concerns the Prime Minister's speech to the United Nations in New York. The Prime Minister left the impression, at least with UPI, that Canada was in the middle of a nuclear disarmament program right now.

Could the minister correct the false impression left by the Prime Minister, and confirm that none of the nuclear missiles in Canada will be leaving in less than five years and that it will be at least three years before the program is completed?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I believe the situation with respect to Canada's nuclear position is very clear. We do not produce nuclear weapons. In so far as our participation in Europe is concerned, we do not have nuclear weapons. At the present time, nuclear weapons are installed or are available for use on the Voodoo aircraft.

As my hon. friend knows, it is our intention to move out of that field with the acquisition of new aircraft which will not be equipped with nuclear weapons of any kind. There is no ambiguity. The Prime Minister, in fact, stated the situation which was fairly well known and which I am glad is now clearly and generally known.

Mr. McKinnon: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In New York, the Prime Minister heaped fulsome praise on President Carter for postponing the development of the neutron bomb. This morning, the Chief of Canada's Defence Staff supported the deployment of the neutron bomb, stating that it was less ominous than the alternatives and, further, that it would raise the nuclear threshold, that is, make nuclear war less likely. As this opinion is clearly divergent from that of the Prime Minister, could the Deputy Prime Minister clarify the confusion?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have not examined the testimony of the Chief of the General Staff before the committee. I have been told, however, that the press reports of his statement do not reflect accurately what the Chief of the General Staff said before the committee. Quite apart from his statement, I can repeat what I said earlier in the week, that is, that Canada supports the decision of the United States in

[Mr. MacEachen.]

postponing the production of a special battlefield nuclear weapon.

I believe that decision by the President of the United States was a right one, and it is supported by the Government of Canada. It is hoped that the Soviet Union, about which the Leader of the Opposition spoke earlier, will show equivalent restraint in its own deployment of forces and its own force levels. In this case, the action of the President of the United States has put the Soviet Union clearly on the defensive.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could put a very simple question that has been asked in this House before. Would the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House if Canada is in favour of, or against, the use and deployment of the neutron bomb?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the policy statement made last Friday by the Prime Minister is the policy of the Government of Canada.

* * *

INDUSTRY

CANADA-U.S. AUTO PACT—INVESTMENT IN CANADA TO REDRESS LOSS OF JOBS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Considering that the number of permanent jobs lost to Canada because we do not have our share of investment out of the auto pact is in the neighbourhood of 20,000, or enough to support a community of 60,000 Canadians, and considering that the Canadian ambassador in the United States has now joined the critics of the government in pointing out that our deficit in automobile parts "far outweighs the Canadian surplus" in automotive vehicles, could the minister, now, at long last, tell the House if he has managed to obtain from the automotive companies investment commitments which will redress this deplorable loss of Canadian jobs?

● (1427)

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, in answering that question I would like to point out that I certainly do not agree with the preamble of the hon. member's question. We are not losing 20,000 jobs. I have said repeatedly that we have a deficit of probably 5,000 jobs in the total automotive industry which applies to the automotive agreement.

We are negotiating with the three major companies and I hope to be able to make an announcement some time in June with regard to one, if not all three, of the major companies and their plant investments in Canada.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the minister not only disagrees with the Canadian Automotive Parts Association, a business group, the United Auto Workers, a trade union, the government of the province of Ontario, which is a Tory government, but he also disagrees with the Canadian ambassa-