

Oral Questions

As I explained to the hon. member when he asked the question last Thursday, NATO is adjusting its military strategy. That was part of the meetings of the nuclear planning group which took place in Kananaskis, Alberta.

• (1440)

It was also part of the meetings of the defence planning committee which took place in Brussels.

I can quote to the hon. member from the communiqué issued by NATO, although I am sure he has a copy of it. It states that NATO is determined to make the most of the opportunities created by these developments and is adapting to the new conditions in Europe.

As always, NATO and the Government of Canada are prepared to change and adjust our strategies.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that when the Ministers of Defence came out of Kananaskis they said that it did make sense to continue to use these weapons. The minister said on Saturday that it does not make any sense.

I would like to know what the government policy is. Does it, or does it not make sense to retain these kinds of nuclear weapons? If it does not, and if the Secretary of State speaks for the government, then when is Canada going to announce a new policy with respect to cruise testing and, for that matter, with respect to forward defence, which is something else the Secretary of State for External Affairs says does not make sense any more?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the only inconsistency is that the hon. member has not read the speech delivered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. Blaikie: You have not read it.

Mr. McKnight: Let me assist him in that. In the next paragraph, right after the one from which the hon. member has read, it states: "This is not to deny the continued requirement for prudent military stability at this time of historic change. Twelve months do not invalidate the lessons of history. The possibility of instability is there and the Soviet military capabilities remain substantial. Therefore a strong military mandate for NATO continues to be valid and a North American commitment to Europe represented by the presence of Canadian and American troops there is crucial as we

strive for strategic stability at significantly lower levels of military force".

If the hon. member would read the whole speech, he would understand exactly what this government is about. This government believes there is opportunity for change. This government will take part in it.

I can only say that if the NDP happen to be government some day—God forbid—they would not even be sitting at the negotiating table.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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FORESTRY

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Forestry.

On December 19, and more recently in May, the minister received a letter from the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources in which she urged the government to negotiate seriously the renewal of the forestry agreement which expired over a year ago. The Ontario minister is troubled by the federal government's inaction.

Why does the minister keep blaming the province of Ontario for his own failure to renew the agreement?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is right. I do have a letter from the Minister of Natural Resources for Ontario in which she suggests that we begin serious negotiations toward a new forest resource development agreement.

I very much welcome this letter and the opportunity it will provide us to start negotiations with the province toward a future agreement.

However, I would also like to point out to my hon. friend that another of the minister's colleagues writes as well pointing out that there are difficulties in mobilizing the resources that would be necessary to meet the expectations about which my hon. friend asks.

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister.

The softwood lumber industry is hurting very badly because of the 15 per cent export surtax on exports to the United States. Pulp and paper profits have fallen from \$400 million in the first trimester of last year to \$93