

The Liberal Party has a major disagreement with the White Paper with regard to the...decision to withdraw its CAST commitment...Defence policy must dovetail with foreign policy....the Norwegians will view this withdrawal as a determination by Canada to withdraw its interest from other Nordic countries....

I agree with the Minister's statement that at the present time our CAST commitment militarily is not viable. However, I do not accept that because it is not viable in today's methodology we should scrap our commitment to Norway....¹²

Mr. Frith also suggested that the special training of Canadian forces for winter-war conditions made them especially suited to defend Norway.

In his response to the Minister, NDP member Derek Blackburn questioned the whole Canadian commitment to NATO. He suggested that the situation had changed dramatically since 1945 and European countries such as France, Germany and Britain are now economically strong enough to take on more of their own defence. He stated:

The Government could not bring itself to adjust our commitments to meet our capabilities. Instead, it cut a commitment, which existed only on paper, to send a brigade to Norway....Canada is now making one hollow promise instead of two....I ask if it makes any sense to over-commit our forces and keep them symbolically present in Europe at a time when the whole strategic architecture...has changed from the central flank in Europe to the Kola Peninsula....¹³

Mr. Blackburn went on to suggest that Canadian forces should be devoted to defending the northern half of North America. This would require a light transportable army which could be reinforced by upgraded reserves.¹⁴

¹² Commons Debates, 5 June 1987, p. 6781.

¹³ Ibid., p. 6783.

¹⁴ Ibid.