

Private Members' Business

is not a loophole but an opportunity that a 116 states of the world have undertaken to use.

I believe our government should support not just the meeting of that conference, but the intent of that conference. I appeal to the government to reconsider its negative attitude on this subject and I appeal to the people of Canada to urge this government to do the same. We do have a chance to end the bomb testing.

• (1440)

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the motion the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce has put forward regarding a conference to convert the partial test ban treaty into a comprehensive test ban treaty.

As the Prime Minister said this week at the Open Skies Conference, the cold war is over. We all welcome the major shift and major developments that have been made possible by massive changes in attitudes in eastern Europe during the past few months.

As my colleague, the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester has stated, Canada intends to contribute to this conference in a very constructive fashion. This House may therefore be interested in recent developments in this regard. The questions of timing and venue of the partial test ban treaty amending conference are currently being considered at a series of meetings in New York. Canada wishes to see these disagreements over administrative questions resolved in a manner that is satisfactory to all partial test ban treaty members.

Canada, despite its serious reservations over the usefulness of the amending conference, has already demonstrated its flexibility and willingness to compromise on the dates of the conference. Our preference is to hold the conference in January 1991 as proposed by the depository states. However, in a statement at the UN General Assembly our Ambassador for Disarmament, Peggy Mason, expressed Canada's willingness to support a short organizational first phase of the conference in 1990, followed by the substantial phase in 1991. This format represents a reasonable compromise and one that would appear to be gaining widespread support.

It is the government's hope that all members will demonstrate flexibility and a spirit of compromise in order to reach an early agreement on this and other administrative arrangements of the conference.

Although the amendment conference will be held in the near future, it is clear that the proposed amendment does not enjoy the support required in order to be adopted. We believe however that the conference need not be a failure. The Canadian delegation which will be headed by Ambassador Mason will work toward an outcome that will move the process forward to a comprehensive test ban treaty goal. More specifically we would hope that this meeting will give impetus to ongoing efforts at the conference on disarmament in Geneva, toward the realization of a comprehensive test ban treaty including as a first step the establishment of a mandate for an *ad hoc* committee on a nuclear test ban. If such a result is achieved—and we believe that it can be achieved—the amendment conference will have been a useful exercise.

Today there has been concern expressed here by members opposite about the commitment of the United States and the Soviet Union to the bilateral talks on nuclear testing. Canada strongly supports the bilateral U.S.A.—U.S.S.R. stage by stage negotiations on nuclear testing and welcomes progress on a revised verification protocol for the threshold test ban treaty that will permit the early ratification of both the threshold test ban treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty. We are encouraged by this progress and by recent U.S.A. statements confirming that a comprehensive test ban remains the long-term objective of the United States of America.

We will continue to press for an early agreement by the nuclear weapons states to move to the next stage of negotiations on nuclear testing and the ultimate goal of a comprehensive test ban treaty. We have been in touch with U.S. officials regarding recent claims that there has been a shift in U.S. policy on nuclear testing and that the U.S.A. would no longer be prepared to proceed immediately to the next phase in the negotiation of the comprehensive test ban treaty.

We have received assurances that there has been no change in U.S. policy on nuclear testing. The confusion seems to lie in a change of wording regarding when the U.S.A. would envision moving to the next step in negotiations on nuclear testing. The United States sees