

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

ment's total lack of appreciation of the needs of the military. The military in this country is currently suffering a desperate lack of resources.

In that kind of situation only a limited number of alternative actions are available to the government. It can ignore the situation, which is what it is doing. It can increase the resources available to the forces through removing the freeze on the budget with respect to armed forces expenditures. It can reduce the tasks assigned to the armed forces. It can undertake a combination of a reduction of tasks and an increase in the allocation of resources. Or it can look at a means of better applying resources now available to the military—for example, more effective use of reserve forces in this country.

I suggest that it is the latter alternative, though not exclusively, that the government should look at first, namely, the effective employment of the reserves. The new assignment of priorities and tasks that the government has given the armed forces in its defence white paper issued in 1970, which listed the defence of Canada and North America as of highest priority, coupled with the government's appreciation that there is a reduction of the possibility of an all-out nuclear war, thus reducing the necessity for a large number of highly trained forces in being, means that use of reserves for more tasks is not only possible in terms of the level of attainment necessary to complete the tasks, but is also desirable in terms of potential savings in the total allocation of moneys for defence, which savings could then be applied to the purchase of new equipment so desperately needed by at least two elements of the armed forces, the land element and the air element.

The government has yet to act on the basis of this kind of analysis. Reserve training, despite recent modifications, suffers desperately from lack of regular force support. When I talk of regular force support I mean regular force personnel who are allocated to reserve units for the purpose of training those units during the course of the winter months. These resources are not being made available to the reserves because the government has not yet seen fit to inform the military that its priorities have altered sufficiently to free men for training reserves.

The most astounding evidence I have yet encountered of government neglect of reserve forces is the possibility that the fourth training squadron might not be available to train reserves this summer. As I have indicated in the course of several questions over a period of two months, that squadron can provide training to 500 reserve force personnel in the form of ship navigation for young officers, seamanship, communications and other tasks allotted to enlisted men. All it takes to make the squadron operational is 12 personnel. I have served in one of the gate vessels, and this squadron is composed of four gate vessels. It takes no more than three regular force personnel to put one of these ships to sea with a reserve crew. In other words, it takes 12 men to make a squadron operational—and the government does not know whether it can find those 12 men. That astounds me.

This evening I am asking for the assurance that the fourth training squadron will be operational this summer. If the parliamentary secretary feels free to comment, I should also like the assurance that the government will give a great deal more attention to training our reserve forces in the future.

**Mr. Paul St. Pierre (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the concern and interest of the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland) in this matter of naval training is well appreciated. I think he will recall that at the time of the briefing of the committee on the summer training program it was indicated that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find the required number of diesel engineering staff with the required engineering certificate. However, this was an indication of the nature of the problems facing the maritime commander in meeting his respective roles; it was not intended, I am informed, to be interpreted as meaning that they could not be provided or that they would not be provided.

• (2220)

I have been advised that the fourth training squadron based at CFB Esquimalt will be operational this summer and that the required technical and specialist personnel will be available for this most important training program for the youth of this country.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.