

Adjournment Motion

to remember that because of our involvement in NORAD, Canadian troops were involved in a decision which, for however brief a period, increased world tensions without our political leaders having any say in the matter. There was no consultation before the fact, only notification after and that notification did not come from the senior Canadian officer in NORAD who must have been aware of the situation almost immediately. He is a subordinate to an American general.

I think I can do no better in this regard than to cite some passages from the "Minority Report of New Democratic Party Members of Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on NORAD". In that document we said in part, and I quote:

We do not accept the recommendation of the Committee that Canada should renew the NORAD Agreement even for a limited period of two years. In our view Canada should take advantage of the termination of the NORAD Agreement to let it die a natural death. In our opinion, for all useful purposes the NORAD Agreement is indeed dead, and it would be more fitting to bury it than to attempt to keep it alive—

Obviously, if we withdrew from NORAD on the basis that we wanted "no truck nor trade with the Yankees" this would cause difficulties, but if we demonstrate, as we think can clearly be done, that a new framework is necessary for Canadian-American cooperation in the air defence of North America and that NORAD is outdated, we think it is insulting to Americans to assume that they would resent this and try to coerce us by denying reasonable economic cooperation with Canada on this basis.

As we said before, we think such timidity on the part of Canada is out of place and it is a threat to the independence of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please.

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland), I wish to respond quickly to the three points he has made. The judgment of the Chief of the Defence Staff was excellent. Second, the Canadian troops were not involved in any formal way in the events we are speaking about. And, third, as I have stated here and in committee, and in conversation with the hon. member, the NORAD Agreement is an asset to Canada and the free world, not a liability. However, I agree with the hon. member that accurate, complete and timely communication between the chief of staff of the Canadian Armed Forces and me, as the Minister of National Defence, is of vital importance. I would also like to say that we are human beings, and that we are not always able to perceive all the contingencies. Each of us within his own area of responsibility must make judgments about what should be done and what should not be done. If I may philosophize for a moment, I might say it is my belief that no number of rules or regulations can ever provide a complete substitute, in advance, for personal judgment.

As the hon. member has pointed out, and as the House knows, events have clearly demonstrated that in the particular circumstances we are discussing the personal judgment of the chief of staff was excellent. I wish again to confirm my confidence in the present Chief of the Defence Staff. That confidence is undiminished. But to the extent that future events might not be so accurately assessed I have today established procedures which will in future require the chief of staff to advise me automatically and immediately whenever he receives information that the United States has changed the alert status of its armed

[Mr. Rowland.]

forces, even if this does not involve any change in the alert status of the Canadian Armed Forces.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Richardson: Further, in reply to the hon. member, I also wish to confirm that the information which was received on October 24 just before midnight at the 22nd NORAD Region, North Bay, was also received simultaneously in National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa and was from there relayed to the Air Specialist Officer who immediately reported to the Operations Centre in National Defence Headquarters. This information was that the United States Continental Aerospace Defence Command Forces had been directed to move toward a state of increased alert, known as Defence Condition III.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I know this is very interesting but the hon. minister's time has expired. All I can do is ask the members—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Continue!

Mr. Richardson: Thirty seconds?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Agreed!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): This is a departure from the rules.

Mr. Richardson: Since our own Canadian defence units were not involved, it is my belief that in this United States alert all appropriate Canadian action was taken.

PENSION—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF PROGRAM TO INCREASE ANNUITIES TO EX-SERVICEMEN

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, may I inquire whether I still have seven minutes in which to speak?

The reason I am appearing in this debate tonight goes back to a couple of questions I placed on the order paper subsequent to the passing of Bill C-220. The first question is No. 3206, as shown on pages 8663 and 8664 of *Hansard*. I asked the Minister of National Defence the following question:

1. To how many retired servicemen are annuity payments being made as of November 15, 1973?
2. How many would be entitled to an adjustment pension after January 1, 1973, as a result of the amendment to the Public Service Superannuation Act and particularly to that portion known as the 85 rule?

The answer was that there are at present 40,687 ex-servicemen drawing pensions and that 1,487 of them will get the increase. It is a rather alarming piece of news, considering the publicity given to Bill C-220 and what it was going to do to combat the cost of living, to find out that it only applies to 3.6 per cent of the people for whom it purported to make life easier.

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This caused me to ask another question, which is reflected at page 8798 of *Hansard*, in which I repeated the answer given to me by the Minister of National Defence describing this miniscule proportion of retired servicemen who