

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 4, 1991

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

SUGGESTED TERMINATION OF NORAD AGREEMENT

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should serve notice on the government of the United States of America that the current NORAD agreement is to be terminated by May 31, 1994, and that in the meantime, the government should institute a thorough public review of Canada-U.S. defence relations, including discussions between U.S. and Canadian parliamentarians.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I especially thank the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for the alacrity with which he moved to get to the point where he could second my motion. I thank him for that.

The motion I have put before the House, which I am inviting the House to support, has two essential parts to it. First, in the opinion of this House, the government should serve notice on the Government of the United States of America that the current NORAD agreement is to be terminated by May 31, 1994.

Second, in the meantime, the government should institute a thorough public review of Canada-U.S. defence relations including discussions between United States and Canadian parliamentarians.

The motion arises from the discussions that took place last fall before a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. The subcommittee was considering whether Canada should proceed to renew the NORAD agreement on May 31, 1991. The committee heard briefs from citizens across-

Canada, had a special panel of experts that prepared some useful material for the committee and debated the issue at some length internally.

The results of those deliberations was that the committee could not agree on the issue as to the renewal of the current NORAD agreement. The committee did agree unanimously that there should be a thorough public review of Canada-U.S. defence relations. The precise terms of the committee's recommendation I would like to put on the record. All members agreed with the following. Given the extraordinary changes of east-west relations and the ending of the cold war, the government should carry out in the first two years of any NORAD renewal period a comprehensive public review of Canada-United States defence co-operation and the future surveillance needs of Canada, the United States and their northern neighbours.

As part of the review process there should be a full and frank Canada-United States political dialogue about NORAD's future, about Canada-United States defence co-operation and about the future surveillance needs of Canada, the United States and their northern neighbours.

To that end, Parliament should initiate an exchange of views and information between Canadian and American legislators with the first of the meetings for this purpose taking place before the termination of the NORAD agreement on May 12, 1991.

The Canadian relationship with the United States in defence matters has been a critical part of this country's foreign and security policy since the early days of the Second World War. Prior to that, those who have some historical interest should note that, in fact, there was no specific agreement between the two countries on defence matters. Canada took responsibility for its own military security. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Canada responded quickly in September of 1939 to the outbreak of war in Europe. Canada declared war against Germany and proceeded to play a very critical role in that war.