

Government Orders

The potential for the abuse of the mandate of the space agency for military purposes, although it may be non-aggressive military purposes, is heightened by the fact that Canada has not specifically excluded itself from participating in the U.S. strategic defence initiatives or star wars initiatives.

Collusion with our southern neighbour in the deployment of any star wars space based weapons system remains, I submit, a very distinct possibility, unless this current legislation is strengthened to ensure beyond all reasonable doubt that this cannot take place. The only way of ensuring that is to strictly define the mandate of the new space agency as being one of non-military and peaceful purposes.

The intent of Motion No. 1 is to do just that. It is to define, in very specific terms, the function of the space agency to include the planning, direction, management and implementation of programs and projects for non-military and peaceful purposes. It is to include co-operation with space and space-related agencies in other countries in non-military peaceful use and development of space.

The operative phrase is the term "non-military peaceful use". By inserting this phrase, as proposed by the motion that I have submitted, we will effectively limit the mandate of this agency to a strictly non-military and peaceful function.

I submit that this is not an abandonment of our responsibilities under the NATO and NORAD agreements. It does, however, clearly establish the fact that Canada should not squander its moral and economic energies in the militarization of the space frontier.

It serves to send a very clear and strong signal to our neighbour to the south that the exploration of the space frontier shall be done for the sole purposes of scientific, technological and economic advances and not as yet another attempt to gain the upper hand in the endless and the morally reckless and economically corrupting game of military superiority. We saw enough of that in the cold war years. It is time to move on to new ground.

By supporting the proposed amendment, the Parliament of Canada will say no to the participation of this country in the militarization of our space frontier. I submit to all members of the House that it would clearly establish the mandate of this new space agency as a proud participant in the quest for the betterment of

mankind and not as an instrument for its ultimate destruction.

I appeal to all members of the House today to give serious consideration to the proposed amendment. The slight semantic changes that are proposed here could well represent a very dramatic and very defined shift in the future operations of this new proposed space agency. I appeal to the members of the House to support this motion of amendment, and I thank you for the time to present my arguments today.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to this particular amendment. However I would also like to speak more generally to the bill. I will be introducing a number of amendments and rather than being on my feet three or four times perhaps I could cover the content of them all now since they are related.

Since the 1930s Canada has had a flourishing space science program and, from the beginning, our remarkable achievements have depended on a small handful of outstanding people—individuals dedicated to the expansion of human knowledge about our world and our universe.

The beginning and the ongoing survival of the space program, the space industry and science has depended on and still depends on science and research being carried out by scientists working for the Government of Canada. Their numbers have been dwindling, partly due to the declining commitment of government to science and research and the increasing tendency to bend everything to the immediate or short-term needs of the market-place.

There is not a new generation of young and eager scientists developing to replace them. Therefore, it is vital as the space agency is established that everything possible be done to keep those scientists we have working for Canada's space program and to inspire a new generation of bright, inquiring minds to join them.

The amendments I have proposed arise from the concerns of these scientists and technicians and their support staff who are vital to the continued success of the space program. It is important that I address them together rather than separately.

They are asking the government to listen to their concerns for their families, their careers, the integrity of the space program and the success of this infant agency. They do not have, at this point in time, a lot of confidence that their concerns are being heard and answered. In the months since the agency was announced for the nth time on March 1 of this year, many