

Adjournment Debate

to secure a comprehensive test ban treaty banning underground nuclear tests of any size.

Third, Project Ploughshare urges that all proposals to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons be coupled with guarantees from the nuclear weapons states to begin the reduction and eventual elimination of their nuclear stockpiles. Then we must consider curbing the growth and use of conventional weapons, halting the international trade in arms and the linking of disarmament with development which, in itself, is a whole theme worthy of development.

Consider what only 5 per cent of the enormous world military budget would do if it were properly spent upon the social development of mankind today. So far, the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence has devoted only one meeting to the subject of disarmament, and when we asked that there be a special sub-committee set up on disarmament the government dragged its heels, with the result that now, on the eve of this conference, Canada is going to the United Nations with hardly any knowledge of its importance among the public generally and without the benefit of discussion in this chamber.

Could the spokesman for the government tonight tell us, even at this late hour, whether something special might not be done to develop Canadian public opinion so as to strengthen the government's hand when it goes to the United Nations for this important session?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on April 5 last, the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Roche) asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs to specify what stand the Canadian government will take at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament which will start in New York on May 23, 1978. I am pleased to be able to provide additional information on behalf of the minister.

Even during the preliminary stage, the Canadian delegation played a leading role by submitting a series of specific and constructive proposals designed to stop the arms race and to backtrack in the matter of conventional as well as nuclear weapons. The proposals have been submitted either on behalf of Canada or jointly with a group of western countries which take the same position.

On April 27th 1977, Canada released to the Secretary General of the United Nations the essence of the recommendations and the content of the closing document which the Extraordinary Session will have to submit. In that same line of action, in January and February of this year, Canada co-sponsored the presentation of three papers on the following themes: a declaration on disarmament, a program of action for disarmament and international mechanism for disarmament. Canada presides over the western group caucus of the UN members and a great many members of that group have co-sponsored these papers with us. Canada also played a major role in the preparation of these important contributions to the success of the Extraordinary Session.

Mr. Speaker, these documents are bulky and exhaustive and can be made available to my hon. colleagues and to the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. If he wishes to get a copy, I will be willing to let him have one. As the hon. minister already stated in this House, the Department of External Affairs is at present carrying on a thorough study of the proposals and supplementary initiatives which could be put forward on the occasion of representation by Canada during the Extraordinary Session of May 25 in keeping with the government's objective of not sparing any efforts during that session to bring a new input to the international proposals for armament control and disarmament.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 10.29 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.