

Private Members' Business

them the right to do. In that particular report, Sir, they made a specific recommendation, and I quote it:

Taking all considerations into account, the panel believes that NORAD serves Canada well and, therefore, ought to be renewed for a further period.

That is a precise quote.

The debate at committee, as the previous member so carefully characterizes it, became a question of is it possible to find some way to agree on a period of time during which the defence policy review and the foreign policy review that we all wanted to see happen could be conducted? In fact, the external affairs committee report specifically recommended a review of policy in both those areas, and we are still interested in pursuing that matter.

I only make this point, Mr. Speaker: At the time we thought we had an understanding. It wasn't that we would pass the Liberal amendment for two, it was that we thought we would be able to agree in the interests of encouraging a defence and foreign policy review, to some period of time less than five years, in order to express our sense that, I think collectively, it could not just be business as usual in the development of policy in the foreign affairs field with regard to security and strategic interests; that the key issue had disappeared and that we had to now find some way to make urgent the necessity to talk about what you do in conflict resolution in the new world order; what do you do in Arctic surveillance issues, and all of the things that the previous member has spoken so eloquently about and knows so well.

Those were the matters that motivated us. As the hon. member for Victoria knows well, there was an attempt to come to some conclusion. He knows full well why we did not get there. I am constrained, because if I remember correctly, those votes were held *in camera* and I will not, therefore, talk about what happened *in camera*. The hon. member for Victoria will know that I believe there was an understanding that was breached in that room. The hon. member knows I believe that. And, so, he will not be surprised. I do know that.

Mr. Brewin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious point which the member has made because he has suggested that I know there was a breach of some understanding in the committee. I want to put it on the record of this House that, first, I had no idea that that is

what the member believed was the situation in that committee; second, I want to state categorically that there was no understanding whatever on that issue.

There were differences of opinion on the issue of how long we should recommend the continuation of the agreement. I understand that but there was no understanding nor was it my knowledge, until the member just got up and said it, that he believed otherwise.

Mr. Bosley: Mr. Speaker, that is an unbelievable statement.

The hon. member has had five discussions with me on this matter. They started before the committee reported. They began in this Chamber sitting in these chairs. We talked about the possibility of building a consensus around the NORAD report.

I indicated to him and I will indicate it here that there were two or three of us on the government side who thought there was some virtue in the position of recommending a shorter period of time if we could get a unanimous committee report to adopt that position.

The hon. member undertook, and I say it here on the record, that if it were possible to obtain a shorter period of time, three years was the agreed number, he would support a position which said in that case he and his party take it upon themselves to support a NORAD renewal for three years at a time.

I say precisely, without saying what happened in committee, that is what he and I discussed in this Chamber in these two chairs. He knows full well how furious I was because he has heard me personally on this before.

It came time to deal with the subcommittee report which would have adopted a shorter period of time and urged the foreign policy reviews. I am constrained from describing what actually happened in votes in committee.

It was not possible to obtain the necessary majority of the votes in that committee to adopt the three-year figure. He knows why because he was there.

I have never been able to understand how it is possible thereafter for the members of the New Democratic Party, particularly my good friend, when there was a chance in their hands to deliver a shorter renewal period in order to get both that shorter renewal period and the defence policy review, which they chose to say they wanted to meet here, but somehow did not get it, to now