

passing strange that that particular decision should be regarded as hypocrisy.

Mr. Fraser: You have forgotten about 1963.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Would he be prepared to comment on the notion that there is a distinction which ought to be made between posturing and practising in the awesome arena of international peace and security, and that in today's world and its realities, with the U.S.S.R. expanding its sphere of interest and military strength around the world, particularly into the unsettled areas of Africa, posturing could be more dangerous than practising readiness coupled with adequate response?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has referred to posturing as if the setting forward by the Prime Minister of Canada's position before the United Nations' disarmament conference its well known position on nuclear disarmament—

Mr. Diefenbaker: What about 1963 and the Liberal party?

Mr. MacEachen: —is posturing. It seems to me that he ought to describe statements made by other world leaders at the UN conference in precisely the same terms, because each of those who went to the podium in New York took the opportunity to put forward views on the question of disarmament.

● (1417)

There is no justification for the hon. member to slight Canada's contribution to our collective defence. We have continued our adherence to NATO, and 2½ years ago we restated that adherence by very substantial improvements in our contribution to NATO and NATO financing.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

REDUCTION IN DEFENCE BUDGET

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. As the Deputy Prime Minister is aware, NATO's long-term defence program calls for improvement in ten areas, including reinforcement machinery and reserve mobilization, that is, improving the quality, quantity and availability of reserve units.

Would the Deputy Prime Minister explain how a decision to forgo \$60 million in this year's defence budget at a time when Canada's reserves, especially militia units, are grossly underequipped is in any way compatible with the obvious need for all NATO members to make improvements in their commitments to the alliance's conventional forces?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as hon. members

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know, two or three years ago there was a very extensive discussion within NATO itself in respect of Canada's continued adherence and continued contribution to NATO. At the NATO summit at that time, the Prime Minister stated that Canada would make an effective contribution that would be seen to be effective by our allies.

As a result of consultations with our allies within NATO, we took certain decisions in respect of replacement of aircraft and in respect of the selection of a tank. All of these decisions were taken in consultation with and the support of our allies in NATO. I believe our over-all financial contribution in that alliance, and our forward defence planning and defence budgeting, are very clear indications of our determination in that respect.

Mr. Darling: Mr. Speaker, after ten months, a statement on the very important question of the neutron bomb has finally been made, not to this House but last Friday to the United Nations' special session on disarmament. Members of parliament were denied the opportunity of participating in a discussion of this non-partisan subject affecting all Canadians and our stand in the international community.

The Prime Minister referred to President Carter's "farsighted postponement of a decision to produce" the weapon. Now that all danger of upstaging the Prime Minister has past, will the Deputy Prime Minister explain to the House what that statement means in respect of Canadian policy on the desirability of ever deploying such a weapon in Europe? In other words, is the government irrevocably opposed to the use of this weapon, or is it merely temporizing?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stated in his speech that the President of the United States had shown the way in recent weeks with his farsighted postponement of the decision to produce a special battlefield nuclear weapon. Of course, the Prime Minister went on to say that we all hope the response of the Soviet Union will be such as to make it possible to extend that postponement indefinitely.

As I said earlier in the question period, the ball is now clearly in the court of the Soviet Union, which in fact has been challenged by President Carter to exercise equivalent restraint with regard to its own deployment and force level. It seems to me it was highly constructive at this particular time for the Prime Minister to support the stance taken by the President of the United States.

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● (1422)

POST OFFICE

NEGOTIATIONS WITH CUPW

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Postmaster General. Will the Postmaster General confirm a report that was made on the weekend, that since the termination of their contract with the members of CUPW, which was almost a year ago today, the Post Office