

Shipborne Aircraft (NSA) project. The project is now in the definition phase. The EH-101 designed by a British-Italian consortium and selected by a number of NATO navies is the only contender for the Sea King replacement, other candidates having been eliminated in earlier stages of the NSA project, and prototypes are already undergoing flight testing in Europe. The performance of the new helicopters and the sophistication of their anti-submarine equipment should more than adequately complement the capabilities of the new frigates and updated Tribal class destroyers. About 40 new helicopters are required to equip all of Maritime Command's ships and to provide sufficient numbers for training. However, the Committee views with concern the delays in the New Shipborne Aircraft project caused by technical problems during the development phase in Europe and difficulties in assembling the consortium which will build the helicopters in Canada. Delays in the delivery of Canadian-built EH-101s may make it necessary to keep the Sea Kings in operation for longer than expected.

IX The Committee recommends that the Sea King helicopters be replaced as planned and that this be done as soon as possible to avoid costly stopgap measures.

b. Patrol Aircraft

To supplement the air surveillance capabilities provided by shipborne helicopters, Maritime Air Group also has patrol aircraft which can work in conjunction with Maritime Command ships and their helicopters to detect and attack submarines or operate by themselves to patrol wide expanses of ocean. These aircraft are a vital element of Canada's anti-submarine capabilities; the value of patrol aircraft in anti-submarine warfare was amply demonstrated during the Second World War. The ability of patrol aircraft to monitor fishing and shipping activities in the sea approaches to Canada also make them valuable assets in the assertion of Canadian sovereignty.

At the present time, Maritime Air Group's fleet of maritime patrol aircraft consists of 18 CP-140 Aurora long-range patrol aircraft. Three Arcturus aircraft, which are basically identical to the Auroras but lack the anti-submarine detection equipment, are on order. Prior to 1 April 1990, Maritime Air Group also operated a fleet of Tracker aircraft, but these aircraft were taken out of service as a result of the cuts in the Department of National Defence budget announced in the April 1989 federal budget. The Trackers were used mainly for general surveillance, their anti-submarine warfare equipment having been removed in the early 1970s. These small, twin-engined, medium-range patrol aircraft were ideal for monitoring fisheries activities, icebergs, pollution and a variety of other occurrences in Canadian coastal waters of interest to Canadian authorities, and they also participated in search and rescue operations. Thousands of patrols were carried out over