

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 12, 1983

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Friday, December 9, 1983, consideration of the motion of Mr. Jack Burghardt for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Mulroney (p. 45) and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Broadbent (p. 59).

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be able to respond to the Speech from the Throne and particularly to the first part of that speech which deals with peace-keeping. This has been a great concern of mine over the last four or five years and particularly over the last two years. I am very proud to be able to associate myself with members from both of the other Parties in a minority report which I believe in very strongly as the eventual solution to our problems.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few years I have come to conclude that a nuclear exchange in this decade is a strong possibility and that the consequences of that exchange would be that civilization as we know it would perish. I believe that is what is in store for humanity on this globe, and particularly for the people in the northern hemisphere. It is not simply a matter of something which will occur between the Soviet Union and the United States; it is something that will happen to all of us.

In the last couple of weeks over 100 million Americans and Canadians witnessed the film "The Day After". We saw the result of that nuclear exchange. I have not used the word "war" in terms of that exchange because I do not think we are talking about a war. We are talking about "nuclear omnicide". A war is something that one side or the other can win or one side or the other will lose. There is some expected political or economic gain which would occur from a war, but we are talking about something that would be the end of it all for virtually all of us. We saw that in the film *The Day After*. If you watch the film you see the horrendous consequences of a nuclear attack, Mr. Speaker.

● (1110)

Some might say that this only concerns the United States because Canada does not have nuclear weapons or is getting rid of them; therefore we will not be part of it and it will not affect us. Of course, that is incredibly wishful thinking because

in the first wave, as we saw in Lawrence, Kansas, the first thing that would be attacked would be Minuteman silo bases and the Trident submarine bases which would be used to destroy the other side, the Soviet Union. The first attack would be an attempt to destroy those silos of which there are hundreds throughout the northern United States close to the Canadian border.

The Canadian Public Health Association has shown that half of the people in most of the cities in the West, from Vancouver right through to the East and certainly to communities like Thunder Bay, would die from the fallout of these blasts. Each silo would likely be subjected to 25 times the size and power of the bomb used at Hiroshima. In the first round alone, probably somewhere around seven million or eight million people in Canada will die.

In addition, Canadians would be subject to certain types of bombing because there are targets in our country of significance to an enemy even if we were not involved. One of those targets is airports with runways longer than 10,000 feet because they would be places where B-52 bombers could land after an attack.

The *Canadian Public Health Journal* says that 12 million or 13 million Canadians would die in the first round and as a result of its consequences. In all of the wars in which Canadians have been involved, we have only had approximately 125,000 casualties. Consider that in the first few days of a nuclear exchange involving North America, half of all Canadians would die. That is why I consider this topic to be the most important one to discuss. That is why I am pleased that the first issue raised in the Throne Speech was this event which could very well occur.

Further to the kind of information we have had about fallout radiation and so on, we have seen a far worse scenario which was developed by U.S. scientists, particularly at Harvard but which has been concurred in by different scientists around the world, including those in Russia who say that their findings are the same. Let me quote from a short article just to describe the other consequences of such an exchange:

The Soviet scientists said their own studies confirmed recently published American findings—

These are the American findings.

—that an exchange using only a small fraction of existing warheads would produce a 'nuclear winter' in which smoke and soot obscured sunlight, temperatures plunged to below freezing levels even in summer, food crops and other ecological systems were wiped out, radiation was several times more intense than previously estimated and, when the pall lifted, ultra-violet rays from the sun reached untenable levels.

That is what the Americans said, "using only a small fraction of existing warheads". The article goes on: