

Contributions to NATO: In so far as SHAPE is concerned, we have allocated \$150 million or approximately 8.9 per cent of the total defence budget; to ACLANT, \$203.5 million or 12.1 per cent; for defence of the Canada-United States region, including all army field forces in Canada, \$398.8 million or 23.8 per cent of the defence budget; training forces, \$227.7 million or 13.6 per cent; logistics support forces, \$338.2 million or 20.2 per cent; command and administration, \$102.9 million or 6.1 per cent; reserves and cadets, \$53.6 million or 3.2 per cent; research and development, \$51.1 million or 3 per cent; search and rescue, \$11.4 million or 0.7 per cent; pensions, \$58.4 million or 3.5 per cent; mutual aid, \$21.8 million or 1.3 per cent; and various unallocated amounts, \$62.8 million or 3.6 per cent.

In conclusion, hon. members will have noted that the total estimates this year amount to \$1,680,194,006. For a country our size this is a very considerable sum and represents about 5 per cent of the gross national product and 27.3 per cent of total government spending for this fiscal year. Some critics, perhaps, outside this House suggest we are spending too much. To do less would mean failure to live up to commitments we have made, and to run the risk of weakening the Western alliance and invite disaster. I can assure these critics that every effort is being made on my part and on the part of the officials of the Department to ensure that the funds voted are wisely spent and all extravagance removed.

Other critics complain that we are too dependent on our allies and presumably that we should spend even larger sums. To these I say that we are in a partnership and that our partners fully appreciate our position, our sovereign rights and the efforts we are making. With the high cost of modern equipment we must weigh most carefully the advantages and requirements that can be expected before embarking upon any new enterprise or project. The criterion must be how essential is the new project or piece of equipment to the over-all defence picture. With changes taking place as rapidly as they are there is no time for hasty decisions. I place reliability of equipment before prestige weapons, and I made no apologies if I have taken some time to reach decisions. To be cautious does not mean that one lacks courage.

Still other critics have suggested different methods of spending the funds which are made available. I hope I will always be receptive to new ideas, but as no two critics in this group seem to be able to agree I can but thank them for their help and say that I prefer to rely upon the informed advice of the Chiefs of Staff, a group of dedicated men in whom I have great confidence.