

### *Government Orders*

I could also have quoted what was said by the hon. member for Champlain or the hon. member for Lotbinière, who told me last night that he was reading a very important paper on the subject, so we have the hon. member for Champlain and the hon. member for Berthier, who is also a member of our regional caucus, and we had time to outline a five-point agenda with which I will conclude my speech.

I would like to get back to what was said by the hon. member for Verchères, when he made a connection between Canada's sovereignty and permission for these tests. He said, and I quote: "And if I start my speech on cruise missile testing by emphasizing this concept of sovereignty so dear to my heart, it is simply because in certain spheres the testing issue is viewed as an attack on the sovereignty of Canada."

And he went on to say: There are people who claim that renewing the Canada-U.S.A. umbrella agreement and periodic authorization regarding cruise missile testing within Canadian territorial boundaries is akin to an unacceptable surrender to the imperatives of the foreign and defence policy of our neighbours to the south, an infringement upon the political sovereignty of Canada. But since any sovereign state must be able to protect its borders, we must recognize that Canada's political and territorial sovereignty depends to a large extent on its participation in the collective security system provided under NATO and NORAD. We must recognize that Canada does not have the resources required to defend its huge territory by itself."

That is what the hon. member for Verchères said in his speech earlier today, reflecting what was said by the leader of our party, who also referred to the connection between these tests and environmental issues.

• (1855)

I quote: "What about environmental costs? Those costs are, for all intents and purposes, non-existent if one considers the very low frequency of the flights, merely a few over the course of one year, and over 3,000 kilometres of a nearly empty territory."

Referring to the political aspect of the decision, and I think that is very important, he went on to say:

But we must also take into consideration of the political side of the issue. Who is asking us to conduct these tests? We must not forget that the United States is Canada's best friend, its only neighbour, its safest ally, its major trading partner, and a great nation which speaks the same language as that of most Canadians.

Let us not forget that the United States is the pillar of NATO and NORAD, the two pacts which ensure our security. If there ever was a nuclear threat to Canada... but there is a risk, to whom would Canadians and Quebecers turn? I do not even have to give the answer, because that answer is so obvious. Should such a situation occur, we would be quite relieved to be able to rely on an ally equipped with cruise missiles which it would have developed at its own expense.

That is what our leader had to say this morning about the political aspect.

He also made a very interesting comment on the strategic aspect, which was well received by our caucus, when he said:

Canada's commitments to strategic deterrence are basically a part of co-operation between allies. Canada has no strategic weapons in its forces. However, in that its defence is based on the agreement among allies and it benefits from collective security, it must voluntarily co-operate in implementing this strategic deterrent force if required. This is an integral part of the national defence policy as found in the 1971 and 1987 white papers on defence and the 1992 defence policy statement.

These were some short and straightforward comments made by our leader and a number of new Bloc members, either in their 20-minute speeches or in pertinent questions to members upon conclusion of a speech.

Since I have five minutes left, I would also like to consider some statements made by other members. I am surprised they are not in the House. The statements were made when they were in the opposition, but it seems as soon as people sit on the other side, there is a kind of alchemy that takes place which turns red books into blue books.

It happened to the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who said: "End cruise missile testing now. There, I have said it." It is as though he regretted having said that, back in March 1987. Does he still feel the same way? If this debate is so important, why do these people who took a stand not rise in the House today to reiterate their commitment or explain their reasons for taking a new approach to these agreements?

There is also the hon. member for Saint-Maurice, the leader of the Liberal Party, who said: "Will the government confirm"—he was referring to the Conservative government then in power—"that Canadians are diametrically opposed to using Canadian territory for these dangerous tests?" Does he still feel the same way? If he does, that is the position the government will take. So why bother with a debate? Is it just window dressing?

I am surprised that the party's so-called big guns are not taking a position. However, I did see the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who has always taken a stand, and I am glad to see he is about to do so again.

I am surprised that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, who embodied Liberal party policy when he was in the opposition, is not taking a position today in what was announced as a crucial debate.

Madam Speaker, since I have three minutes left, I will wind up my speech with three main arguments in favour of cruise missile testing.

• (1900)

First, Canada has always considered cruise missile tests as an opportunity to demonstrate our support for collective defence.