

MONITORING OF SOVEREIGNTY IN ARCTIC

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister to deal with the question. The question is this. Will he agree that not only experts in his Department but those in other countries, including the U.S., agree that there is a technologically adequate alternative? If our task is to find out what is going on in the Arctic, under the ice, there are alternative means of doing so that would cost much less and would not involve us in a potentially aggressive strategy. At precisely the time the superpowers are coming to their senses, our Government is the only one that wants to go the other way.

Why does the Government not do the sensible thing and have a strategy that would monitor our sovereignty but not get us into a potentially aggressive posture in any way whatsoever?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is simply confused and confusing in what he suggests. I suppose if our only goal in our defence policy was to know if someone was trespassing, without having the ability to defend ourselves, we could also scrap our CF-18s. We could wind down the responsibilities of the Army as well.

The responsibility of the Canadian Armed Forces is to defend the territorial integrity of Canada; to be prepared to ensure that if there is a trespasser in our airspace or in the maritime approaches, we are capable of doing something about it. This is consistent with the NPT. It is consistent with Article 14 of the agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, as the Hon. Member should know.

The time has now come for the NDP to begin to come clean with the Canadian people. This week the hon. gentleman suggested taking that money and spending it on a range of social programs and giving it to CUPW, among other things. What is his proposal for the defence of Canada? What is he proposing that we do with the Navy? Does he disavow what the Hon. Member for Brant said about buying conventional powered submarines and—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Strike two, Ed.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Oshawa.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure I get very clearly what the Minister is suggesting to the people of Canada, indeed everyone around the world. On the one hand there is a system that could be used to find out if there have been incursions on our sovereignty and then report back so we can take diplomatic action to deal with it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: All right.

Oral Questions

Mr. Lewis: That is great, Neville.

Mr. Andre: We will throw the book at them!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton): What did you want to do about St. Pierre and Miquelon? Send in the gunboats!

Mr. Andre: Gunboat Broadbent.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member, please.

Mr. Broadbent: Now that we have heard the intellectuals in the Tory caucus—

Mr. Nystrom: Which one?

Mr. Broadbent: —there is the other alternative, and this was the thrust of the Minister's argument, that if we should find any incursion on our sovereignty we are going to attack.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Is that what the Minister is saying? They are the only two options. We proposed an alternative which could monitor and report incursions and we would then follow it up diplomatically. The other alternative is to spend billions of dollars on attack submarines. Which option are you choosing, and explain why?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, when I listen to the hon. gentleman I do not know whether to laugh or cry because it is so sad. He says that if Canada is attacked all we should do is stand by and protest.

Mr. Broadbent: Listen to the argument.

Mr. Beatty: The hon. gentleman asks a question but does not allow an answer. I do not blame him because the question was so fatuous.

The role of the Canadian Armed Forces is to be prepared to defend Canada. We have never occupied or coveted a square centimetre of anyone else's territory. The sole time that we use military force is to defend ourselves and protect freedom. We threaten no one. We certainly threaten no one by saying we are prepared to defend Canada. The NDP says we should not be prepared to defend Canada and they are dead wrong.

Some Hon. Members: Strike three, Ed.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

CORPORATE PLAN—RURAL POST OFFICES

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Canada Post. A confidential portion of Canada Post's corporate plan obtained by Canadian Press, a copy of which I