

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 9, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

[English]

## SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Monday, February 6, 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.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, when the first atomic bomb exploded in a New Mexico desert in 1945, life itself changed. Man gave himself the power of his own destruction. Never again would children be free from fear of the bomb. Never again would we parents be able to reassure them, nor to calm our own anxieties. A nuclear war would make no distinction between the sides of this House in which we sit, between right and wrong, between rich or poor, between east or west, north or south.

Nuclear weapons exist. They probably always will. And they work, with horrible efficiency. They threaten the very future of our species. We have no choice but to manage that risk. Never again can we put the task out of our minds; nor trivialize it; nor make it routine.

Nor dare we lose heart. Managing the threat of nuclear war is the primordial duty of both East and West. But Canadians are concerned that the superpowers may have become diverted from this elemental responsibility, that they may be too caught up in ideological competition, in endless measurements of parity, in trials of strength and will. Canadians also know it would be foolhardy to expect that animosity between East and West will somehow disappear this side of the point of no return. The experts would have us believe that the issues of nuclear war have become too complex for all but themselves. We are asked to entrust our fate to a handful of high priests of nuclear strategy and to the scientists who have taken us from atom bombs to thermonuclear warheads, from missiles with one warhead to missiles with ten or more, from weapons that deter to weapons that threaten the existence of us all.

Canadians, and people everywhere, believe their security has been diminished, not enhanced, by a generation of work spent on perfecting the theories and instruments of human annihilation. But technological push too often finds a sympathetic political pull. It is leaders who decide on defence budgets and research budgets. It is leaders who must direct. It is leaders who must assert their will for peace or science will devise ever more lethal weapons systems. Canadian security is at stake;

and Canada has earned the right to be heard, in peacetime and in war.

Thousands of Canadians fought and died in World Wars I and II that Canada had no hand in starting. We helped to shape the post-war world—at Bretton Woods where the World Bank was launched; and at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco, where the United Nations organization was born. We advocated universal membership in the international community—when it was not always popular to do so, as Prime Minister Diefenbaker demonstrated with respect to Cuba; as Prime Ministers St. Laurent and Pearson demonstrated in helping newly independent states gain admission to the UN; and as our Government demonstrated in recognizing the People's Republic of China and its right to a seat on the UN Security Council.

Canada emerged from World War II as one of the very few nations with both technology and resources to build nuclear weapons. But we had seen the terrible nature of these weapons and their work. Successive governments, therefore, renounced this nuclear option, and applied Canadian skills to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In place of a national nuclear force, we joined with others in systems of collective security—in the UN, in NATO and in NORAD. Canada is a steadfast member of each of these three organizations. In the UN, we took the lead in peace-making and peace-keeping in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. In NATO, Canada is one of the few countries to maintain Alliance forces permanently outside its borders. In NORAD, we contribute an element of priceless value: the airspace above our vast land. The United States can design its own defences knowing that for 4,000 kilometres north of them, the land is occupied by a stable ally.

We take our commitments seriously. We have replaced our maritime patrol planes with the most advanced aircraft of their kind in the world. We have equipped our armoured units with the high-performance Leopard tank. We are phasing in sophisticated tactical and interceptor aircraft. We have launched a program to acquire new frigates. All of this is the most modern equipment available, all of it tasked to defensive purposes.

● (1110)

We decided in 1969 that it was no longer appropriate for the Canadian Armed Forces to be equipped with nuclear weapons. We announced our intention to phase these systems out in a manner fully consistent with our commitments to our allies and as quickly as equipment replacement permitted. By 1970 we had divested ourselves of the surface-to-surface Honest John rockets in Europe. By 1972 we had completed the conversion of Canadian aircraft in Europe from a nuclear