

*Supply—National Defence*

fast, far-ranging jet bombers to carry them were having on all our thinking about defence. This, again, must be my opening thought today.

It is now 11 years since the first atomic explosion marked a new departure in warfare—more startling perhaps than any other since gunpowder first came into use some 700 years ago. And then, almost before we could begin fully to comprehend the terrifying possibilities of atomic weapons, the H-bomb added a vastly more far-reaching formidable dimension of terror and destruction—so comprehensive indeed that we cannot yet begin to assess its full magnitude.

No simple, clear-cut, complete answer to the defence problem thus poised has yet been found; and, frankly, as far as I can see, none is yet in sight. Is it any wonder, then, that throughout the free world there is dispute and controversy as to how this problem can be resolved? Is it any wonder that protagonists of this view or that, of this service or that service, of this defence element or that defence element, are so eagerly and at times vociferously projecting their particular views on a confused and worried public?

This active preoccupation with finding answers to the new weapons may ultimately bring us to the point where defence catches up with the offensive, which is now so far out in front in the race. I suppose that, if this balance is redressed, as it has been from time to time over the years in the past, war must then become an even less attractive adventure to aggressively-minded nations than it is today.

No nation ever wants to risk defeat; and that revulsion is made so much the stronger by awareness of how terrible defeat in thermonuclear war could be. And yet the threat of war continues. As long as this is true, our best hope is, undoubtedly, in the maintenance of a strong compelling deterrent. Primarily, of course, this deterrent at present is based on the strategic air force of the United States, now being augmented by that of Great Britain. But, to be effective, such strategic air forces must be supplemented by warning lines to enable their retaliatory planes to get off the ground immediately an attack is launched on the free world anywhere. They must also be supplemented by fighter air power to blunt the edge of the thermonuclear attack. They must also be again supplemented by well trained, efficient ground forces to form a shield to prevent Europe being suddenly overrun by ground forces of an aggressor. All these factors are just as much part of the deterrent as the thermonuclear retaliatory forces themselves.

To maintain the deterrent power of the free nations will not be an easy task, essential though it is to our survival. Paradoxically, as the existence of the deterrent continues to protect the peace, the continuance of that peace itself may tend to soften up the very deterrent force on which it depends, for it tends to give credibility to smiling assurances and friendly, folksy visits, all propagating the view that the day of world brotherhood has dawned at last, and suggesting that we can now safely set aside our defence programs, with their heavy costs, and concentrate on the much more pleasant task of raising our material standard of life.

To thus relax our defence effort might be an inviting policy for the free nations, but it would be a very dangerous policy. We would be foolish indeed to neglect those defensive measures that have created the deterrent that has so far kept us all safe from a major war. Rather, we should, I think, make sure that those defensive measures are kept bright and strong.

Our opponents have a very keen understanding and appreciation of the importance of strength. This we have reason to know. They also have perhaps a better understanding than we of the subtle, insinuating effects of persuasive propaganda. If we must sup with the Kremlin, we should always be careful to use a very long spoon.

Today I should like briefly to touch on a few of the more notable ways in which Canada is building and maintaining a defence effort that is really out of all proportion to our status as a middle power. Hon. members have in their hands the white paper in which Canada's defence program is spelled out in greater detail than I could hope to do in the time at my disposal today. My main purpose today, therefore, is to supplement what is in the white paper by drawing attention to some of its highlights, and by telling hon. members something of the changes taking place in our own defence system. In the discussions to follow, hon. members' questions will, I hope, enable me to give a more complete picture of that program, and their suggestions will as always, I can assure them, receive not only my own consideration but that of my service advisers.

Change has been operative in many fields of defence activity in Canada, but particularly so in our air defence arrangements. Arising from continuing reassessment of Canada's part in the joint United States-Canada air defence program, I can today