

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister be prepared to table that agreement?

Mr. Pearson: As I announced at the time the agreement was signed, there were military details in this exchange of notes which, in accordance with NATO practice and considerations of military security, could not be made public, as I am sure my right hon. friend will appreciate.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Is it not possible to produce excerpts from the agreement other than the actual sections which come within military security? Surely the Canadian people have a right to know something of the subterranean operations that have gone on.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, when the press statement was issued all the information which it was possible to give was given, and the procedure which was followed was that which I am quite sure the right hon. gentleman would have followed in similar circumstances if he had brought to a conclusion the draft agreement which he was considering at the time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I still ask the right hon. gentleman whether this cannot be done. There was a tremendous reversal of opinion on his part in this connection.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will he not consider tabling the sections of the agreement which do not contravene security? That is the simple question.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman of course knows, because he has followed the procedure himself in the past, that in an exchange of notes of this kind dealing with military matters, to take out of an agreement two or three paragraphs and make them public would not only be a breach of security but would be a quite improper constitutional procedure.

Mr. Pigeon: The Nobel prize answer.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Quite improper politically, possibly.

[Later:]

[Translation]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lucien Plourde (Quebec West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Has the federal government received official or unofficial protests from the Quebec government concerning the acquisition of nuclear arms by Canada, and

their storage at La Macaza, in the province of Quebec? If so, what has been the reply of the government?

[Text]

Mr. Pearson: To my knowledge no such protests have been received.

BOBCAT PERSONNEL CARRIERS—INQUIRY AS TO PRODUCTION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. I should like to ask him if the production of the armoured personnel carrier called the Bobcat has been discontinued?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): No, it has not, Mr. Speaker. Production of the prototype model is still continuing.

Mr. Churchill: Is it the intention to continue production or has the minister given instructions to discontinue it after the present program has been completed?

Mr. Hellyer: There have been no instructions, Mr. Speaker. There are 20 prototypes being produced. They have not yet been accepted as technically acceptable to the armed forces. If there is any further word on that, it will be announced.

PARLIAMENT HILL

COLLECTION OF OVERPAYMENTS TO CHAR STAFF

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the house leader in his capacity as Secretary of State. I refer to a press article of this morning from which it would appear that the char staff on parliament hill have been subject to the collection of what is alleged to be an overpayment during the summer, which has led to their receiving very, very small pay cheques. Has the matter been brought to the attention of the minister and is any action contemplated?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that strictly this question comes within my constitutional purview, but since Your Honour cannot answer the question I can assure the house that it will be taken into immediate consideration and that any redress that can be made will be made as quickly as possible.

TRANS-CANADA AIR LINES

WINNIPEG—TRANSFER OF OVERHAUL AND MAINTENANCE BASE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the