

Supply—National Defence

We are informed that Republic offered to let Canada make all the sheet metal air-frame parts, including skins, after-fuselage structure and parts of the wings for its United States air force contract, thereby giving this country an additional production sharing order. Furthermore, the Republic 105 has been engineered in such a way that it would be able to use the Iroquois engine, and it is understood that Republic offered to consider using the Iroquois engine for its United States air force contract. This would have been a matter for agreement between the United States and Canadian governments. If such an arrangement had been reached the Canadian plus the U.S.A.F. orders would have been sufficient to make the Iroquois competitive for other installations. In any event, it would likely have been cheaper, if you consider the cancellation costs connected with the Iroquois, to have put it into production rather than tooling up for another engine. The Iroquois engine would have increased the power and effectiveness of the Thunderchief, an already outstanding strike aircraft.

What about the J-79 engine in the F-104, the plane the Canadian government has chosen for our air division? Congressman Andrews of Alabama had the following questions to ask:

Mr. Andrews: How often do you overhaul an engine? At certain periods?

General Hewitt: At certain periods, sir. We have different life expectancies on engines running all the way from 100 hours between overhauls to approximately 1,200 hours, for one of the engines that we now use, the J-47 in the B-47.

Mr. Andrews: What is the one which has 100 hours' life expectancy?

General Hewitt: The one which has 100-hour expectancy, right now, perhaps a little less, sir, is the J-79 which is in the F-104 aircraft. I can recall the time when the J-47 in the B-47 aircraft also had a life expectancy of 100 hours. As we find out the faults and the weaknesses of these engines, sir, by modification we can extend their life expectancy.

We have a complete chart here, sir, if it would be of any interest to you, which shows the life expectancy of each one of the types of engines we are now using.

Would you not know, Mr. Chairman, that of all the engines in all the fighter planes of the United States air force the Canadian government would choose the one which is the least satisfactory?

As regards armaments, it is reported that the F-105 rocket payload is approximately five times that of the F-104. In addition, it has an internal bomb bay which gives it a capability of delivering nuclear or conventional weapons. The F-104 does not have an internal bomb bay. The F-105 is the only plane available which can launch a bomb when flying twice the speed of sound. It

has been flying for nearly two years and unlike the F-104 has yet to kill a pilot. It has been estimated by a United States research team that one Republic 105 Thunderchief is capable of doing the work of two F-104's. On this basis the F-105 system if bought in its entirety would cost less than the F-104 because it would take fewer planes to do the job.

The Republic F-105 also has an all-weather fighter capability and could be used to supplement the Bomarc if Canada is to remain in this particular field of continental defence. It could be stationed at bases such as Comox, Cold Lake, Churchill and Bagotville, for example, and could make contact with the enemy far over the north. To provide this capability would merely require minor modifications in the electronic system.

The Grumman F-11-F is also an outstanding aircraft. Its electronic capabilities are similar to the F-104. It was designed for the United States navy as a strike aircraft. It, too, is very stable, an excellent weapon platform. United States confidence in the Republic 105 Thunderchief is demonstrated by the fact that it is presently in United States air force squadron use and there is a production order which will continue until 1963. The United States air force, which developed all these planes and which is in the best position to evaluate them, chose not the F-104 but the Republic F-105 Thunderchief for its strike fighter squadrons. United States confidence in the F-104 is demonstrated by the fact that it does not plan to replace this plane in squadron service as the inventory is depleted. The very high attrition rate will accelerate this phasing out.

The plane chosen by the government of Canada to re-equip our air division is, Mr. Chairman, to put it bluntly, no ruddy good for the strike role. The air frame is unstable. The engine is not reliable enough. It was not designed for the job. There are infinitely better aircraft available for the strike reconnaissance role. This, Mr. Chairman, is just one further example of this government's incredibly bad judgment in defence matters.

Mr. McGee: I wonder if the hon. member would table the document from which he was reading?

Mr. Winch: I would like to ask the Minister of National Defence if he would give an indication of something which I admit I do not know, and that is with regard to matters which have an effect on the air force and its equipment, its equipment in Canada and its equipment overseas. Would the minister mind explaining just how a decision is reached