

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I will broaden the field; it is a question now. I should like to ask a question of the Minister of National Defence. Is NATO a nuclear power?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, two of the countries of NATO and a third partially are nuclear powers. In other words, as the hon. member and I think all hon. members know, the United States and the United Kingdom both have nuclear weapons, and France is in process of building them. The hon. member asks whether NATO is a nuclear power. NATO is an alliance of nations, three of which have nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Pearson: May I ask a supplementary question of the minister. Could he inform the house how many NATO members have bilateral agreements with the United States for the control of nuclear weapons?

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I am in a position at the moment to give that information. The information would have to come originally from the United States, which is one party to all the bilateral agreements which exist.

[Later:]

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister if he will now agree to the setting up of a special parliamentary committee on defence, in order that all members of the house including, and perhaps more particularly, members of the ministry may have an opportunity to inform themselves.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is a most desirable objective that the hon. gentleman should have information, but in so far as a committee is concerned there has been no change in the attitude of the government.

NATO—INQUIRY AS TO SUITABILITY OF F-104
PLANE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the report from Bonn yesterday to the effect that the Starfighter is unsuitable for the role assigned to it, may I ask the minister whether this is the same aircraft as that known as the CF-104, which is being manufactured for the Canadian NATO air division?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the report referred to. Until I have seen what it is I should not like to comment on this [Mr. Speaker.]

particular matter. The Starfighter is a name which is applied to the F-104. However, I might point out that the F-104 comes in several configurations. Some of them are strike reconnaissance planes, others are fighter bombers and still others are straight fighter aircraft.

COMBINES

REPORTED INQUIRY INTO METHODS OF PERMITTING INDUSTRIAL CONCENTRATION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillington): Perhaps the Minister of Trade and Commerce, who was so anxious to do so a moment ago, would now answer my question.

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Yes, I would be very glad to. Consistent with the policy of this government and my department continually to seek ways in which Canadian companies and individuals can become more productive, and thereby provide more jobs for their fellow Canadians to work at—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest with deference to both the questioner and the minister that we are not now back in the University of Toronto. Let us get on with the business of this house.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. gentleman made a statement in Toronto on government policy, or what purported to be on government policy, to the effect that the combines act was going to be changed to allow industrial concentration to take place. I suggest, sir, that is not a subject for debate, that is a proper subject for inquiry in the house. If government policy is to be announced in the University of Toronto, we are surely entitled to know about it here.

Mr. Speaker: I am not denying that for one moment. I was cutting off what I was beginning to feel was becoming a political debate instead of an answer.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister was making a speech.

Mr. Speaker: Let us also watch our questions, as well as the answers.

Mr. Hees: Consistent with the aims of this government, of which I spoke a few moments ago, I did not announce any government policy. I simply informed the press conference at which I was speaking yesterday that my department is searching into ways and means which it could suggest to the justice department of amending the act so as to allow this very desirable circumstance to