

*Supply—National Defence*

policy was being carried out, to show the distribution of our forces and to explain briefly the estimates required for this financial year. Amidst all the verbiage that has been uttered since I tabled the report I can find but two or perhaps three points of criticism, and these all affect matters that require major policy decisions. I refer to the re-equipment of the air division in Europe, the defence against the manned bomber at home, and the defence against the ICBM of the future. I have already made mention of the problem of defence against the ICBM and I shall refer later to the defence against the manned bomber.

Hon. members will realize that a decision such as the re-equipment of the air division, involving not only millions of dollars but also our relations with our NATO allies, is not easily arrived at. At the time I tabled the report no such decision had been taken. Now, after the government has had the opportunity of hearing the views expressed by General Norstad, the supreme allied commander, Europe, and having taken into consideration many other factors including costs, I am in a position to announce that the government has decided to re-equip the air division of the R.C.A.F. The U.S.S.R. and its satellites have large, mobile and fully equipped forces deployed along the European border of Russia and in the territory between the Russian border and NATO Europe. These deployed and combat-ready Soviet forces would be capable of launching and sustaining for some time a major ground attack against NATO Europe. To prevent the overrunning of NATO Europe it would be essential to defeat enemy forces launching such an attack.

The mobility of enemy forces and the target information requirements for the effective use of surface to surface missiles, with which the allies are now being armed, clearly indicate a need for aircraft which can penetrate the area between the combat zone and the Russian border for reconnaissance and for strikes on targets of opportunity such as advancing columns of troops.

The NATO military authorities have recognized this deterrent force requirement and have requested Canada to provide a strike reconnaissance aircraft contribution. This contribution requires an aircraft capable of flying at a comparatively low altitude at great speed in order that targets on the ground, either stationary or moving, can be located and attacked. While such action would only be taken after hostile ground forces had commenced operations in western Europe, the presence of these aircraft in Europe would considerably enhance the value of the deterrent. The government, therefore, has decided to re-equip the eight squadrons

of the air division, now armed with the F-86 day fighter, with a strike reconnaissance aircraft. The four CF-100 squadrons are continuing in their present role.

The F-86, although in service for a number of years, is still an effective aircraft; but if we are to continue to support NATO a decision had to be made as to the role the air division would play in the years ahead. Some two years will elapse before new aircraft will come into operational service, and by that time the value of the F-86 will have diminished in comparison with other aircraft in operation. Failure to take a decision now, therefore, would jeopardize the effectiveness of the R.C.A.F.'s contribution in the future and undoubtedly would cause serious alarm and harm to the alliance. The decision now taken is in accordance with the recommendations of the supreme allied commander and re-emphasizes the fact that Canada, as a member of the NATO alliance, intends to continue to meet its agreed commitments as we have in the past, despite the heavy costs involved.

Provided the negotiations which are being carried on with the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion in respect to costs, production sharing and other contractual terms, the aircraft selected will be the F-104G, a single seater supersonic aircraft equipped with the J-79 engine. It is an advanced version of the F-104, which is now in service with the United States air force. Members of the committee will be aware that this aircraft was also selected by the Federal Republic of Germany and will come into operation with the air force of the Federal Republic of Germany at about the same time as it will come into operational use with the R.C.A.F. squadrons. In the meantime the German air force is taking into operational use the F-86. While the airframe and engine will be manufactured under licence in Canada, final details of production and costs will be announced by the Minister of Defence Production in due course.

The F-104G was selected as the most suitable after more than 20 types of British, American and European aircraft had been evaluated by the R.C.A.F. Consideration was also given to the possibility of modifying existing Canadian aircraft with a view to converting these aircraft to carry out the new role assigned to the air division. Such aircraft were developed essentially as fighter or interceptor aircraft, and were designed to engage hostile bombers at great heights. The requirements for a strike reconnaissance aircraft do not demand long range and great height, but do call for the ability to fly fast at low altitudes. The two requirements are not compatible, and it was not deemed