

THE MID-CANADA LINE

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rail, by aircraft and by tractor train. I have already expressed by admiration of the outstanding performance of the air carriers. It really constitutes an epic in transportation.

"Throughout the construction phase the builders have worked against time and conquered terrain, weather and the vagaries of perma frost.

"This great project involving so many challenging difficulties, such great effort and expense, was only undertaken, you may be sure, after careful consideration of its value to the defence of the whole Canada and United States region.

"With the development of long-range bombers flying faster and higher than ever before, and the advent of thermonuclear weapons, it became evident that we must provide maximum warning of any attacks which might be made on this region, and thus gain time to launch early defensive action and bomber retaliation as well as to give warning to the civilian population.

AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

"An overall air defence system was accordingly developed, including the following principal elements in this country:

1. The Pinetree warning and control system constructed across the continent, for the most part north of the most heavily populated parts of Canada. This system has been in operation since 1954.

2. The Mid-Canada line, construction of which was undertaken by Canada as I have mentioned to provide supplemental warning and to help interceptor forces pinpoint invading planes.

3. The distant early warning line now being built at the cost of the United States far to the north along the shores of the Arctic to provide early warning of approaching hostile planes.

"The three lines, when fully operative, will constitute a co-ordinated system interlocked by an elaborate and extensive communications network, the whole designed to alert the continental air defence system and civil defence organizations as well should a hostile air attack be launched against this continent.

"The whole system was considered, planned and organized by Canada and the United States working together. In that connection I would like to emphasize the close team work which has existed between Canada and the United States with respect to the aircraft warning and control system, the same close co-operation which has obtained in all our joint defence ventures.

"In these dangerous times the defence of the free world is essentially a matter of team work, and if that team work is to be effective, no country can afford to permit narrow na-

tionalistic pride to undermine its security or that of its allies.

"But I should like to make this point unmistakably clear--Canada works in defence matters with the United States in a self-respecting partnership. Our sovereignty is fully maintained.

"On occasion a flurry arises over some imagined threat to Canadian sovereignty. Such an event occurred some months ago when a misleading article in one of our national magazines gave wide-spread currency to unfounded allegations and fears that Canada's control of the DEW line area was in danger.

"Of more recent occurrence was a news agency story with the ridiculous statement that senior Canadian government officials planning to visit the DEW line had to submit to a security check by United States courses. A simple check with officials of my department would have shown how absurd it was.

"The fact is that for Canadian visitors to the DEW line, security clearance is given by the appropriate Canadian authorities, and for United States visitors, the clearance is given by United States authorities. In other words, both countries operate on a reciprocal basis with respect to their own people.

"When Canadian ministers and officials go to the DEW line, there is no question, therefore, of their asking United States permission to do so. But it is essential that they inform the people responsible for making the arrangements in advance to ensure that accommodation, which is scarce in the North, is available for them on arrival. This is only common sense and ordinary courtesy.

"But Canada, not the United States, is responsible for authorizing visits of Canadians to the DEW line in Canada.

"I mention these incidents only because Canadian and American interests are so closely interwoven in this great project for the benefit of us both, and because the co-operation in respect of it has been on a scale unique between neighbouring nations.

SOVEREIGNTY MAINTAINED

"I know of no instance in this whole project where the slightest difficulty has arisen or the slightest attempt been made by our southern neighbours to impair our sovereignty in the North or to assert any claims incompatible with our national pride as Canadians.

"That being so, I think that any attempts to raise prejudices and to create ill-feeling between us and the people of the United States are mischievous and hurtful and should be deprecated. The world needs more, rather than less, of the spirit of close co-operation which exists between Canada and the United States.

"While I'm talking about the DEW line, I think I should say a word also about the idea some people seem to have that its construction has been 100 per cent a United States opera-