

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 13, 1957

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

U.S.—CANADA—STATEMENT ON DEFENCE
CO-OPERATION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the hon. member for Algoma East (Mr. Pearson) asked for a statement in connection with the subject of defence co-operation between Canada and the United States, and I propose on this occasion to make such a statement. I do not think the present is the occasion for a more lengthy statement than I am about to give, but the opportunity will come later on during the estimates to discuss this question at length. I am prepared, however, to sketch in general terms the basic framework of our defence co-operation with the United States.

As the house is aware, the machinery of defence co-operation between Canada and the United States had its origin in what is known as the Ogdensburg declaration of August, 1940, by the president of the United States and the then prime minister of Canada, Mr. Mackenzie King, foreshadowing the development of the closest defence collaboration between the United States and Canada. Arrangements arising out of this declaration were effective during the last war in the political, military and supply fields.

In November, 1945, the United States government forwarded a request to the Canadian government urging that the collaboration in defence which had been so effective during the days of war should be maintained; that Canada and the United States should agree to the continuance of the permanent joint board on defence which had been established in August, 1940, and set up military arrangements to ensure the continuance of close co-operation of the defence forces of both countries in the defence of Canada and the United States. It was agreed that the permanent joint board on defence would be continued and a military co-operation committee would be set up, directly responsible to the chiefs of staff in each country, to discuss and process joint measures for the defence of Canada and the United States.

Following negotiations in the permanent joint board of defence, there emerged a joint statement of principles approved by the two

governments laying down in broad terms the conditions governing the continuing partnership in defence of the two countries. These conditions and principles were announced in the House of Commons on February 12, 1957. Defence co-operation and collaboration between Canada and the United States has therefore continued without a break and with continuing impetus since 1940.

When Canada and the United States signed the North Atlantic treaty, the arrangements and procedures for defence collaboration were continued under the Canada-United States regional planning group as one of the regional groupings of NATO.

I would emphasize that the only restrictions which exist in defence collaboration are those imposed by law and not by desire. This limitation is only in the field of thermonuclear weapons, and is mainly concerned with the composition, construction and manufacturing techniques of nuclear weapons. The house will realize that the manufacture of nuclear weapons is not an urgent defence requirement for Canada. On June 15, 1955, by means of an exchange of notes, agreement was reached between the government of Canada and the government of the United States for co-operation in the atomic field for mutual defence purposes. At that time agreement was reached that each government would make available to the other government atomic information deemed necessary to:

- (a) the development of defence plans;
- (b) the training of personnel in the employment of defence against atomic weapons; and
- (c) the evaluation of the capabilities of potential enemies in the employment of atomic weapons.

The finalizing of this agreement in this very important field was followed by the participation of Canadian military personnel in United States exercises involving thermonuclear explosions, so Canadian troops could be trained in the procedures for decontamination of personnel and vehicles and the detection of radiation resulting from these kinds of explosions. In short, there exists today the fullest co-operation in all aspects of military operations in areas where atomic weapons may be used.

In President Eisenhower's statement of November 7, to which the hon. member for