

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

government before the matter has been referred to parliament and its members informed of any action which is contemplated by the cabinet?

**Mr. Pearson:** If a situation were to develop requiring such an important change in Canadian defence policy and, indeed, perhaps in foreign policy, as to call for participation in an operation of this magnitude, with all the complications and implications of such a decision, I think that if parliament was sitting parliament would be consulted first.

[Translation]

**Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the decision of the United States to establish such an anti-missile system is not inconsistent with the NORAD Treaty, which was signed by Canada, to the effect that the United States should confer with Canada as regards North American defence?

**Mr. Speaker:** That question is argumentative and out of order.

[English]

**Mr. L. R. Sherman (Winnipeg South):** A supplementary to the Prime Minister on this question of North American air defence. In view of statements from Washington that the United States defence department is considering going beyond the missile defence project announced last week toward a new form of bomber defence for North America, may I ask whether the right hon. gentleman has any information with respect to Canada's role in these circumstances?

**Mr. Pearson:** I know of no request or suggestion by the United States that we should alter the nature of our present participation in continental defence against manned bombers in any way. I will discuss this matter with the Minister of National Defence, however, before giving a definite response.

[Translation]

[Later:]

**Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister and come back to a subject considered by the house a few minutes ago, and ask him whether the government intends to renew the agreement concerning the air defence of NORAD, which will be coming to an end shortly?

[Mr. Douglas.]

[English]

**Mr. Pearson:** That matter is under active examination, Mr. Speaker, and I hope it will be possible to make an announcement in the house with regard to it very shortly.

### CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

#### FEDERAL PARTICIPATION IN PROPOSED PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Prime Minister a question with regard to the constructive proposal of the prime minister of Ontario to hold a conference on the subject "Confederation for Tomorrow." Will the Prime Minister reconsider his position with regard to participation by the federal government and agree to be present himself or at least to have a senior federal minister participate so that the federal position may be presented in a positive and constructive manner?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister of Canada to be present as an observer at a provincial conference called by the head of the government of one province not as a federal-provincial conference but as an occasion for provincial consideration. This was made clear by the prime minister of Ontario when he met with other heads of provinces and myself last July; he had in mind a provincial conference though he would welcome federal participation in an observer capacity. There will be federal observers at the conference.

**Mr. Fulton:** The Prime Minister seems to indicate that the representation at this conference will be non-ministerial. Will he tell us what the nature of the federal participation will be? At what level will the government be represented? Will there be participation and, if so, what instructions have been given with regard to the position to be taken? Or will the federal government be represented merely by an observer?

**Mr. Pearson:** We have undertaken to the province of Ontario to send observers and we shall send observers from an appropriately high level.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

Could the right hon. Prime Minister tell us whether he intends to delegate the hon.