

Interim Supply

the poor minister must face the consequences. He has stated on a number of occasions that he has confidence in this missile. We in the opposition and Canadians generally have no confidence either in this missile, in the government's defence policy or in the minister in having to present this policy to parliament and the people. If the blame is the minister's own, in the face of everything we have seen today I think the greatest service he can render his country is to resign from his office. If, on the other hand, it is not his fault and he has only to face the music on behalf of the cabinet, then it is time they took another look at what they are trying to do. I do not think they have the confidence of parliament or the Canadian people with regard to defence policy at the present time.

Mr. Pearson: Is the Minister of National Defence not going to say anything about the statements that have been made on defence policy this morning?

Mr. Pearkes: Mr. Chairman, I replied to various questions about defence policy in the question period this morning.

Mr. Peters: I wish to support the amendment that has been moved. I recently visited North Bay a number of times and inquired of the people there and learned there is a difference of opinion about what is going on with respect to the Bomarc development. The people are entitled to know what is happening. We know the value of the class B Bomarc and are completely unsatisfied with this. If Canada is going to pursue the defence policy that has been outlined in the past few years we will obviously have to have bases in Canada and for this reason Mont Laurier and North Bay were chosen. Canada will have to give some assurance to the people that we are not building bases that cannot be used for anything else in the light of developments with respect to the Bomarc B in the United States. I believe that one of these days the minister will come to parliament and tell us that the United States government has scrapped its program for Bomarc B missiles and that we are now going to use Nike, Thor, Atlas or some other missile presently under development. If we build cement bases in North Bay they should be suitable for use with other types of missiles.

We cannot change our program overnight in the House of Commons and say that this nation will be able to go into the production of another type of missile, because the fixtures that have to be installed for this type of firing are not interchangeable from one rocket to another. Each one requires

a different type of base. For this reason I think we should discontinue our work on the Bomarc missile base at the present time and wait until we have more assurance that this is the type of missile we are going to use, because I doubt whether it is. We should be in the position to be able to change over.

I should like to ask whether in fact any Bomarc missile base is in the course of erection in North Bay area. It is my understanding that there is a trailer parked on the highway at about the approximate place at which the semi-automatic ground environment tunnel is to be, and this is the extent of the development. In fact no work is taking place on the Bomarc missile base at all.

This may be a very hush-hush matter. If it is, the people of North Bay may not know everything that is going on, but some of the citizens should be in a position to know. They know of absolutely no work going on at the missile base. The only work that is going on is taking place at Trout lake, and the Trout lake development is the semi-automatic ground environment for the eastern central command. There will be a tunnel between the environments and it is not really a missile base anyway.

If we are voting an appropriation, if we are voting supply toward this missile base, then we should know whether it has been started or not. The minister has informed the house that the Mont Laurier base has not even got to the stage where we own the land, although we have an option on the land where the base will be built.

I am in agreement with the hon. member for Trinity with respect to this amendment. It would seem to me that we should at least leave ourselves an opening, and if we are building a Bomarc missile base at North Bay today we should be sure it will be applicable to some other type of missile. We should be giving consideration to an alternative plan because, obviously, if we have any more failures in the Bomarc missile development program there will be no missiles developed in the United States. Canada is not in a position to make another mistake such as we made with the Arrow. I do not think we are in a position to make that kind of a mistake more than once every 10 or 15 years, and we have already made it. This is a worth-while amendment and it has my full support.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, this amendment which the hon. member for Trinity has moved in an impressive, reasonable, logical statement is one of no confidence in the defence policy of this government,