

Supply—National Defence

That is a brief description of the air defence of Canada. I hope that the hon. member will note this outline I have given and will link that with what I said in my opening remarks. Then, I trust he will be able to get a picture of what we are trying to accomplish. The west's defence is based on the power of retaliation. The retaliation forces must be secure, and we are in a partnership in the defence of this North American continent, including the cities of Canada, the cities of the United States and the SAC bomber bases, with our allies, the United States. Their aircraft will be available to protect the cities of Canada against bomber attack.

The hon. member talks of two Bomarc bases. Yes, there are two in Canada, but from the west of North Bay to the Pacific the centres of population in that Bomarc zone will be covered as soon as these Bomarc batteries are in place in the United States. However, one must remember that they come under the command of NORAD and we have a Canadian officer as deputy commander of that force. These Bomarcs and these interceptors, whether they are based in Canada or based in the United States, will be directly under the command of the commander in chief of NORAD for the protection of everything that there is on this continent.

Mr. Winch: I have a question on the same phase of the discussion. The Bomarc is not a system of retaliation, the Bomarc is a system of defence.

Mr. Pearkes: Bomarc is for defence; it has nothing to do with retaliation at all except that it is a protection for the forces of retaliation.

Mr. Winch: That is what I said; Bomarc is not a weapon of retaliation, but Bomarc is a system of defence. So far as we know from the Prime Minister and the minister, Bomarc, as a system of defence, is only now being authorized, paid for and installed in two sections of Canada. I listened very carefully to what the minister had to say, but if it is not breaking security I should like to ask this question because your government is placing the emphasis on Bomarc: Is there a protection for the third city of Canada by Bomarc the same as there will be for Ottawa from North Bay? I think we are entitled to know the answer to that.

Mr. Pearkes: I have said there will be a general interlocking of Bomarc stations from the Atlantic to the Pacific which will be capable of engaging hostile bombers before they enter the air space over the heavily populated parts of Canada. If my hon. friend is thinking of the city of Vancouver from

which he comes, there will be a Bomarc station which will be capable of doing exactly that task and providing that protection about which he is so concerned.

Mr. McGee: Coming down from the airy heights of armchair strategy to a matter concerning an individual member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, I should like to put in the form of a rather lengthy question the case of an individual which has been brought to my attention. I would prefer, for the moment, not to disclose his name or circumstances, for obvious reasons.

This young man, 19 years of age, joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in a certain trade capacity. Since his enlistment he has married and has had a child. He is faced with the usual situation which confronts a young married couple with a child. According to the information which I have it is suggested that it is air force policy that if the individual cannot demonstrate his ability to look after his family they release him, at least this is one of the reasons which would contribute to his release. Apparently, according to my information, a member of the R.C.A.F. must reach 21 years of age before he can receive a married allowance. The representations made to me take cognizance of the fact that this is, perhaps, a reasonable attitude for the air force to adopt in general, but raises the countering argument that this particular individual happens to be dedicated and is most interested in a career in the Royal Canadian Air Force. I must say this is an attitude I can understand having shared at one time that same point of view.

This young man graduated at the head of his class following his training period. In fact, it has been brought to my attention that there are others who desire to be released, but for other reasons I will grant you. My question to the minister is, is it a matter of policy in the air force—I must confine myself to that particular service at this time—that 19-year-olds who have married and assumed certain responsibilities at the same time incur disabilities as a result of that particular situation?

Mr. Pearkes: If the hon. gentleman will let me know the name of this man privately, I will see what can be done for him. But as a matter of principle we do not encourage service men to marry under 21 years of age.

Mr. McGee: While I can appreciate the decision of the department and the particular service in not encouraging marriage and the acquisition of dependents, surely it is a fact that people under the statutory age of 21 in ever increasing numbers in other areas of our society do in fact marry and do in fact