

*Supply—National Defence*

able to tell us what are Canada's commitments under this five-year program which was agreed to, I believe, in December, 1957. I am more interested in finding that out now than I was an hour ago because the minister said a few moments ago that one of the Canadian commitments in this document was to re-equip the Canadian air division in Europe. I think that is what the minister said. I remind him that this particular program was agreed to in December, 1957. Are we to understand from what the minister has said that in 1957 a decision was taken by his government to re-equip part of the Canadian air division in Europe? If that decision was taken at that time, has it been made known to the Canadian public since that time, because I have no recollection of any such decision having been made public?

**Mr. Benidickson:** That is the question I raised.

**Mr. Pearson:** If it was made public and if it was a commitment formally undertaken by the Canadian government in December, 1957, why was it not possible to let the Canadian parliament and the Canadian people know about such an important commitment as the re-equipment of the Canadian air division? If, in fact, that decision was taken in December, 1957, why has it taken from December, 1957 until July, 1959, to implement it?

**Mr. Pearkes:** Because it was a five-year program. The hon. gentleman realizes that it was a five-year program. This was not all to be done at the time that the MC-70 was first drawn up.

**Mr. Pearson:** Yes, I realize that. I am commenting on what the minister has said. The decision to re-equip the Canadian air division was made as a commitment when this five-year program was drawn up in December, 1957. I ask the minister whether there are any other commitments in that document which we have not heard about yet? That, Mr. Chairman, I think for the moment exhausts the questions and no doubt exhausts the minister in listening to my questions.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Mr. Chairman, can the minister not give us any additional information with reference to the Bomarc at all? I think we all appreciate the fact that much of the information regarding it is classified. There has been so much expression of opinion about it in the press; there have been so many questions raised about its low-level capability, about its subject to jamming, about its other deficiencies, that I would like the minister to give us some assurance on these things individually even if he cannot give specific detailed information.

**Mr. Pearkes:** I think the best assurance I can give the hon. gentleman is that the United States are adopting this as their area defence weapon. As I have said before, they are going ahead with the construction of Bomarc stations across the northern part of the United States. Now unless their administration had confidence in it they would not be going ahead and doing that. From the information I have received, I have stated in the house previously I believe this is the best weapon for our Canadian defence as a ground to air missile.

**Mr. Hellyer:** I wonder whether the minister would tell us if we are to have two squadrons, as was the original impression given this house, or whether it is true, as we later understood it to be, that we are to get two half squadrons?

**Mr. Pearkes:** There will be two Bomarc squadrons and they will be equipped with 30 missiles in the first instance. Then, when they have been completed, decision will be made according to the threat and according to the requirements as to whether that number should be increased.

**Mr. Hellyer:** I should like to pose another problem with respect to the Bomarc chain which has been raised by a number of people. Perhaps the minister can set our fears at rest in this regard. Is the Bomarc chain not something like a series of fixed gun emplacements in that they are not mobile, they are fixed, and consequently they are able to deal only with attacking bombers coming within their particular range?

The minister knows that the United States is proposing that its bombers carry, in addition to their other armament, ground-to-air missiles. They will carry live ground-to-air missiles and also drones as a replacement for what they used to call ducks. In the event of an attack on Canada from a formation of Russian bombers coming toward our populated areas and in the event that the Russians released from their attacking force air-to-ground drones at intervals of some several minutes apart, is it not a fact that the Bomarcs would have to be fired because we would not know whether they were drones or live and we could not afford to take a chance, and once 30 drones had been shot in the same direction at the same squadron area all of the Bomarcs would be exhausted, there would be nothing more and there would be a completely open corridor for the entire Russian bomber formation to fly through and beyond which they could deploy in the direction of their various targets?