Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): I would think before the end of the present calender year.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, for the Acting Prime Minister. Would he tell the house what exactly will be the new duties of the present high commissioner when he returns to Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I doubt that this question can be asked at this time.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REPORTED PLAN FOR PROTECTION OF CANADA BY U.S. NAVY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Are consultations being held with the United States government concerning the protection of sea approaches to Canada by the United States navy in view of the reduction in Canada's naval strength?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend did not give me notice but my colleague has given me the opportunity to deal with this question as though I had received the customary notice.

Mr. Churchill: I do not give notice.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The report is unfounded. The U.S. embassy has stated that it is cognizant of mutual United States-Canadian co-operation in defence planning and of our common obligations under NATO and NORAD, and knows of no such study. Furthermore, the U.S. navy has informed the U.S. embassy that no such study has been contemplated or made. I thank my hon. friend the Minister of National Defence for this information and I thank the hon. member for being so courteous as to listen to this reply.

Mr. Churchill: I did not say there was any report so I do not understand the first part of the answer. As a supplementary question, is the minister considering holding consultations with the United States government along this line in order that Canada's defences may be maintained, since apparently we cannot do it ourselves?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has returned the compliment to me on this one so that I may reply. The answer is no. No such consultation is necessary. My hon. friend, as an ex-minister of national defence, would know that there are constant consultations in respect of all defence matters concerning mutual defence and he would also know, if he really had listened to the evidence presented to the committee on national defence last spring, that the anti-submarine capacity of the Royal Canadian Navy is better now than it has been at any time in history and that the Canadian taxpayers are well served.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Churchill: I was not on the committee last spring but I will be next time.

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence whether he can advise the house how many ships with underwater capability are at sea today?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hellyer: H.M.C.S. Forrestall I think is the only one.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

REPORTED INTENTION TO REMOVE COAT OF ARMS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (Queens-Lunenburg): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Postmaster General. The announcement by the Post Office Department that they are going to replace the arms of the Dominion of Canada which have been on our post office trucks and mailbags for many decades has created considerable concern in my constituency and I wish to register the strongest possible protest against this act.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is abusing the rules of the house. He cannot make a statement of this kind under the guise of asking a question.

Mr. Crouse: My question is this: on what authority is the Postmaster General attempting to carry out his ill-considered action.

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Postmaster General): No orders have been given yet.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): The minister says that no orders