

Canada and one that, apart altogether from its defence implications, is dramatically contributing to the opening of the great Canadian north.

The Mid-Canada line and the DEW line, as the committee know, will form part of a warning system anchored on the Pinetree stations already in operation, all linked together by a vast complex of communications. The Pinetree system itself is being strengthened by additional stations. On both the DEW line, being built largely by Canadian contractors working for the United States Air Force, and the Mid-Canada line, being built by Canada, admirable progress is being made. These are projects of great difficulty and magnitude—costly, but we believe worth the cost. For they will buy us time—time to get the big United States deterrent force of bombers with their nuclear weapons winging away on their missions should the need arise, time to get our defences activated, time to prepare our people for impending attack.

Another purpose of this system is to alert our sister NATO nations if the Canadian north should be chosen as the first point of any attack. It is hoped that in the near future the early warning system of North America will be linked with an early warning system in Europe, to which NATO is giving high priority, thus forming an integrated comprehensive early warning system covering the whole of the NATO area. These warning lines cannot—I want to be very frank about this—buy us absolute protection. Their searching beams are not steel barriers. In a determined attack some enemy planes would run the gamut of the defending fighters and many lives would undoubtedly be lost. But these lines will nevertheless contribute very materially to NATO air defence plans generally and to Canada-United States effectiveness in particular. In defence terms any enemy invasion of our Northland is of immediate concern to every Canadian, but—and this we should not forget—I think it is of equal concern to the citizens of the United States. Realistic policy for continental air defence requires the closest co-operation between our two countries.

Let me assure the committee, there is the closest co-operation. Our defence plans are closely integrated. Our relationship is a friendly one, founded on mutual respect and full understanding of each other's particular rights and interests, and dedicated to the defence of our common continental home against present, indisputable and continuing grave dangers.

Both of the new northern lines are rapidly approaching completion. The United States is now recruiting civilian technicians, for the most part Canadians, incidentally, to assist in manning the DEW line for the initial period. Recruiting and training of civilian technicians will shortly begin to assist the Royal Canadian Air Force servicemen, already trained, in manning the Mid-Canada line.

May I turn now to the Canadian Army. I can advise the committee that the note of change that is evident in Air Force plans applies with equal force to the Army. Indeed, for all the services, the changing shape of our defence problem requires constant re-examination of our defence plans and organizations.

For many months a number of the most senior officers in the Canadian Army have been examining the organization of field formations that would best meet Canada's needs in the light of our commitments, both present and possible, and under conditions of either so-called conventional or nuclear warfare.