

*Oral Questions*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**SUGGESTED RECONSIDERATION OF EXPENDITURE ON FIGHTER AIRCRAFT**

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the decision of President Carter against the production of B-1 aircraft and in view of the obvious fact that manned aircraft cannot now play a significant defensive or deterrent role, will the minister and the government reconsider the immense proposed expenditure of upward of \$2 billion to be made on fighter aircraft?

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence):** One of the reasons for the decline in the use of the manned bomber is, of course, that it is vulnerable to air defences. If there were a general de-escalation it would be a different matter, but one of the other considerations is the need to maintain our first priority in national defence, that of ensuring national sovereignty, and fighter aircraft serve this role very well. Any nation which allows its air space to be intruded upon does so at its peril.

**PURCHASE OF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT—ASSURANCE OF PROPORTION OF PRODUCTION IN CANADA**

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** I must say I accept what the minister says about the need for the protection of Canadian Sovereignty. I wonder, though, whether a very large manned bomber and fighter aircraft fleet is necessary for that purpose, and I suggest it is not. When the minister made his announcement on this subject some weeks ago he assured us every effort would be made to ensure as much of the production was kept in Canada as possible. He referred to a number of firms. I think most of them were European. One or two were American. These firms were going to be asked to tender on this. I assume negotiations will be based on the hope that production will take place in Canada so that employment can be created here. Has any progress been made on this at all?

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. First, I should point out in further answer to comments in the first question that the aircraft are used in our NATO role in Europe as well. With reference to the industrial benefits, there are negotiations going on now and proposals are being made by some of the six vendors who are tendering on the aircraft. The industrial benefits will be an exceptionally important consideration. First of all, it has to be a correct military decision. The price has to be right. That is another very important consideration. The bidders know about and are working on the question of industrial benefits. I use the term "industrial benefits" as opposed to offsets which might be offsetting on this procurement alone. I am delighted to see that some of those vendors are now making proposals which go quite beyond the contract involved. One is now talking in terms of a \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion investment in Canada. I think that is a good start. I hope the others will see that that is the kind of opener we are looking for and will improve on that.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

**PURCHASE OF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT—POSSIBILITY OF USING MONEY EXPENDED FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether I should address this question to this minister or to the Minister of Finance, but I think I will stick with the Minister of National Defence. If he can I would like him to tell us what percentage of production there will be in Canada. I would like him also to say whether it is not fairly obvious that there are socially useful projects such as cleaning up the Great Lakes and housing—which I know the minister has a special interest in—which require capital. Is this the time to be expanding military expenditures, one group of aircraft alone costing over \$2 billion, when these other urgent things need to be done for the benefit of Canada?

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman recognizes the priorities the government must have in terms of military expenditures as opposed to other social expenditures. Of course, this is a massive expenditure. It is not an increase in our effort. It is to replace older aircraft with newer ones to fulfil our commitment to NATO and NORAD and for our own security.

As far as the percentage of purchasing in Canada is concerned, I have not set a fixed percentage. When I announced that we were looking for tenders I suggested something like 125 per cent in Canada is what we are looking for. My colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, is vitally concerned about this as well. We want industrial benefits which will have ongoing results. These may not necessarily be strictly military benefits but industrial benefits in the broader sense of bringing permanent jobs, permanent facilities, new technology, research and development into Canada.

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**TORNADO**

**INQUIRY AS TO REQUEST FROM MANITOBA TO HAVE AFFECTED AREA DECLARED DISASTER AREA**

**Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. On Tuesday of this week as recorded at page 7783 of *Hansard* I asked a question regarding the tornado which devastated parts of southeastern Manitoba. I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether the premier of Manitoba or the minister of finance of Manitoba have contacted either the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance asking the federal government to declare the area a disaster area and thus to make relief moneys available. This would be very welcome, in view of the fact that some of us will be in the devastated area, and these people have been waiting now for a week.

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I have not as yet heard from the premier. The Minister of State (Multiculturalism) has already brought this to my attention. I remind the House that we have a procedure whereby we respond to a provincial request. If the province