

*Abandonment of Defence Projects*

matters. This should not surprise hon. members of the committee, because it was all forecast and carefully set out in my opening statement to the committee on June 27 last. On page 25 of that statement I referred to Canadian defence policy and I said this:

Our contributions at this time are those which have been agreed to in the past. They are as I have set them out for you. It is the policy of the government to make effective those weapons systems which have been acquired as part of the Canadian contribution, including making immediately available nuclear devices required to make our contribution credible. Furthermore, it is the policy of the government to undertake a thorough review of our defence policy and commitments in order to determine the best and most effective contribution we can make to the collective defence of the free world and to the maintenance of peace in the years ahead.

I then went on to say:

In order to facilitate the review, certain action has been taken. All major procurement programs are being reconsidered. In particular, any procurement program which would tend to limit future policy or interfere with the exercise of future options is being carefully reviewed.

That statement is very clear. Even more precise is the next paragraph:

One of these programs is the general purpose frigate program. It is a project involving the expenditure of large sums of money. For this reason all present and likely future options have to be carefully considered before proceeding.

Surely that was a clear indication to the committee that a review of this program would take place and that a decision would be made without too much delay. Later in respect of the air division and our commitment in Europe I had this to say:

We are considerably concerned about the effectiveness of the four squadrons to be located on the two French bases at Marville and Grostenquin. As members of the committee know, the French government has so far not permitted the stockpiling of nuclear weapons for NATO on its territory. In consequence, the weapons for the four squadrons would not be readily at hand, and those aircraft to be maintained on quick reaction alert would have to be deployed to other bases. This raises the further question of vulnerability. In view of these problems, it is considered desirable to review at once the alternatives which may be available now or in the future.

Is it surprising to hon. gentlemen that we are in fact reviewing them as we said we would? Is it surprising that we are doing precisely what was indicated to the committee would have to be done? Further on, Mr. Speaker, I said this:

As soon as a review of existing procurement programs is complete and decisions taken, which I hope will be within a few weeks, the general review of future policy will commence.

As a matter of fact, it has taken more time to reach some of these decisions than I had hoped, but as hon. gentlemen on the

other side know as well as we know sometimes in government it takes a few days to do what one might under other circumstances do a little more quickly.

**An hon. Member:** We are all in a daze.

**Mr. Churchill:** You are learning.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Surely the indication is very clear. It was indicated to the committee that within a few weeks decisions would be taken on a number of important matters which were hanging fire from the previous government, including major procurement programs and including the follow-up purchase of CF-104 aircraft and the general purpose frigate program. They should not, therefore, be surprised when we do as we said we would do and make the decisions we said we would make. In our general review we have to consider the relationship between our forces and our allies.

**Mr. Clancy:** Did you know in February that the French would not allow nuclear arms on their soil?

**Mr. Hellyer:** Yes, I knew it three years ago. As a matter of fact, I introduced the problem in the house and drew it to the attention of the government of that day. I was surprised that after three years nothing had been done about it and it was left for me to try to solve.

**An hon. Member:** You are a hero.

**Mr. Hellyer:** In order to make our proper assessment of future requirements we have undertaken a number of studies. These include both major and minor studies ranging from the study of the probability of various types of wars to various types of incursion or insurrection which might take place in the world generally, the balance of forces at present existing between east and west and the possible most effective contribution which a country like Canada could make in the years ahead.

A number of additional specific studies have been undertaken and are being undertaken, and we hope that in total they will give us a very broad base of information on which to work toward a comprehensive policy for the future.

I also gave an indication of the timing that I hoped would be achieved and I concluded my remarks in respect of the general review by saying:

It is hoped that notwithstanding the considerable scope and magnitude of our own studies we will be in a position to reach conclusions early in the new year. I am sure that the views of this committee will be most helpful in assisting us to determine the best role for Canada to play in future years.