

Inquiries of the Ministry

In view of what I have just said, the last part of the hon. member's question becomes inapplicable. However, I should point out that there can be found in the estimates of my colleague the Minister of National Defence an item relating to a start on the paving of the Alaska highway.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**REPORTED INTERFERENCE WITH PHOTOGRAPHERS DURING NAVAL REVIEW**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I have a question which I should like to direct to the Acting Minister of National Defence or to the Prime Minister. I wonder if they would undertake to have an investigation made into the report that 13 newspaper photographers were locked in a small room aboard a naval vessel for 3½ hours during yesterday's naval review by Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, near Victoria, B.C., and were not allowed to report on the review as were the C.B.C. photographers.

Hon. George C. Nowlan (Acting Minister of National Defence): The minister of National Defence will be back tomorrow, I expect, and I shall bring this question to his attention. I am sure he will give an answer at the earliest possible moment.

NORAD—REFERENCE TO PRESS REPORT OF DIRECTIONS TO CANADIAN FORCES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. J. McIlraith (Ottawa West): I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I should like to ask whether he has any statement to make to the house concerning the press report of the directions purported to be given by General Partridge to the Canadian forces forming part of the NORAD forces.

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am unable to answer that question from our department.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Possibly that question might have been directed to me, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that it concerns more than one department. In connection with the press report may I say this. During the past week of deep tension in the Middle East and generally throughout the world the United States has throughout kept the Canadian government informed of the steps being taken and the consequential action which their authorities considered appropriate both in that area and in general. Throughout the week

[Mr. Smith (Hastings-Frontenac).]

there has been the closest consultation on the highest governmental level as well as between the chiefs of staffs of the two countries.

The nature of our defence program and problem is such that, when a period of international tension arises, it is most essential that the military authorities, particularly those concerned with air defence, shall act prudently so that the forces will be in such a position that should grave eventualities take place that are not anticipated, none the less the defensive and deterrent quality of those defences will be in readiness.

Those in charge of NORAD came to the conclusion that it would be proper to increase the state of readiness of the air defence forces under its operational control. This increased readiness of air defence involves increasing the number of aircraft ready to take off on short notice as well as increasing the number that are available for use at various times in the future.

The commander in chief of NORAD informed both the Canadian and United States chiefs of staffs in this regard yesterday. The decision that was made was the type of decision which our own air defence authorities would have made under all the circumstances had they been operating our defence forces purely as Canadian forces and not as part of an integrated system. However much one regrets the disturbed conditions in the world today and hopes that the tension will be relieved, there are periods from time to time—and this is one of them—when calm judgment and cool deliberation are necessary, and when as a normal practice the defence forces must be brought up to various states of readiness which the circumstances of the moment demand. To take this course is the course of prudence, caution and common sense.

The course that was taken is not intended in any way to be of an alarmist or provocative nature. It is not to be interpreted as such. The course taken is one that was determined on the basis that every potential eventuality in defence must be assured at all times; and I think on the basis of what I have said that while in no way desiring or feeling that what I have said may extend the fears of our Canadian people, at the same time due caution, having regard to the circumstances, will I hope be accepted as the reason for this course which, as I said earlier, would have been taken regardless of whether our air defences were joined or entirely separate.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): I am sure members on this side of the house would consider this a normal precautionary measure in the circumstances, and not to be regarded as alarmist in any