

Supply—National Defence

The minister and the Associate Minister of National Defence have stated that this aircraft can take off from short clearings in fields. However, I am informed that because of its underslung bomb load, necessitating a perfect runway, it requires greater length of runway than an Air Canada DC-8 jet. Even operating from perfect airfields, which might be few and far between in brush-fire wars, the aircraft is limited, with a moderate bomb load, to a range of 180 miles.

The Minister of National Defence has been careful to deny that at the present time there is a problem respecting morale in his department. However, the numbers of men receiving discharge in the last 18 months, being some 13,142 who have retired from the defence forces prior to normal retirement age, would indicate that he has been singularly successful in producing rivalries long forgotten in the Canadian services. His policies have caused discontent among the troops. He has disrupted planned programs in the navy, setting construction back by at least five years, with no clear objective. He has generally made so many serious errors in judgment, such as the retirement of 500 pilots who now are required by the Royal Canadian Air Force, that there seems little reason, except the old school tie, for him to hold his post.

● (6:00 p.m.)

It is readily understandable that the navy, in the Atlantic provinces, and especially in Nova Scotia is our prime concern. However, what did the minister do? He cancelled the general purpose frigate program and then, many months later, he produced another, smaller construction program. But to date no action has been taken.

In his so-called wisdom he decided a minesweeping capability was not required by the R.C.N., so he mothballed every minesweeper in the fleet. I ask him this: What alternative is he going to introduce in place of these minesweepers? It is true that if he

keeps on at this present pace it may well be that Canada will not have any navy to protect against mines. But we do have a large and growing wooden and steel fishing fleet, and in time of war these ships would be entitled to some protection, if they are to be expected to continue producing food for the nation.

The minister stated today that our six squadrons in Germany will be fully operational in the non-nuclear attack role as well as in the nuclear strike role. However, I think he should give us a clear explanation of what is being done in support of our NATO requirements. Does this mean we have now gone full cycle and become a non-nuclear power? Will the Bomarcs in Canada be scrapped, or will this arrangement be expanded, with Canada becoming part of an anti-missile missile system?

There are many other questions I could put to the minister but I see it is six o'clock. I hope he will answer some of those I have been able to pose during the short period of time at my disposal.

Mr. Nowlan: May I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Hellyer: I understood there was some general feeling that we might finish tonight—that it had been discussed earlier.

Mr. Churchill: Misinformed.
Progress reported.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Churchill: I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence about the business for Monday. I understand there will be a continuation of discussion of the estimates of the Department of National Defence followed then or later by the estimates of the Department of Justice. Is that correct?

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, that is the intention, if that is agreeable to the committee.

It being six minutes past six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.