

*Supply—National Defence*

to go ahead on our own, must give one cause to hesitate about the final effectiveness and acceptability of this weapon.

I gave some information about Bomarc tests this morning. The minister said tonight that these tests are classified and he could not confirm or deny what I said about these tests which caused some anxiety about the effectiveness of the weapon. As I understand it the tests have not been very successful. I must say, however, that the information I got was from the reports of the congressional committee. They are public documents. I had no other information. Everything I said was taken from congressional committee reports which have been made available to members of congress and to the general public. There is certainly nothing classified about that kind of information.

A few moments ago the minister dealt with the very important question of the equipping of Canadian forces with nuclear weapons, something about which I asked him some questions earlier in the day. I repeat what General Norstad had to say about this, "Our defence plans are based on the nuclear weapons." The minister commenting on that and on what I said stated that he was sure that the Canadian people would not wish their troops to be sent into action with inferior weapons. I have no doubt that he is quite right in that but I suggest to him that the Canadian people also would not wish their troops to be sent into action with weapons under the control of another government.

The minister has said—and I want to be fair to him on this matter—that negotiations are now under way. As I took down what he said, the purpose of these negotiations with the United States is to make arrangements for the storing and equipping of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces. The minister at page 7 of his annual report had something to say about this:

While ownership and custody of nuclear weapons required for Canadian defence forces will remain with the United States, their use from Canadian territory or in Canadian air space will depend on conditions previously agreed to by the Canadian government.

Ownership and custody will remain with the United States. Has there been a change since that report was written or is it a fact that the negotiations which are now under way are merely for the storing and equipping of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces and will not affect in any way the control over those weapons by the United States?

**Mr. Pearkes:** If the hon. gentleman wishes me to answer that point now, I would say that since these negotiations have not been completed it is impossible to give the details to the committee. The practice which has

[Mr. Pearson.]

been followed in such other countries as now have nuclear weapons stored by the United States within their boundaries is that the United States retains custody of those weapons until they are released for operation to the country itself. The country then has a veto; the country need not use them. They are available and once they have been, as it were, handed over to the occupying country or the user country, then they are employed under the direction of the government of that country.

**Mr. Winch:** Would the United States hand them over if the country would not agree to using them? Otherwise there would be no sense to it.

**Mr. Pearson:** I do not know of anything more important than this particular question. I think we should try to get it absolutely clear. I understand from the white paper that there is no question that the ownership and custody of nuclear weapons required for Canadian defence forces remains in the hands of the United States. The minister has now said that the agreement which it is hoped to negotiate will provide for those weapons which are available to be handed over to Canadian forces at a time and under circumstances agreeable to the Canadian government which may desire to use them at that time. I do not know whether that is an accurate description of the situation, but it seems to me to be a very confused situation indeed.

I ask the minister, if the decision is to use nuclear tactical weapons,—and I am not quarrelling with that decision at the moment—why should we not follow it to its logical conclusion and have the United States government, in the event that an agreement for this can be reached, turn those weapons over for storing, for use by and under the control of the Canadian military authorities. This will require an amendment to congressional legislation. I know, however, that that change has been made in the interests of one country, namely the United Kingdom, and I think there will be no other satisfactory way of dealing with this matter—if the decision is to use tactical atomic weapons—than to have those weapons brought under the complete control of the Canadian government if the Canadian government wishes to allocate them to Canadian forces.

I asked the minister this morning—and he referred to it this evening—some questions about the document, "Minimum Force Needs from 1958 to 1963". I know, of course, this is a top secret document and I naturally do not expect him to tell the committee the details of the implementation of this five-year program; but I had hoped that he would be