

External Affairs in Parliament

U-2 Incident

In reply to a question asked in the House of Commons on May 11 as to whether U-2 aircraft of the United States Air Force had made "a series of weather flights over Canada" and, if so, whether such flights had been made "as the result of special arrangements with the Canadian Government, which preclude using Canadian bases as take-off points for flights to the Soviet Union", the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard C. Green, made the following statement:

... No such planes have ever operated from a Canadian air base. That was made clear by the Minister of National Defence in a statement which he issued yesterday afternoon, and it has also been confirmed in Washington today by Mr. Lincoln White as spokesman for the State Department. Furthermore, no such plane as the plane described here as a spy type has ever landed in Canada. Apparently the main type of U-2 plane is one which is designed for high flying, and is used for meteorological and radiological sampling. Such planes carry United States Air Force markings and are flown by United States Air Force pilots, neither of which fact pertains in the case of the plane which came down in the Soviet Union.

One of the planes which is used for meteorological and radiological sampling made a forced landing north of Prince Albert on March 15, 1960. It was on a routine flight, the purpose of which was upper atmosphere meteorological and radiological sampling. It was returning from a point over Liverpool Bay near the mouth of the Mackenzie River, and had not proceeded beyond North American air space. The flight in question was one of a series of scientific flights to obtain precise information about clear air turbulence, upper air cloud formations, jet streams and radiation in the upper atmosphere. The aircraft have been unarmed and all flights have been cleared in the normal manner. This is not only a matter of the planes being cleared and flight-plans being filed, but also the making of reports during flight and when the plane returns to the United States.

As I have said, one such plane crashed north of Prince Albert on March 15, 1960. There is no question about its *bona fides* in the case, that it was such a plane and not one engaged in flying over the territory of any other country. I am further informed that these particular U-2 planes do not have the flight range to be able to fly from the United States over Canada and thence over Soviet territory. . . .