

Supply—National Defence

withdrawing from that particular participation in that kind of continental defence, and of using our resources to give the R.C.A.F. other jobs, other tasks, other assignments which will be effective and perhaps will be more Canadian?

The minister stated a few moments ago that it was not possible—I think he said it was beyond our resources—at the present time to make one brigade group in this country air transportable, or mobile in that sense, because it would require 200 planes. I ask the minister whether the government has considered the desirability of diverting our air effort from the kind of continental air defence I have been talking about to an air effort which would make Canadian brigade groups completely air transportable with Canadian planes?

I would also like to ask the minister what will be the functions of the CF-100 squadrons which will remain as part of the air division in Europe, as part of NATO air forces, and which will presumably not take on the new role which is being assigned to the present F-86 squadrons? Perhaps the minister would like to deal with that now.

Mr. Pearkes: Yes. They will carry out, as I said this morning, the role they have been carrying out in the past. General Norstad still feels there is a requirement for this particular type of long distance reconnaissance interceptor and he would like to keep the CF-100's for that purpose for the time being.

Mr. Pearson: I take it then that the government is satisfied that the CF-100 is capable of doing this type of work, that there is no necessity for replacing it and that that will be a function of the air division separate from the function of the other squadron?

Mr. Pearkes: That is correct. I cannot agree with the statement made a moment ago by the Leader of the Opposition to the effect that the CF-100 is obsolete because it still has a very useful function to carry out.

Mr. Pearson: I agree that it may be serving a most useful function in certain respects. When I say that it is obsolete I call the minister's attention as justification for that remark to the comment that the Prime Minister made on February 23, which I quoted this morning, when he said that regardless of the advice of the chiefs of staff and their view on this aircraft—that is the CF-105—it would be to all intents and purposes obsolete by the time it became available for squadron service. If the Prime Minister was justified in referring to the CF-105 as obsolete before it would become available for squadron service, that is what I mean when I say that obviously the CF-100 in doing the work the

CF-105 was meant to do could hardly be considered as other than obsolete at the present time. There may be other duties it could perform effectively, but as a high level interceptor alongside modern United States interceptors, surely the minister will agree that the CF-100 is obsolete for that particular use against modern supersonic bombers.

Mr. Pearkes: I think the Leader of the Opposition is confusing the threat of today and the threat that was anticipated by the time that the CF-105 would have been available. As I have said on many occasions and as I repeated this morning, we consider that the bomber threat is diminishing and the missile threat is increasing. At the present time the CF-100 is an effective aircraft against the type of bomber attack which we may anticipate at the present time and for the next year or two from now as coming against Canada.

Mr. Pearson: With great respect I do not think I am confusing the threat at all. I know perfectly well that the bomber threat will decrease or is likely to give way to the missile threat as the main threat. I know too that the bomber threat, while it may be reduced in the sense that development of bombers may not be proceeding in the Soviet union as it would have proceeded if the missile developments had not occurred, but I also know from the evidence I have read from the congressional committees, by air force people in the United States is that the quality of the Russian bomber fleet is continually being improved. If the minister was correct when he said a year ago that the CF-100 could successfully engage only the majority of the bombers that might be expected to attack this continent—if the CF-100 could only do that a year ago, not knock down but engage the majority of bombers—surely the CF-100, magnificent as it has been and useful as it may be now for certain purposes, is not the kind of airplane on which we on this continent or indeed Europe should be relying for high level interceptor work. No doubt that is why the two Bomarc squadrons are being introduced into our air defence.

The minister has corrected me in my reference to his remarks in Winnipeg. I gave him textually the press quotation and I am glad to have the correction because obviously if the United States decides not to go ahead with the development of the Bomarc it would be folly for Canada to do that on its own. That is self-evident. The very fact that the minister has to make that kind of statement, that if the United States decides not to go ahead with the Bomarc we will not be able