

Labour Crisis in Aircraft Industry

criticizing that decision now. But when in the light of events, with all the factors before them, ministers of the crown decide that a course is necessary to be taken, then that course, if right and proper, denies them any retreat to a position similar to that in which governments in Europe found themselves during the 1930's. They refused to take courses which they knew were right, as their prime ministers subsequently admitted, because they were afraid of the political consequences that would follow such action.

In that connection I think I can do no better than to refer to an editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* of January 31. Similar arguments are taking place in the United States. The title of the article is, "Put Defence Above Politics." The article reads as follows:

A wise man once said that military questions are too serious to leave to generals. Democratic nations have found it well to place defence under civilian control. Under this system political leaders resolve differences among military experts.

Then it goes on to summarize what I believe is the attitude that we must take, and I think that in the days ahead the Canadian people will more and more realize that we have taken a course that is the only one in accord with our responsibilities. The article continues:

Defence is too serious a matter to leave to partisan politics . . . The nation can afford whatever is really required for defence. Indeed, it cannot afford anything less.

Then it goes on:

But let us also recognize that strong forces are operating which would push defence expenses to unnecessary and wasteful levels . . . Perspective is essential.

It finally ends up with this:

We are not wholly satisfied with the administration's defence program, but it is a considered program and it deserves questioning on specific points, not alarmist or partisan attacks.

I think that is fair; that fairly expresses the situation. Again I say, let no one say that in making a decision such as this we did it without much thought. We gave this decision weeks of consideration. In order to justify the expenditure of the taxpayer's money for defence it is necessary that it be actually useful just now, or potentially useful in the future and necessary for maintaining a potentially useful defence unit in the country.

I realize that defence production is an important weapon in the battle against unemployment. However, I say with all the seriousness that I can put at my command, that the production of obsolete weapons as a make-work program is an unjustifiable expenditure of public funds. These changes have been made in other countries. Only last summer the United Kingdom found it

necessary to cancel further work on the Saunders-Roe SR-177, a supersonic fighter which had reached an advanced stage of development. The United States cancelled out two of its aircraft, the F-106C and the F-106D. Then, in the United Kingdom, the government's decision was announced by the minister of supply in these words:

While this aircraft commends general recognition as an excellent and unique design in its class, unfortunately it no longer fits into the particular pattern of the United Kingdom defence program.

I am not going to repeat what I said on an earlier occasion, but the President of the United States dealt with this matter in his address to congress. He went on to say that major national security outlays would be projected at \$48.5 billion for the current budget. The problem, he pointed out—and I am dealing now not with his words but the conclusion based thereon—posed by rapidly increasing costs of complicated new weapons is a subject which should be emphasized. He revealed that the over-all cost of each Atlas missile will average \$35 million, and that they are now buying bombers which actually cost their weight in gold. Then, summarizing what he said a little later on: a striking example of the switch to new weapons was revealed in the total expenditures on missiles, negligible less than a decade ago which will soar into \$7 billion in the current fiscal year. I should like now to quote from the monthly letter of the National City Bank:

The process of selection inevitably has been painful for suppliers of discontinued weapons. One way to avoid dislocations and political repercussions would be to continue spending more on everything, good and poor weapons.

This was the position in which we found ourselves. The changes that have taken place in the last eight or nine years, particularly since 1946, have been such that the plans of a few years ago have been outflown by the changes in aircraft techniques during that period.

Now, an argument was raised today, generally by the Leader of the Opposition and specifically by the hon. member for Assiniboia, to the effect that in what we had done—I think the words were—there was abject surrender to the United States. I say to the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Pearson: I made no such statement.

Mr. Diefenbaker: No; I say to the Leader of the Opposition that when the outrageous statement was made by the member for Assiniboia, that we should say to the United States—which is joined with us in defence; which provided us with the entire expenditure of \$300 million for the D.E.W. line; with that percentage of the expenditure on