

Supply—National Defence

again by the officials of my department and the officials of the Department of Defence Production.

I must say some of the statements made by the hon. member for Trinity yesterday were exactly the same as some of the statements which have been made in my office. But we had the facilities for testing the accuracy of those statements, and they have been tested.

Mr. Hellyer: It is too bad you did not use them.

Mr. Pearkes: I am quite certain that no matter what plane this government had selected for re-equipping this air division, because of the variety of excellent planes I have already mentioned today the opposition would have chosen some other one. It would not have mattered in the least what plane we would have taken, they would have chosen some other plane—

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, on a question of privilege—

Mr. Pearkes: —and would have bedevilled us.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I understand the hon. member is rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Hellyer: That is quite correct, Mr. Chairman. The statement the minister has just made is without any foundation whatsoever.

Mr. Drysdale: What is your question of privilege?

Mr. Hellyer: There are other planes which this government could have chosen.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. member is just making a contradiction. That is not a question of privilege.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, the minister made the allegation that no matter what plane the government chose we would have said they should have chosen some other. That is not so. It is a reflection on the integrity of the opposition, and it should not be allowed to stand on the record.

The Deputy Chairman: Will the hon. member please take his seat. It is a question of argument, not a question of privilege, in my opinion.

Mr. Pearkes: Yes, Mr. Chairman; I made that statement. It is a statement of fact. Naturally the opposition would have done that; they would have chosen some other plane and advocated, just exactly as the representatives of the various companies advocated, the strong points of the other one. You can take your choice. These are all good

[Mr. Pearkes.]

planes. They have certain characteristics which are or are not capable of meeting the military requirements or the economic requirements. These have, as I say, been thoroughly examined and tested during the past few months.

We have also considered how quickly pilots who were accustomed to operating the F-86 could be trained to operate a new plane which was acceptable. That has been shown, and our pilots have already flown the F-104, not the 104-G but the other models of this aircraft. They have already flown it and they have demonstrated their ability to change very quickly from flying the Sabre jet, the F-86, to flying the 104.

With respect to some of the utterly erroneous, exaggerated and irresponsible statements made by the hon. member for Trinity, I would like to call attention to some of these facts. He says this aircraft was grounded two years ago. Has not practically every aircraft which is in operation today been grounded at some time or other? I recall that the Comet II was grounded a number of years ago for a very long period. Is the hon. member going to stand up and say that the Comet IV of today, which is regarded as the best aircraft of its type anywhere in the world, because a previous mark or type of that aircraft was grounded a few years ago, is of no ruddy use?

Mr. Hellyer: I did not say that.

Mr. Pearkes: I know you did not; you said that about the other plane, but for exactly the same reason—

Mr. Hellyer: I said that the faults had now likely been corrected.

Mr. Pearkes: Of course you did.

Mr. Hellyer: Of course I did.

Mr. Pearkes: But you said, as one of the reasons that the 104-G was no ruddy use, that it had been grounded two years ago.

Mr. Hellyer: I did not say it was one of the reasons.

Mr. Pearkes: Then the hon. member went on discussing at considerable length the qualities of the original 104. The original 104 was designed, as he said correctly, for the purpose of aerial combat. It attained great distinction in being able to fly at great height, and was regarded as one of the superior aircraft of that period for its particular mission at that time. But that is not the plane we are getting. We are getting the advanced edition of that particular family of aircraft, one which is having special characteristics introduced into its