

Inquiries of the Ministry

indicate that it should be possible for us similarly to complete the planned build-up of our defences in Canada with these all-weather fighters designed particularly to do that job. It was not possible to do this before because the aircraft with which to do it did not exist anywhere in the world. Had we gone into production of any earlier type we would have had a major part of our productive capacity engaged in producing planes which were either already obsolescent or which were not suited for the purpose. Instead of that we engaged in producing the CF-100 which is believed to be the leading long-range all-weather fighter aircraft, and it is specially designed, equipped and qualified to meet the needs of Canadian defence.

At all times during the past year and a half we have had a number of squadrons of Sabres for our defence pending their transfer to the other side, and we have had a large number of aircrew and aircraft in the operational training units. Exercise Signpost last July was the first major demonstration and exercise of air defence.

There is nothing new in the situation and it has been made plain from time to time. In "Canada's Defence Program" the white paper I put before parliament last session, in June, 1952, and which was widely distributed, I referred to the air defence of Canada; and after mentioning radar installations and communications I said:

At the same time fighter defence in Canada, both regular and reserve, is being built up. At present the fighter squadrons for this purpose are equipped with Vampire and Mustang aircraft. These will be replaced by CF-100's as they become available. In addition, there are a number of squadrons equipped with F-86E's and designated for the NATO air force in Europe. In the meantime they are available for the defence of this continent.

The statement then made was completely in accordance with the facts as they then existed and it has been amplified and repeated time after time ever since. It has been made perfectly plain that the first squadron of CF-100's was in process of formation. We could not establish it—equipped with this first all-weather long-range fighter to meet Canadian needs—until the planes were produced, and there were no suitable planes in production anywhere else.

Mr. Speaker, I have referred to the production of F-86's and CF-100's. As to the production of F-86's, there may be some people still who are sorry that we did not take their advice and go into production on some other types of fighters which are now obsolete. I do not believe that the Royal

[Mr. Claxton.]

Air Force of the United Kingdom, which is receiving a large number of these fighters, would take that view. I do not believe that the United States Air Force, to which we sold a number of these fighters for use in Korea, would take that view. I do not believe that the countries of NATO and Britain, which are now being defended in part by our fighters abroad, would take that view either. I do not believe that the people of Canada would take that view because the F-86E and its production have been magnificent successes and major contributions to our combined defence.

Similarly, a year from now I believe that we shall look back on our decision to make the CF-100 and the Orenda engine in Canada as a major contribution to the defence of North America and of Canada itself.

Mr. J. S. Sinnott (Springfield): I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence. Is he aware that Wing Commander Rohmer is in partnership with a certain Conservative candidate in Toronto?

Mr. Fraser: And treasurer of the Liberal party.

INQUIRY AS TO IMPORTATION OF BEAGLE HOUNDS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. H. Ferguson (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Is it true that we are importing beagle hounds from the old country to be used to encourage the men of the flying corps at Camp Borden to take exercise? Is that true or not true?

Hon. Brooke Claxton (Minister of National Defence): No.

FISHERIES

INCREASE IN CARAPACE MEASUREMENT OF LOBSTERS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. Chester S. McLure (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I desire to direct a question to the Minister of Fisheries. Has the minister been informed by his deputy that the Prince Edward Island fisheries federation strongly protests the new carapace measurement for lobsters? If so, what comment has he to make with regard to the matter?

Hon. James Sinclair (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, the minister has been informed. I have no further comment to make at this time.