

NATIONAL DEFENCE

NORAD—APPROVAL OF EXCHANGE OF NOTES BETWEEN CANADA AND U.S.

The house resumed, from Tuesday, June 10, consideration of the motion of Mr. Diefenbaker:

That it is expedient that the houses of parliament do approve an exchange of notes constituting an agreement between the government of Canada and the government of the United States of America concerning the organization and operation of the North American air defence command (NORAD) signed at Washington May 12, 1958, and that this house do approve the same.

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, during the remainder of the time that I have available to me I shall continue to answer the various questions which were asked during the debate yesterday. The Leader of the Opposition asked for information as to the principles and procedures under which our air force will operate under this plan, that is the NORAD plan. He also asked various questions regarding the system of command.

The note on NORAD states quite clearly that the commander in chief, NORAD, will be responsible to the chiefs of staff committee of Canada and the joint chiefs of staff of the United States, who in turn are responsible to their respective governments. Then it goes on to say that he will operate within the concept of air defence approved by the appropriate authorities of the two governments, who will bear in mind the objectives for the defence of the Canadian-United States regions of NATO.

Then later in paragraph 6 it states:

The plans and procedures to be followed by NORAD in wartime shall be formulated and approved in peacetime by appropriate national authorities and shall be capable of rapid implementation in an emergency.

In paragraph 3 it defines "operational control". Since the Leader of the Opposition and I served during the first war this term "operational control" has been invented. It was not one we understood in those days long ago. I have therefore endeavoured, and perhaps it is wishful thinking, to put down in a very few sentences what I feel is the function of the headquarters of NORAD at Colorado Springs, both in peace and war. I hope I will not confuse the issue even further.

In peacetime the function will be to develop plans and procedures to be used in war. These plans and procedures would be agreed upon in peacetime and be ready for immediate use in an emergency. I might add that these plans are being worked out, modified and improved continuously. There is always a plan which could be put into effect,

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but that may only be a temporary plan awaiting further modification and ultimate approval, we hope, by the governments concerned.

These plans as submitted by the commander in chief of NORAD will be reviewed, amended and approved by the chiefs of staff of both countries. It will be a responsibility of the commander in chief of NORAD to formulate a general pattern of training and the general supervision of practice exercises in order to ensure the readiness of the forces and facilities which may be available to him in time of emergency.

In war it will be his responsibility to direct the air operations in accordance with the plans that have been agreed to in peacetime. Once the air battle is joined, NORAD will keep the subordinate commanders informed of the over-all air situation, and he will be in a position to reinforce threatened areas with any forces that might be available. He exercises that command, so far as Canada is concerned—again I have used the word "command", and I should have said operational control. He exercises that operational control through the headquarters of the air defence command of the R.C.A.F. at St. Hubert.

Perhaps a situation such as this might occur. Unidentified aircraft are located on the radar screen of the distant warning line. These aircraft are seen to be approaching Canada. It is then the responsibility of the officer commanding the air defence command of the R.C.A.F. to dispatch interceptors with the idea of identifying the planes. The radar screen, of course, could not give any definite identification. It would eventually be able to give some estimate of the number of tracks there were, or in other words the number of aircraft which were approaching Canada.

Assuming that these aircraft were a number of enemy aircraft and that they had been identified as such by the aircraft sent up by the officer commanding at St. Hubert, the officer commanding at St. Hubert would then direct interceptors to engage the enemy, once it had been established that these aircraft were of hostile intent. At the same time the information reached the officer commanding at St. Hubert the same information would have been passed to the commander in chief of NORAD. The commander in chief of NORAD might also be getting other radar recordings from other parts of the continent of North America. He would report those to the officer commanding the R.C.A.F. air defence force. If the number of hostile planes moving through Canadian air space approaching the various targets were more