

Supply—National Defence

Mr. Winch: I think, sir, you have now made one of the most astounding and misunderstandable statements ever made by a minister of national defence.

Mr. Pearson: I can understand the hon. member's preoccupation with the fact that CF-100 squadrons will be operating in Canada indefinitely at a time when the capability of a possible attacker is such that one can have no assurance that the CF-100, good plane as it is and skilfully operated as it always is, will be able to carry out effectively a job which could have been done a few years ago. If we have worries on that score they are, surely, understandable. These preoccupations are increased, I think, by the references which the minister made yesterday to the possibility of United States interceptor squadrons operating from Canadian airfields and pushing interception as far north as possible which, if we are going into this kind of thing, is certainly desirable. The minister said yesterday that provision had been made for this kind of co-operation in the NORAD agreement. I have been looking at the NORAD agreement, but the only provision I can find to cover this kind of activity of United States squadrons operating on Canadian soil is the article which reads:

No permanent changes of station may be made without the approval of the higher national authority concerned. Temporary reinforcements from one area to another—

That is, one area on either side of the border, or across the border, presumably, including the crossing of the international boundary.

—to meet operational requirements will be within the authority of commanders having operational control.

That kind of movement is authorized under this agreement if it is to meet operational requirements. With respect, I suggest to the minister that this particular clause would not cover the kind of procedure I have in mind and to which I thought he referred yesterday—the stationing of United States interceptor squadrons at Canadian airfields as part of a joint force.

Mr. Pearkes: The permanent stationing could, as the hon. gentleman has just read out, only be carried out by agreement between the two governments, but the temporary operation of squadrons of the United States air force from Canadian airfields could be authorized by the commanders in question.

Mr. Pearson: May I ask the minister if there are negotiations under way now which would permit that kind of permanent stationing on Canadian soil?

[Mr. Pearkes.]

Mr. Pearkes: There are no such negotiations under way for the permanent stationing of any United States squadrons in Canada.

Mr. MacLean (Winnipeg North Centre): There is one matter on which I feel compelled to make some comment and I think it would be best done under this item. It is with regard to the separate school problem that has existed over the past year among air force personnel situated at Stevenson's field in the city of St. James. I, myself, and I know the hon. member for St. Boniface, have received a good many representations on this matter and no doubt the minister has received as many, and possibly more. I do not know what may be done with regard to immediately solving the situation. As the minister well knows, before last year the personnel situated at Stevenson's field were granted equal privileges with regard to educational opportunities for their children. In Manitoba we have a separate school system. It is my understanding that Quebec and Manitoba are perhaps the only provinces with such a system. However, the system in Manitoba differs from that in Quebec in that, although the separate school system is recognized, no public funds are authorized for the provision of such a separate system.

Up until last year the minister's department paid for the education of these children regardless of which school they wished to attend. Then at the beginning of last year an agreement was entered into by the Department of Finance with the city of St. James under which an over-all sum was paid to the city of St. James, but the city of St. James had the onus of providing the educational facilities for the children of the air force personnel situated at this air field. However, the city of St. James is not compelled to provide separate schools as such, and it is my understanding that there are no other schools in St. James apart from the Protestant public schools.

The minister may wonder how I come into this picture. I am in this picture because the main parish school which is situated in St. Edward's parish is in my constituency. The children of the Catholic air force personnel at Stevenson's field went in the main to this parish school and Monsignor MacInerney of St. Edward's parish brought this to my attention. I have talked to the air force personnel out there. I realize, of course, in part this is a constitutional issue with the minister because education comes under the domain of the provinces. This is a situation in which perhaps he can do little since the agreement has been signed.

However, I understand the present situation is simply this. The air force personnel situated