

Supply—National Defence

which were addressed to the minister which he has not dealt with; but I assume there are a great many of these questions of detail concerning the separate services which can be dealt with when we come to the items in the estimates. For instance, Mr. Chairman, we would want to ask a great many questions about the re-equipment of the air division, or part of the air division, in Europe, questions of detail, not so much questions of general policy, and perhaps this may not be the time to ask those questions. As a matter of fact, I think we would like a little time to ponder over the minister's announcement with regard to the re-equipment of this division before we would be in a good position to ask some of the questions we would like to ask.

The minister mentioned one point on which I should like to say a few words. He did not in answering this point deal with what I thought was a very fundamental question going right to the roots of the continental defence policy, namely the validity of this whole concept of Canadian participation in continental air defence as part of a joint United States-Canada effort. At the moment I am not arguing one way or the other whether the partnership, the alliance, or whatever you wish to call it, should devote such a high proportion of its resources to this kind of continental air defence or whether it would not be better to fall back on the deterrent and the protection of the deterrent as the basic concept of defence.

But let us assume that this concept will be carried out by the United States; that is, the spending of great sums of money on the interception of bombers and missiles which may be launched in an attack on this continent, not in the hope—because there is no hope—that they will all be prevented from reaching the continent and dropping their bombs, but in the hope that a high proportion of them presumably can be knocked out of the air as far north as possible. If we assume that this is going to continue to be a major aspect of North American defence—I suggest it is no longer a major aspect of the United Kingdom's defence—is it desirable, and I ask this as a question, that Canada should devote such a large share of its defence expenditure to participation in this North American effort which is, and in the nature of things must be, primarily under the control of the United States?

The minister aroused my curiosity this morning in one part of his statement to which he has not referred tonight, and which I mentioned in my own statement, when he said that in the effort to carry interception as far north as possible United States squadrons may soon be operating off Canadian bases.

[Mr. Pearson.]

Mr. Benidickson: Entirely.

Mr. Pearson: Not entirely.

Mr. Benidickson: No, I am wrong.

Mr. Pearson: There will be United States squadrons presumably operating off Canadian bases. So that means that a new stage in this combined continental defence has been reached where we do not have, as we have had up to the present, a Canadian sector of NORAD with Canadian squadrons operating in Canada and United States squadrons operating in the United States, because up to the present, I take it, there have been no United States interceptor squadrons operating in Canada under NORAD.

Mr. Parkes: Oh yes. A United States squadron in Labrador is operating under the air defence command of Canada. There have been United States aircraft frequently coming and exercising from Canadian stations. The Canadian sector, as I have pointed out in the past, was only that comprising the area which would be covered by interceptors from the North Bay, St. Hubert and Bagotsville stations.

Mr. Pearson: I appreciate what the minister has said. There have been, of course, United States squadrons operating from leased bases in Labrador and Newfoundland, and there have been United States planes operating by agreement in exercises over Canada. But the minister has taken this development one stage further, and he visualizes the time when more modern United States interceptors than any we have now will be pushed further north to operate off Canadian bases as part of the North American continental air command.

Mr. Parkes: That is provided for in the NORAD agreement whereby squadrons from either country may operate on the other side of the international boundary on a temporary basis.

Mr. Pearson: Yes, I appreciate that too, Mr. Chairman. What I am trying to get at is this. If this development proceeds in the way I suggest it will proceed from what the minister has said, we will then have in this country nine, I think the figure is, squadrons of CF-100's taking their place in this continental air command, squadrons which will be equipped with airplanes which will be less modern in a year or two because they must be considered obsolete even now, for many purposes at least, and we will have Canadian squadrons equipped with these planes operating with United States squadrons in Canada as a part of NORAD. I ask the minister if the government has considered the desirability—I put this forward merely as a question—of