

*Supply—National Defence*

some of the principal ones which were given an exhaustive examination were the F-102 Convair, the F11-1F Super Tiger Grumman, the Blackburn NA-39 and the Blackburn 109, the Northrop 156, the McDonnell F-4H and the McDonnell F-101C, the Lockheed 104, the French Mirage made by Marcel Dassault, the Republic 105, the A-IIIJ North American and the CF-100 and F-86 to see whether they could be converted to the role.

Among the criteria which were set out in order to enable a just assessment to be made was suitability to the role which was given to us when General Norstad visited Ottawa a few weeks ago. Of course the serviceability of the aircraft had to be given high consideration, and the availability; when could this aircraft come into service? Then on the economic side, the cost and the amount of work which might be provided in Canada had to be considered. Could these planes be manufactured under licence or would they have to be bought outright? There was the question of production sharing, how much work could be carried out in Canada on other projects which were being carried out by some of these companies. Would they share the production with our own industry in making parts for some of the aircraft which might be used by the United States air force or by civilian operations?

In fact I can say that the decision was based on military, operational and economic grounds. A question was asked yesterday, could not a larger type of aircraft—mind you, the size of the aircraft governs the cost—have been used in fewer numbers than a smaller aircraft which would, for each copy, cost less than a larger one? It was emphatically stated that from the military and operational requirements point of view those requirements could not be met with a fewer number of aircraft. In fact, for a strike reconnaissance role rather small aircraft are preferred.

I believe this gives some indication of the extended and exhaustive studies which were made. Yesterday we were told we should have reached this decision months ago. Why was this decision not taken last December? No sooner had we been accused of being dilatory in that respect than we were told we had selected the wrong aircraft. I can assure hon. members that this government does not apologize for having taken considerable time to make a thorough examination so as to be certain that the taxpayers' money was being spent to the best advantage. As a result of this prolonged examination the cabinet did come to the conclusion that they would re-equip the air division with the Lockheed

104G, the "G" being the mark of that particular series or family of aircraft. I am satisfied that the taxpayers' money is being spent to the best advantage by the purchase of this particular aircraft.

This is a proven aircraft. It is supersonic. It is a small aircraft with a very high performance. It can also be refueled in the air, so it could be deployed in Europe or in any other part of the world in order to carry out its strike reconnaissance role. There are various types of this family of aircraft already in operation. They are in operation with the United States air force on this continent, in Europe, in Turkey and in the Far East. I emphasize the fact that they are in operation in Europe and the commander in chief of the European forces, General Norstad, has expressed satisfaction with this type of aircraft, and has indicated to this government that the re-equipment of the air division squadrons with the "G" variety of the 104 will be entirely acceptable to him.

The other day in speaking here I mentioned that it has been noted that the Federal Republic of Germany is also re-equipping its squadrons, which today are equipped with the same aircraft as our squadrons, the F-86, with this F-104G for a strike reconnaissance role. As a matter of fact we have been in close consultation with the Germans for a number of months on this matter. We have had teams of the R.C.A.F. in Europe in order to find out how the independent assessment made by the Germans was progressing, and which aircraft they were going to accept. It would be interesting, I think, to hon. members to learn that as late as March 31 a contract was signed between the government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the company concerned for the acquisition of a number of these aircraft. Even more recently, only last week, we had officers of the R.C.A.F. in Paris conferring with their German colleagues, and the latter expressed satisfaction that the German air force had in this particular aircraft.

Now, of course, the advocates of other types of aircraft will naturally belittle the type which has been successful. An unsuccessful competitor will naturally feel disappointed that he has not received an order. I might say that for months I have been subjected, as have the officers of the R.C.A.F. and the Minister of Defence Production, to daily visits from the representatives of these various companies. They have enlarged upon the benefits of their own particular aircraft. I have at all times endeavoured to take a detached point of view in order not to be prejudiced in favour of one or the other type of aircraft. I have listened patiently to all their representations. These have been recorded; they have been examined again and