

Supply—National Defence

Prime Minister could be implemented under current defence policy and given full effect.

There is no quarrel with the basic statement made by the Prime Minister—"Should war come, are we going to arm Canadians with bows and arrows?". The advent of war is something which we are all working against. Then the Prime Minister went on to say:

Canada has 65 interceptor aircraft which would be more effective with nuclear weapons. The same applies to the two Bomarc anti-aircraft bases being built in this country.

Then, to show the solemnity of the situation he envisaged as being potential, and which he, along with every other civilized man and woman, hopes will never eventuate, he added:

Should war come we must have available the necessary instrument.

That is the eventuality which we are now discussing. The Leader of the Opposition is not engaging at this moment in a discussion of Canada's policy with regard to nuclear weapons. We are not discussing whether or not there has been any conflict between the Minister of National Defence and the Secretary of State for External Affairs with regard to nuclear policy at this time. That is not the subject under discussion. The Prime Minister was talking about the eventuality of war, and in that context he affirmed his belief that our Canadian forces must have available the necessary instruments. And in the context of modern armament developments, the necessary instruments are nuclear weapons. Now, surely, we are entitled to demand from the Minister of National Defence before this item receives the sanction of parliament an answer to the question: how are we to have these necessary instruments made available to us? We asked this question of the minister because these are his estimates and because the Prime Minister is not here tonight to elucidate the statement which he made in this regard. But we have had no reply from the Minister of National Defence. The hon. gentleman keeps saying that this question has been put to him over and over again, and that he has given a reply over and over again. In fact, he has not answered the questions put to him by two hon. members on this side of the committee. He has walked out of this chamber even as this discussion has been going on, and is now standing behind the curtain when he should be in his place addressing himself to the question before us.

An hon. Member: Where were you last week?

Mr. Chambers: On a point of order, I think it should be pointed out that never has the hon. member for Essex East spoken for so

short a time that an hon. member could not go behind the curtain for a few moments.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am glad we are having these interjections—

Mr. Monteith (Perth): You are a stinker.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—being made by the hard-working Minister of National Health and Welfare. Let them be placed on the record as an indication of the concern which members of this committee and of this government are displaying toward this vital question of possible nuclear war and the capacity of the Canadian armed forces to meet that kind of eventuality. Let these observations go on the record.

An hon. Member: Where were you last week?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I say that the Prime Minister assumed the proper role of prime minister in indicating to the Canadian people what might eventuate and what he thought would likely happen. But in that case it is the responsibility of the government to anticipate what must be undertaken in order to protect the Canadian people against the catastrophe of nuclear war. He said:

If war does come, we must have available the necessary instruments

Mr. Harkness: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, you ruled some time ago that we should not have a general debate on defence. The hon. member for Essex East has been doing nothing else but attempting to carry on such a debate. He stated we are discussing the most important question that has been before the house this session. Well, the question which is before the committee is the provision of an increase in an estimate which has already been voted, an estimate to increase the money voted for the acquisition of certain engines, aeroplanes, spare parts and so on for the Royal Canadian Air Force. The hon. member for Essex East is attempting to convert this into a general discussion on nuclear weapons and their acquisition or otherwise—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am not.

Mr. Harkness:—and in consequence I think he is out of order and should be called to account by the Chair.

Mr. Pickersgill: I should like to say a word on the point of order which the minister has raised. The minister talks about this as being an addition to a vote already approved. What we are being asked to vote here is \$31 million, which is an increase of nearly 14 per cent over the original vote. That is not an insignificant addition. My hon. friend from Essex East was discussing exclusively the subject