

*Supply—National Defence*

maintenance of a brigade in the forward lines in West Germany armed with tactical nuclear weapons; second, the maintenance of eight squadrons of the R.C.A.F., six in West Germany assigned to a strike role and two in France in a reconnaissance role. These are now or, I think the minister told us, shortly will be equipped with both nuclear and conventional loads. The third is the role of active air defence of North America under NORAD. The fourth is a share in the antisubmarine role under the Atlantic command of NATO. The fifth is the so-called mobile command designed to provide a mobile conventional force available both as a mobile reserve in NATO and for United Nations peace keeping operations anywhere in the world.

The first role, Mr. Chairman, namely, the maintenance of a brigade of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, is part of the outdated tactical nuclear strategy that was adopted in 1958. It has been criticized by a host of qualified military authorities. They say it is based upon a mistaken reliance on early or immediate response with tactical nuclear weapons to a full scale conventional invasion of west Europe. This role overlooks the fact that such an invasion is today unthinkable as it would almost certainly escalate into a devastating strategic nuclear holocaust. It overlooks the fact that a tactical nuclear response to some lesser eruption of violence in Europe would also create the dangers of escalation.

From the point of view of a useful Canadian contribution, it further overlooks the fact attested to by Mr. McNamara that the western allies have overwhelming superiority in such tactical nuclear weapons. It completely overlooks the fact that, as General Foulkes informed the defence committee, it was agreed by General Norstad and military authorities of NATO as long ago as 1960 that our brigade group should go into mobile reserve. General Foulkes said that such action would cause the brigade group to be reorganized as an air portable formation with an airborne element which would suit Canadian aptitude and training.

The only excuse advanced for the failure to carry out this military recommendation in 1960 is not in the realm of good military thought but is due to some alleged political reason. On the contrary, it seems to us that political reasons would dictate a thinning out and withdrawal of the massive confrontation of tactical nuclear forces in Europe and that Canada might well initiate this process.

[Mr. Brewin.]

The White Paper, despite the bold words used by the government when it promised a review of Canada's role, opts for the indefinite continuance of this role in Europe. The North Atlantic council met in Paris in December, 1965 and issued a communiqué. This is what they said:

Force goals for the period 1966 through 1970 are being worked out, as the first of a series of steps designed to secure a closer alignment between NATO military requirements and national force plans within the agreed strategic concept of a forward defence posture. They—

I take it that means the delegates of the NATO countries.

—accepted in principle the introduction of new procedures designed to improve the annual process of reviewing the defence efforts of member countries and agreeing upon their force contributions. These procedures, by projecting alliance force goals and country plans five years ahead each year, are designed to enhance the capacity of the alliance to adapt its defence plans to changes both in military technology and in the international situation.

What country plans are as distinct from the alliance force goals I am not sure, but I presume it means the plans of each country.

So far as I know the minister has failed to reveal whether or not Canada at this NATO council meeting accepted this five year plan, what force goals it committed itself to, whether any suggestion was made that was critical of the continued reliance on tactical nuclear response, whether the military proposal approved in 1960 for the withdrawal of the Canadian brigade to a mobile reserve was discussed or brought forward by the representative of Canada and what, if any, the current proposals are to adapt the defence plans of NATO to changes in military technology and the international situation. We in this house have a right to know what our representatives in NATO have committed themselves to or propose to commit themselves to for the next five years or if they did propose to commit themselves to anything for the next five years. We have the right to know whether or not the promise to negotiate out of this role has in fact been forgotten, or whether any steps have been taken to do so. We are told there are political reasons for maintaining the brigade group in the forward role, but the future military necessity for it, as agreed by all military authorities, is finished. We want to know what these political reasons are and have them explained to the house. The same questions are even more insistent with regard to the eight air squadrons that we maintain in Europe. These air