

statement on April 4, 1962 that there is no need for us to get into the atomic business at all?

Mr. Pearson: You got us into it.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, as of this date I have changed my mind.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: What mind?

Mr. Hellyer: I have very good reasons for so doing, the chief one being the incomparable mess this government has got us into with respect to defence matters.

An hon. Member: How?

Mr. Hellyer: I do not know how they could get us into it, but they have; and now there is no honourable way to get out of it other than to live up to our commitments to our allies. The United States government must have wondered at the Prime Minister dragging in the red herring of the Nassau agreement. Any person who knows anything whatsoever about military matters knows that the matters under discussion at Nassau had no immediate effect whatsoever on Canada's commitments. They were just not relevant at all to those things we had undertaken to do. It is most unfortunate that the little bit of defence information we get from the government is not accurate. Is it any wonder that the Canadian people are so confused and bewildered on perhaps this most important of all subjects facing us at the present time? It is incredible indeed, and where the Prime Minister would get that suggestion other than out of his imagination, no one knows; but it must have been a terrible shock to Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Kennedy when they saw it interpreted in that most unorthodox and unrealistic way.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member accept a question?

Mr. Hellyer: There is no connection whatsoever between the Nassau agreement and Canada's commitments in respect of tactical weapons in Europe or to our agreement under NORAD to fulfil our end of the bargain and arm the Bomarc.

Mr. Churchill: Will the hon. member accept a question?

Mr. Hellyer: I have just three minutes left and there is something I have to say.

Mr. Churchill: It will only take a minute and a half.

Mr. Hellyer: I will accept it at ten o'clock. There is one thing I should like to correct at this time. That is the suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Calgary North

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership

(Mr. Harkness) and the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) intends to fulfil our commitments and then renegotiate the agreement the next day.

Some hon. Members: That is what he said.

Mr. Hellyer: This is absolute nonsense.

Mr. Lewis: That is what he said.

Mr. Pearson: That has never been said.

Mr. Hellyer: Anyone with any common sense whatsoever, and apparently there are a lot of people over there who have not very much—

Mr. Lewis: That is what he said.

Mr. Hellyer:—knows that it is physically impossible to do anything of the sort whatsoever.

Mr. Sevigny: That is exactly what you have said.

Mr. Hellyer: Any new policy which would be agreed on by a new minister in June, for example, and adopted by cabinet in September or October, which could be concurred in by the NATO council in December, would take three or four years to implement in full, and during that time the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment which the government has bought would be worn out in the normal course of events. The effective life of the F-104 is five years. That is what is counted on overseas. The effective life of the Bomarc no one knows. Mr. McNamara has not much more faith in it than I have.

Mr. Sevigny: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, I want to finish this statement.

Mr. Sevigny: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Hellyer: In my opinion the Bomarc will not be kept in operation for more than a few years.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The minister may request leave to ask a question, but if the hon. member chooses to disregard the request, he is at liberty to do so.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, I wish to finish this most important point. The Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Sevigny: Mr. Speaker—