

*Supply—National Defence*

announce two major developments: the re-organization of our auxiliary air force and an increase in the number of our regular interceptor squadrons.

Last year I drew the attention of hon. members to the studies being undertaken by the Royal Canadian Air Force to determine whether it was practicable to expect the part time air crew of the Royal Canadian Air Force auxiliary, however skilled and devoted, to operate all-weather jet interceptors of the complexity of the CF-100 in the role of air defence. This important question, in relation to the over-all problem of air defence generally, has continued to receive thorough reassessment by the Royal Canadian Air Force in the light of the thermonuclear air threat to this country.

This threat is such that defending forces must be able to operate in all conditions of weather by day or by night, must be on immediate alert status, and be trained to a very high standard of proficiency; and must, in peacetime, be deployed at their war stations. Our experience now forces us to the conclusion that these conditions are far too exacting to impose on auxiliary forces who are engaged on their civilian duties throughout the week and whose flying therefore is limited mainly to week ends. Consequently, the ten auxiliary squadrons that were to have been re-equipped with CF-100 all-weather fighters will no longer comprise part of the first line forces in the North American air defence system.

Other highly important duties will be assigned to these auxiliary squadrons, the personnel of which have constituted such a useful and active reserve force to the Royal Canadian Air Force. Six of these squadrons will be re-equipped with Sabre day fighter aircraft and T-33 jet trainers, and their personnel will progress from the T-33 to mastery of the Sabre jet. These six squadrons will continue to operate in pairs on the established Royal Canadian Air Force bases at Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, and will constitute an effective and economical means of providing a reserve of fighter air crew, ground crew and aircraft, at a minimum of overhead cost.

The squadron at Calgary will become a light transport auxiliary squadron, while the flying squadron at Winnipeg, backed by facilities of the regular force navigation school located there, will undertake the task of providing a reserve of trained air navigators. The auxiliary squadron at London will become an aircraft control and warning squadron and thus provide an important augmentation to the trained reserve manpower required for the air defence control

[Mr. Campney.]

system. Finally, at Hamilton, already the home of a very good aircraft control and warning squadron as well as other auxiliary air force units, the auxiliary flying squadron will not be continued, and personnel will be able to concentrate on these other important auxiliary roles. This decision, made with some reluctance, has been influenced by the fact that to support this flying squadron a costly air force base has had to be maintained.

The conditions that have brought about the withdrawal of these auxiliary flying squadrons from the first line air defence force necessitates increases in the regular force units assigned to this role in Canada. Accordingly, I can now announce that steps will be taken to establish, over a period of time, three new all-weather interceptor squadrons equipped with CF-100 aircraft. This increase, with the 12 squadrons in Europe, will bring to 24 the number of regular force fighter squadrons. The size and composition of Canada's contribution to the continental air defence system continues, of course, to be under review.

Towards the end of this year we will replace one of our Sabre squadrons in Europe with a squadron equipped with CF-100 all-weather interceptor aircraft. And at intervals thereafter, during 1957, three more Sabre squadrons will be thus replaced. This will fulfil our undertaking to NATO to provide four squadrons of all-weather interceptors. Throughout, our commitment in Europe remains at 12 squadrons.

As for new equipment, the air force, working in conjunction with the defence research board, is making good progress with its new supersonic delta wing all-weather fighter interceptor, the CF-105, being developed by A. V. Roe, Limited which, with the very advanced and powerful PS-13 engine being designed for it, is expected to constitute a very fast and formidable fighting plane.

The development and preproduction work at Canadair Limited on the CL-28, the new maritime anti-submarine aircraft developed from the Britannia aircraft, is also proceeding very well, and the prototype is expected to fly next spring. By the production of successively improved marks, both the Sabre and the CF-100 are still, and will continue for some time to be, of their sort and for their purpose, first class and effective fighter planes.

The job of the Royal Canadian Air Force is certainly now a widely diversified one, including the interception of enemy bombers, the transport of troops and supplies, the support of anti-submarine activities and defence of shipping operations. Worthy, I think, of