

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

tactical atomic weapons and to accept the risks inherent in this strategy.

Would the Minister of National Defence tell us which of the allied nations in NATO prefer that use of atomic weapons?

**Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence):** No, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that would be helpful. I think it is well known that there is some difference of opinion in respect of strategy. Our main interest is to seek agreement so we can have a strategy which is fully supported by all members of the alliance. A meeting of the NATO council of ministers is taking place shortly, and it would not be the least bit helpful to mention now any of the positions that may be taken by different delegations.

**Mr. Churchill:** Then may I ask a question of the minister for external affairs. What steps will the minister for external affairs take at that NATO meeting in December to ensure that there shall be no use of either tactical or strategic atomic weapons without the concurrence of the NATO allies?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** I am sure the hon. gentleman, as an experienced minister of the crown, knows how improper that question is at the present moment.

**Mr. Churchill:** I am asking for the position of the Canadian government in a matter of vital importance to the peace of the world. Let me phrase my question again. I am asking the minister what steps he is going to take on behalf of the Canadian government and the Canadian people to ensure that no nation within the NATO alliance will use either tactical or strategic atomic weapons without the concurrence of the other allies.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** My hon. friend knows quite well that the response I gave him a moment ago was the response which he, as a responsible minister, if he were on this side, would give. These are matters which the government makes public at the appropriate moment, and this is certainly, in the interest of the alliance, not the time to give the kind of response which my hon. friend encourages me to make.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition):** I am surprised that the affable minister should answer in that way. Has not parliament the right to know, on a matter as important as this, the stand that Canada is going to take?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** My right hon. friend is quite correct. Parliament has the right to know the position of the government. But the government has the responsibility of saying when it shall inform parliament concerning government policy.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The same old contempt of parliament.

**Hon. Paul Martineau (Pontiac-Temisca-mingue):** I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence a question arising out of his Toronto speech. Would he care to elucidate the statement made in the course of that speech, that the situation of one half of our air division is clearly not satisfactory? If it is not satisfactory, what is the government going to do about it?

**Mr. Hellyer:** I think the statement speaks for itself. I said it was not satisfactory, and I proposed to make recommendations in respect of it in the very near future.

**Mr. Martineau:** When is that?

**Mr. Hellyer:** In due course.

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He said a moment ago that the government reserved the right to tell parliament when it had reached a decision. May I ask the minister if parliament will be informed before any commitment is made by the government of Canada, or afterward?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** My hon. friend, who has had long experience as the head of a government, knows that the answer to that kind of question would depend on the circumstances.

**Mr. Douglas:** May I ask a supplementary question. Would the minister tell us the circumstances which would determine when parliament would be informed?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** As an experienced parliamentarian and former head of a government, my hon. friend knows that the answer to that must be that it would depend on the situation at the time.

BOBCAT PERSONNEL CARRIERS—INQUIRY AS TO PRODUCTION

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North):** I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the statement in his speech yesterday that the brigade in Europe is in urgent need of armoured personnel carriers, could he inform the house whether the pre-production run of 20 Bobcats has been completed, and if not what is the reason for the long delay in this program which should have reached this stage quite a long time ago?

**Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the development has not reached the stage where the vehicle is technically perfect, and the hon. gentleman