

*Supply—National Defence*

The hon. member for Trinity was suggesting that this decision could have been reached last December. It would have been a different decision from the one which was reached and announced today if a decision had been reached in December and Canada would not have obtained anything like the deal that she has obtained today. As I said in my remarks, it is sometimes better to be a little bit cautious and not to be in too much of a hurry when you are spending hundreds of millions of dollars of other peoples' money, in this case the taxpayers' money.

Questions were asked about tests which had been carried out with the Bomarc. Tests are being carried out all the time with the Bomarc and with other missiles but those tests are being carried out by an ally of ours, not by Canada. Canada is kept fully advised of the results of those tests but the information naturally is sent as classified information. Although there may be newspaper speculation as to the result of some of these tests, I do not feel that I can be called upon to break the confidence of an ally by stating publicly in this chamber the result of those tests. I have said—and I repeat—that to the best of my knowledge the scheduled development of the Bomarc B is proceeding up to date.

The hon. member for Vancouver East spoke about nuclear power and rather suggested that Canada should not employ nuclear weapons. Of course it is government policy that Canadian troops should be armed as efficiently and as effectively as are troops with which they are co-operating. I do not think the average Canadian would wish to see his country's troops sent into action inferiorly equipped.

On February 20 of this year, during the debate which took place at that time, the Prime Minister announced that as far as our troops in Europe were concerned and as far as our air force and troops in Canada were concerned, we were entering into a series of negotiations with the United States in order to arrange the details of the storing of and equipping our forces with nuclear weapons as and when they would be available and as and when we would have the weapons to launch them. By the time we get the Bomarc and by the time we get the Lacrosse over to the brigade and by the time we get the new aircraft for the air division, I am confident that these programs will be completed. Progress is being made with them and as soon as negotiations are completed an announcement will be made and it will be made in this house if the house is sitting at that time.

Remarks were made by the hon. member for Trinity in connection with another matter.

66968-9-342½

I must point out that he was hardly fair when he stated that General Norstad was not allowed to speak or to have a press conference. General Norstad held two meetings of a public character, one in Montreal and one in Toronto. He was here in Ottawa for a very short time because he had to leave that same night and go to Oslo in Europe. He was rather crowded for time, but he gave up his time in order to consult with the government and give his advice which was invaluable to the government in reaching a decision with regard to this re-arming and re-equipping of the air division.

As for General Partridge, may I say this. General Partridge has been here several times and at no time have any orders been issued by me or by anybody else that he was not to see the press. If there were not opportunities to do so, that cannot be helped. However, I do not remember—and I may be corrected in this respect—that either General Partridge or the press asked for a press conference when he was here last.

No instructions have been issued to the chiefs of staff to say that they must not hold press conferences. There are definite orders—and the same orders have been in effect for years and years—as to how officers will conduct themselves and as to the type of information that they can give in press interviews. Generally it is necessary for them to get clearance from a superior officer or, in the case of chiefs of staff, they usually get clearance from me when they give press interviews or make statements to the press.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the mix in offensive weapons. There is also a mix in defensive weapons. That is why there are various types of defensive weapons.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to a speech which I am reported to have made in Winnipeg a few weeks ago in which I said we had not yet decided on the Bomarc. What I did say was that if the United States stopped developing the Bomarc we would not proceed with the development on our own, which of course is a perfectly reasonable statement to make because we are not developing it and therefore could not go on developing it.

Mr. Chairman, I think that has cleared up most of the questions which have been asked to date.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister for having answered so many of the questions which have been addressed to him, if I can thank him on my own behalf. He has, however, in his reply to these questions raised some additional questions in my own mind. I should also point out that there are I think some detailed questions