

Judith Robinson —

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Bomarc's And Arrows

OTTAWA—Discussion all day yesterday in the House of Commons was of Arrows and Bomarc's.

It may be permissible to quote Hansard. At the point where quotation begins the leader of the Opposition had asked why it had taken the Government so long to discover that Americans were not interested in buying Canadian-built Arrows. Hansard follows, neat:

MR. PEARKES: May I answer that question? They were anxious to see performance in the air before they made a decision.

MR. PEARSON: It was March, 1958, when it performed in the air; but the Government claims now that it acted wisely and it acted well in abandoning the Arrow in the middle of February, 1959, and in planning after the event what should be done to cushion the resulting dislocation and sudden and serious unemployment.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, there is no possible justification for that kind of procedure, which is a sorry example of the lack of decision and the lack of planning on the part of the Government. Every argument that the Government now advances merely points up first that the Government should have

got that decision out of the United States long before February, 1959. -

And if that decision had been negative, then the Government should have made up its mind and if the decision which it made was against putting the CF-105 in production, the Government, then, not the third week of February, should have planned alternative production policy and made orderly arrangements for change with the company and incidentally saved the taxpayers millions and millions of dollars.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we have the right to draw it to the attention of the House. The matter was allowed to drift and no final decisions were taken until February, 1959. During those months the Government itself had not made up its own mind finally whether manned interceptors were considered to be essential or not in the light of the conditions as they developed.

I refer the minister to his own statement in the House of Commons last January and I refer him, as I have referred him before—indeed, I have put them on the record—to his statements in the estimates committee in July, 1958, which undoubtedly encouraged the view that the CF-105 was to be continued; or, if it was not to be continued, its place would be taken by some other manned interceptor and that Bomarc's were merely supplementary.

I think what has already been put on the record on this side has clearly

shown that this was the impression that the Government desired to create in the country. There is much additional evidence to confirm that. The Minister of National Defense is reported in the Calgary Herald of January 18, 1958, a year ago, as saying:

"I do not share the opinion that the Arrow will be obsolete before it is operational. When Russia stops building bombers it will be time for us to start thinking of some other defense."

Later:

MR. WINCH: May I ask the hon. minister a question before he gets away from the subject of the Bomarc? He stated that there are two locations for the Bomarc, both between Ottawa and the east. May I ask the hon. minister what is the Bomarc defense from Ottawa to the Pacific Ocean?

MR. PEARKES: I said that one squadron would be north of the line Ottawa-Montreal and the other would be at North Bay. West of that there are no squadrons planned at the present time, but by the extension of our radar system further north the Bomarc squadrons which are planned by the United States air force will be able, on account of the coverage given by our more northern radar stations, to cover practically all the population districts in that area . . . In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to refute emphatically the suggestion that our defense policy is muddled and confused . . . Again I must insist that our defense policy is perfectly clear.

Perfectly clear.



Judith Robinson