



Vulcan Visitor—This RAF Vulcan H-bomber brought Air Vice Marshal J. G. Davies to Toronto yesterday to address the RCAF staff college. The aircraft flew from Montgomery, Ala., where it is based under an exchange training program. The Vulcan, on only its second visit here, is framed by noses of two Avro Arrows, undergoing engine tests at Malton Airport. —John Gillies.

Robert Duffy

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Minding Your Business

Ottawa—Defense Minister G. R. Pearkes has promised the House a White Paper on defense policy, without indicating when it will be ready. It is obvious that a whole set of critical questions is in process of being settled. The result must be a profound reorientation of defense planning and expenditure. That, presumably, is why it is taking the Government so long to say anything—the White Paper was first promised last year.

One indication of the Government's present uncertainty is the number of times Mr. Pearkes has refused an answer, or admitted that no decision had been made, in reply to questions in the House.

A more generalized description of the problem was contained in a speech Wednesday by General Charles Foulkes, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff. He spoke of the increasing cost of developing modern weapons, and the difficulty of economic Canadian production because the quantities required are so comparatively small. Efforts to persuade other countries to take Canadian weapons, he said, had found "little success except where these weapons and equipment have been given away to our NATO partners as mutual aid."

As a result, he concluded, "we may have to abandon the policy of developing and producing special Canadian equipment for the limited requirements of Canadian forces" and look to joint production. General Foulkes said "with our partners"; he might as well have said "with the United States".

The problem here is to work out the proportions for sharing the economic benefits, as well as the cost to the Governments, of an integrated system of defense production. Three weeks ago, External Affairs Minister Smith said there would be a "comprehensive statement" on defense production co-operation "in the near future". There have since been unofficial reports that the statement was imminent. But so far the Government has maintained absolute silence, suggesting that co-operation is not without difficulties.

Another statement by General Foulkes indicates some question in defense planning about the usefulness of Military Reserve units.

"It is only the forces which are fully trained and equipped in peacetime which we can expect to fight in any war of the future."

If there is some plan to convert the Reserve establishment to a Civil Defense role, as Mr. Pearkes hinted last year, the Government is evidently having a hard time making up its mind about that, too. It refuses to make public even an abridged version of the special study on Civil Defense prepared by General H. D. Graham, who retired last August as army Chief of Staff. It does not know even when the position of Civil Defense Director may be filled, though it has been vacant nearly nine months.

The future of the Avro Arrow supersonic interceptor is the most dramatic uncertainty in Government policy. In fact, it is hard to see how Mr. Pearkes can present a useful defense White Paper prior to that decision.

But there are a number of other matters unsettled, or unknown. Among them: Where to establish Bomarc missile bases—surveys and soil tests (of relative fertility?) are being carried out; or how much the Bomarc will cost—somewhere between \$10,000 and \$100,000 per installation, Mr. Pearkes says. Possibly, as a consequence, there is no agreement yet with the United States about sharing the cost of the Bomarc bases. And there has been no decision as to whether these things are to be fitted with atomic warheads; time enough to decide when we get the missiles, says Mr. Pearkes.

Neither has the Government decided what to do about replacing the F-86 Sabre fighters RCAF squadrons now use in Europe. The effectiveness of this fighter "may have ceased by 1961-62", Mr. Pearkes said the other day. That looks like the understatement of the year, considering the current reports of operational Russian supersonic bombers.

Nevertheless the Government, on Mr. Pearkes' word, has only got to the point of "consideration" of the "possible replacement" of the F-86.

It should be a fascinating White Paper, if Mr. Pearkes can ever get it put together, and a fascinating defense debate to follow.