

Military Preparedness Policy

The Honourable Brooke Claxton

TODAY the question of defence has become a matter of prime importance for every citizen of Canada. The uncertain nature of the international situation and the threat to the freedom of all free nations has brought about the largest defence programmes ever undertaken in peace time. Canada in this programme of preparedness has two main objectives: first, the immediate defence of the soil of Canada and the territory of North America against direct attack; second, to do whatever is considered desirable under the United Nations Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty.

The first object of our preparedness is the immediate defence of the soil of Canada and the territory of North America against direct attack. *At the present time* (and I emphasize that I am referring to the present time because defence plans must change) it is not envisaged by any competent military expert that I know of that the only possible aggressor would mount a large scale attack on North America at the outset of a world wide war. It is not believed that any enemy would have either the ships or the aircraft to undertake such a job at this time.

On the other hand, we do know that Russia has a considerable number of four-engine medium bombers of the B-29 type, capable of carrying a load of about five tons one way to almost any part of North America at a speed of about 300 miles an hour. Such an aircraft is large enough to carry an atom bomb, high explosive or

other weapons. It could not carry very many troops.

We assume that the Russians have the atom bomb. Irrespective of the number they have, we must also assume that in an all-out war they would try to drop some on North America.

People will naturally differ in their estimate of the number of targets sufficiently important to warrant the use of such bombs as there may be available. It has been suggested in the United States that the figure there is less than thirty and in Canada it is certain that it is a very much smaller number. However, when bombers set out on their missions they don't always get to where they intend to go and they are sometimes given alternative targets. If one is hit by an atom bomb the question whether it was as an alternative or a primary target might be rather academic.

What I have said will indicate that the problem of home defence against aerial attack and civil defence against its consequences is very important, but it is also very different in North America from what it is in Britain or Europe.

We have all seen the result of static defence, of the Maginot-line philosophy. We want none of that. We are all agreed that the best place to defeat any enemy would be as far away from Canada as possible.

What we need then in North America is the minimum defence considered necessary to deal with an attack on the scale anticipated.

A glance at the map shows that there are two main avenues of possible attack and that both of them are across Canada. Consequently, almost every cent we spend on defence in Canada (except for local civil defence) directly contributes to the defence of all of North America, including the United States.

IT is out of the question for fourteen million people to make a country of three and one half million square miles impregnable against direct attack.

To deal with attack by airborne troops, we have the airborne brigade group of three battalions and other units well trained and equipped. This force is considered sufficient to deal with this job at the present time. The United States has corresponding formations.

Now let us consider defence against attacking aircraft.

Air defence has three components.

We must first search out and find the enemy's aircraft. For this we have the marvelous instrument of radar. We have a number of mobile radar sets of the latest type we had at the end of the Second War. As fast as we can we are building a network of large stations with the most modern and powerful equipment.

However, aircraft are not knocked down by radar. We have to get fighters into the air to do this job and that calls for a highly efficient network of communications. That is the second requirement.

The third requirement is the fighters themselves. We are making two of the best fighters known just as fast as they can be made. The limiting factor is the number of engines we can produce or acquire. There is a similar limiting factor everywhere.

Squadrons of fighters, regular and auxiliary, are being located at crucial points, connected with the long-range eye of radar by a network of communications services. Our air defence network is being completely planned, integrated and organized with that of the United States so as to form a single system.

In addition to attack by air, we might be subject to attack by submarines. To meet this the Navy is building seaward defences

and its job and that of the Air Force would be to defend our coasts and hunt and kill the submarines. To do this we are working on some interesting equipment, including the latest anti-submarine ships.

As time goes on there may have to be still more emphasis on local defence. With our great neighbour to the South we are planning to do, not everything we would like, but what we consider should be done with the part of our resources which we think it desirable to earmark for home defence.

Everything that we do in the way of local defence will help to achieve our object, which is to prevent war by deterring aggression. Stronger defences anywhere will help achieve that object everywhere.

II

THIS brings me to the second aspect of our defence and that is to do whatever we consider desirable under the United Nations Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty.

To back up the United Nations' stand against aggression in Korea we have had three destroyers in Korean waters since July 1950. The Air Force has contributed a big airlift to the Far East with twelve North Stars of the 426 Squadron carrying more men and materials in six months than the same squadron carried through four years of war. The Second Battalion of the Princess Patricia's have already shown their mettle in action. They are being joined by the rest of the 25th Brigade. I saw them in their first parade at Fort Lewis and they are a first-rate force and will give a good account of themselves.

However, events there, important and difficult though they are, must not obscure the fact that the focus of global defence is in Western Europe.

We were active in promoting the North Atlantic Treaty and setting up its organization.

The Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army and the R.C.A.F. will be taking a proper share in building up our defences under the North Atlantic Treaty.

In terms of money and equipment the largest single contribution will be Air Force. We expect to build up a force of eleven squadrons. This and the air training plan, together with what we shall need for the defence of Canada, will involve an addition of 3,000 new aircraft of the most modern type.

In the Army we shall contribute to the integrated force in Western Europe a brigade group. No time is set for its arrival there and this may depend in part on events in Korea.

In addition to looking after seaward defence, the Navy's job would be escort work across the North Atlantic. All our ships are being successfully refitted, re-armed and recommissioned. With new ships to be constructed we shall have nearly one hundred on this job.

Canada is already making two major contributions to NATO by providing at one and the same time badly needed equipment and training facilities.

We have transferred the arms and ammunition for a division to the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy as well as the guns for an Artillery Regiment to Luxembourg.

We shall be greatly enlarging the arrangements under which we are training army officers and airmen for Britain and other NATO countries. Today we have personnel of Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, and there will be more.

III

CANADA'S three-year programme calls for an increase in the men in the services from the present figure of 65,000 to 115,000, or 67 per cent. This will require a big effort. What we would like is to have recruiting continue at the rate for January and February, 1951.

Counting civilians, we expect to have, by 31 March 1954, about 150,000 engaged full time in our defence.

Today there are still 275,000 veterans under thirty. Forty-four per cent of the Special Force were veterans but each year will mean a reduction in the proportion

of veterans available for service in combat units.

If there were an emergency, we now would be well off in the total number of trained officers, with 8,000 in the Active Forces, 7,000 in the Reserve Forces and about 57,000 additional veteran officers of the Second World War.

However, to meet the immediate need for the build-up of the active forces we shall need large numbers of junior officers. We are offering short term commissions of varying periods, as well as permanent force careers.

Our plan is to have a large part of the equipment and ammunition which would be necessary to see us through the first year of a war and to enable us to clothe, equip and train the men we would have in our armed forces during that period in an all-out effort.

Our programme is a three year programme calling for the expenditure of \$5 billions. This year we shall be spending on defence, including defence production, mutual aid and other matters properly chargeable to defence, the tremendous figure of over \$1.6 billions. A preliminary estimate of the three largest divisions are \$300 millions on personnel, \$250 millions on construction and \$500 millions on equipment.

We are making this effort because strength is the first essential to preserve peace. I said essential, but we must do a lot of things in addition.

We must keep our economy strong, because it is obviously part of Russia's plan to have us weaken it so that we destroy ourselves.

We must maintain our objectives of family and human welfare and internal security and ever enlarging the area of human freedom.

But we would not have a chance to do any of these things if we lost a war. Should there be a war we should have to postpone the forward march of civilization until we had won the war and started recovery from its appalling consequences.

Our object is to prevent war by deterring aggression, by making it plain that aggression does not pay.