

4 45PM COMMONS : COMMITTEE OF 100

MR DAVID RENTON, MINISTER OF STATE HOME OFFICE, TOLD MPS THAT THE HOME SECRETARY MR R A BUTLER, HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE INTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF 100 TO OBSTRUCT THE ENTRANCE TO THE U.S. AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS, TO ATTEMPT TO ENTER TWO AIRFIELDS OCCUPIED BY US FORCES, AND TO HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE BREACHES OF THE LAW IN CARDIFF, BRISTOL, YORK AND MANCHESTER.

MR BUTLER UNDERSTOOD THAT THE SECRETARY FOR AIR, MR JULIAN AMERY, HAD AUTHORISED THE TAKING OF ALL NECESSARY STEPS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE POLICE AND THE U.S. AIR FORCE TO PREVENT UNAUTHORISED ENTRY UPON THE AIRFIELD AND THE HOME SECRETARY HAD NO DOUBT THAT IN THE OTHER AREAS, ANY NECESSARY ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE CHIEF OFFICERS OF POLICE CONCERNED.

" THE HOME SECRETARY WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF POINTING OUT THAT THESE AIRFIELDS ARE PROHIBITED PLACES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT AND THAT UNDER SECTION ONE OF THE ACT OF 1911, ANY PERSON WHO FOR ANY PURPOSE PREJUDICIAL TO THE SAFETY OR INTERESTS OF THE STATE, APPROACHES OR IS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF, OR ENTERS ANY SUCH PROHIBITED PLACE IS GUILTY OF A FELONY.

" IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO FAILURE ON THE PART OF THOSE PLANNING THESE DEMONSTRATIONS TO APPRECIATE THE GRAVITY OF THESE OFFENCES FOR WHICH THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THEM MAY RENDER THEMSELVES LIABLE TO BE PROSECUTED." SAID MR RENTON.

1.12PM. NEW WAVE OF ANTI-BOMB PROTESTS.

THE COMMITTEE OF 100 PLANS TO IMMOBILISE THE HUGE NATO AIR BASE AT WETHERSFIELD, ESSEX, ON DECEMBER 9 IN THE BIGGEST SERIES OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CAMPAIGNS IT HAS EVER PLANNED IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN LONDON TODAY.

THERE WILL ALSO BE ORDINARY SIT-DOWN DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE U.S.A.F. HEADQUARTERS, RUISLIP, AT THE U.S.A.F. STRATEGIC BOMBER BASE AT BRIZE NORTON, OXON, AND IN TOWN CENTRES AT CARDIFF, BRISTOL, YORK AND MANCHESTER.

THE COMMITTEE IS EXPECTING 50,000 PEOPLE TO JOIN THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND, IN ADDITION, IS SEEKING 1,000 PEOPLE WHO WILL PLEDGE THEMSELVES TO REFUSE TO GIVE THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES, IF ARRESTED.

BY FAR THE BIGGEST DEMONSTRATION IS PLANNED FOR WETHERSFIELD. MR MICHAEL RANDALL, THE COMMITTEE'S SECRETARY, SAID TODAY THE WETHERSFIELD DEMONSTRATORS WOULD, IN EFFECT, STORM THE DEFENCES AT THE AIRFIELD AND SQUAT ALL DAY IN FRONT OF AIRCRAFT. THEY WILL NOT SIT ACROSS THE RUNWAY, SINCE TO DO SO MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO A LANDING AIRCRAFT, BUT THEY WILL DO THEIR BEST TO SEE NO AIRCRAFT TAKE OFF.

MR RANDALL SAID: "WE HAVE AN IDEA WHERE THE H-BOMB DUMP IS LOCATED AND, WHILE THE MASS OF OUR MEMBERS SIT IN FRONT OF THE AIRCRAFT, WE MAY SEND ONE OR TWO COMMITTEE MEN TO FIND IT."

THE COMMITTEE IS PUBLISHING A MAP - POSSIBLY THE FIRST - NOTING THE POSITION OF THE RUNWAY, THE HANGARS AND THE FUEL DEPOTS.

ASKED IF THIS WAS NOT A BREACH OF SECURITY, EARL RUSSELL SAID: "I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT, BUT I DON'T THINK IT IS A BREACH OF SECURITY IN PEACE TIME AND, IF IT IS, I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE STOPPED US PUBLISHING IT."

MR RANDALL SAID THE H-BOMB DUMP WOULD HAVE BEEN MARKED HAD THEY BEEN COMPLETELY CERTAIN OF ITS WHEREABOUTS.

THE WETHERSFIELD DEMONSTRATORS PLAN TO CROSS THE BARBED WIRE AROUND THE BASE PERIMETER AT A NUMBER OF POINTS.

SOME WILL TAKE TENTS WITH THEM AND REMAIN THERE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

NO RESISTANCE WILL BE OFFERED TO POLICE AND DEMONSTRATORS WILL BE WARNED TO SIT AND REMAIN QUIET IF SECURITY DOGS APPROACH THEM.

AT RUISLIP THE ENTRANCE TO THE BASE IS TO BE BLOCKED FOR SIX HOURS. THE OXFORD COMMITTEE OF 100 ARE ARRANGING THE DEMONSTRATION AT BRIZE NORTON. THE DEMONSTRATION IN YORK WILL BLOCK THE ENTRANCE TO NORTHERN COMMAND HEADQUARTERS.

EARL RUSSELL SAID THAT, IF A SIZEABLE BODY OF PEOPLE REFUSED TO GIVE THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES TO THE POLICE, ACTION WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM AT ONCE.

IN THE PAST, POLICE HAD BEEN ABLE TO TAKE MEMBERS TO COURT OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THEIR ARREST.

SOMETIMES EVEN THE COMMITTEE ITSELF DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED, LET ALONE THE PUBLIC.