

Inquiries of the Ministry

adopted by the supreme soviet of the U.S.S.R. late in December, that being the one to which he now refers.

I told him there had been just the two notes, that is the letter of December 13 and the second one dated January 8 and delivered to me on January 10. These were apart, I said, from the New Year's greetings sent to Canadians in general.

I have since confirmed that no formal communication came to us as a result of the peace program adopted by the supreme soviet of the U.S.S.R. This seven point program, the details of which, of course, we received from our embassy at the time, did not contain anything that was not already covered in the Soviet proposals to be found in the letter we had received from Mr. Bulganin on December 13.

I should inform the hon. member, however, that at an earlier stage, on December 1, a request was received at the Canadian embassy in Moscow from the foreign ministry of the U.S.S.R. to pass on to the government and parliament of Canada a declaration dealing with peace and security which had been adopted by the supreme soviet of the U.S.S.R. on November 6. This declaration, which did not contain any points that had not been covered in previous Soviet statements and public pronouncements, was forwarded by the embassy to the Department of External Affairs. The Secretary of State for External Affairs carried out the request of the Soviet foreign ministry by transmitting the text of the declaration to both Speakers, the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the Senate, on December 11. I shall be happy to send a copy of this particular document to the hon. member for his perusal.

REPORTED RUSSIAN DRIVE TO ESTABLISH
EUROPEAN BUFFER ZONE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. F. C. Christian (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs of which I have given him notice. Would he care to comment on Canada's position with respect to the neutrality drive by the Soviet government for the establishment of a buffer zone in Europe?

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but I have not received notice of that question, and I will have to ask for an opportunity to consider it and give an answer at a later date.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

CODE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW RESPECTING
OUTER SPACE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister, which I hope will be taken more seriously than when it was addressed on previous occasions to other ministers. My question is suggested by a paragraph in President Eisenhower's most recent letter to Premier Bulganin. In view of the tremendous bearing that man's activities in outer space, such as the launching of satellites, space travel and control of the weather, may have on the future existence of mankind, will the government put some of its top people in the departments of justice, external affairs and transport to work—

Mr. Sinclair: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):—on the problem of coming up with a code of international law so there will be an agreed basis for the control of man's activities in outer space?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I scarcely think that is a question for the orders of the day; however, the matter referred to by my hon. friend is one that is the concern of all nations. The writing of an international code dealing with outer space, the question of territorial limitations and the question of the rights of travel are all matters that are today receiving the active consideration of international lawyers everywhere. Certainly the problem is of such intricacy, having regard to the fact that it took some 300 years to develop the original rules of international law, that it could hardly be determined in a matter of a few weeks.

However, it is a question that certainly deserves serious consideration, and I recall referring to it on one previous occasion in this house as one that will exercise the minds of free men everywhere as well as those in the Soviet union and in its satellites and people elsewhere in the world, to the end that a code of international law may be achieved which I hope will be upheld to a greater degree than conventional international law.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, which I ask out of appreciation of the statement the Prime Minister has made. In view of the fact that Canada has made some notable contributions to international relations in other instances, does he not think this might be a