

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can only attempt to answer the question in the very same terms that I answered it a few days ago: it is not a prerequisite in the sense that we do not feel that the Berlin question must be settled finally before even sitting down to discuss mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe. However, we do feel that before a conference on European security can usefully be held we will have to know that there are conditions for progress which have been achieved. One of those conditions for progress is that we should know there is some palpable and possible solution to the Berlin question.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question for the purpose of clarification. Then it is no longer the position of the government of Canada that there has to be a security arrangement regarding West Berlin before a European security conference would be appropriate?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I should like to know if the Leader of the Opposition is asking whether the Berlin question would have to be settled finally in every way before we would sit down to discuss other questions with the Soviet Union.

Mr. Stanfield: No, Mr. Speaker. What I am asking the Prime Minister is whether the position of the government of Canada and the position to be taken by the Secretary of State for External Affairs at the NATO conference is the position that Canada took last December along with our NATO allies or whether this position has been changed, as I believe the Prime Minister has just indicated to me that it has been changed?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the answer is that it has not been changed.

CANADIAN RECOMMENDATION THAT RUSSIAN MUTUAL
TROOP REDUCTION PROPOSALS BE INVESTIGATED
BY NATO ENVOY

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister on a related matter. Is the Secretary of State for External Affairs recommending to the foreign ministers at NATO that an envoy be sent to eastern Europe to investigate Russian proposals for mutual troop reductions?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the view has been expressed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs that such an envoy should be sent.

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WELFARE

CONSIDERATION OF JURISDICTION OVER SOCIAL SECURITY
AND WELFARE AT FORTHCOMING MINISTERS' MEETING

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare arising out of various speculations that have taken place. Can the minister inform the House whether the question of jurisdiction over social security and welfare is on the agenda of the meeting of welfare ministers to be held

[Mr. Stanfield.]

next week, particularly in view of the demands of some provinces that they have full jurisdiction in these fields?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): The matter of social policy is on the agenda Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lewis: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I would guess that the meeting of ministers of welfare would discuss social policy; that would not be very revealing. I asked the minister whether the question of provincial or federal jurisdiction in the fields of social security and welfare is on the agenda in preparation for the constitutional conference?

Mr. Munro: The jurisdictional aspect of social policy is not an item on the agenda, Mr. Speaker. We will be talking in terms of the various policies we have enunciated in the white paper and the suggested and proposed changes we might have to offer to meet some of the views advanced by the provinces and other people generally.

JURISDICTION OVER SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE—
DISCUSSION WITH PREMIER BOURASSA OF INCLUSION
ON CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Did his recent discussions with the Prime Minister of Quebec with regard to items to be discussed at the constitutional conference touch upon the question of jurisdiction in the fields of social security and welfare and, also, will the Minister of National Health and Welfare be accompanying him to Victoria on whatever date the conference may now be held?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer to both questions is yes.

DISCUSSIONS WITH PROVINCES OF FURTHER FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE TO CITIES

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In view of reports that cities in various parts of Canada, because of the financial squeeze in which they find themselves, are cutting back on the categories of people who can get welfare, will the government discuss with the provinces the raising of the percentage which the federal government pays under the Canada Assistance Plan to meet the costs of welfare?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are coping with that in other ways. I must remind the House that the meeting in Victoria is to be primarily a constitutional one and that the meeting of ministers of health and welfare previous to it has been asked to report to the constitutional conference. The discussion in Victoria will revolve mainly around constitutional matters. What will be discussed between the welfare ministers would be, I think, couched in those terms.

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Prime Minister.