

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

question to the Minister of Finance. Does the government intend to present a budget to parliament this fall. If so, when may we expect its presentation?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to present a budget this fall. The present date we are aiming for is somewhere in mid-October, but I would not like to tie myself down to an exact date at this time.

**Mr. Hees:** As a supplementary question, is the absence of any mention of tax reform in the speech from the throne an indication that the government has abandoned any firm ideas that it might have had?

**Mr. Benson:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The supplementary question is argumentative.

**Mr. Hees:** No? Mr. Speaker, please—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have indicated to the hon. member that the question as asked is argumentative and out of order.

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****NATO—ATTENDANCE OF CANADIAN MINISTERS AT FALL MEETINGS**

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has Canada received a proposal to have him and the Minister of National Defence attend an emergency meeting of NATO ministers in the near future? If so, what is the government's decision regarding such a meeting?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions in the NATO council and among foreign ministers of the NATO countries regarding a series of meetings to be held this fall. Definite decisions have not yet been made as to the time and the place of such meetings.

**Mr. MacLean:** In view of earlier reports that in the light of the U.S.S.R. invasion of Czechoslovakia NATO countries had given undertakings to the alliance to not reduce their military strength in Europe, I should like to ask the minister whether any such undertaking has been requested of Canada or given by Canada and, if so, for what length of time.

[Mr. Hees.]

**Mr. Sharp:** After the NATO council met a public statement was made. I do not have it with me today, but I could obtain it and it could be tabled if the house were interested. Canada subscribed to this statement. It did not involve any country giving an undertaking about the maintenance of its present forces.

**Mr. MacLean:** Perhaps I might be allowed a further supplementary. I should like to address this to the Prime Minister. In view of the Prime Minister's statements about a reassessment of Canada's role in NATO, will the Prime Minister undertake to make a full statement to the house on Canada's position in this regard before the series of meetings to which the Secretary of State for External Affairs referred take place?

**Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Sir, it would be normal that I only make this statement after the assessment is concluded. We are proceeding with as great haste as is possible but, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs just indicated, our general position in NATO does not compromise any reassessment we might like to make.

[Translation]

**HOUSING****QUEBEC—REPORTED STATEMENT BY PROVINCIAL MINISTER**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford):** In the absence of the Minister of Transport, who is responsible for urban renewal, I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. Could he tell us, following the statement made last Friday by the Quebec Minister of Municipal Affairs, the hon. Robert Lussier, to the effect that he would fight with all his energies the interference of the federal government in the field of housing, if he intends to change anything to the federal housing policy outlined in the Speech from the Throne?

**Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, if the said minister is thereby indicating that he wants to respect the constitution, we are in complete agreement, and we hope that his government will respect it in every field.

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.