

Inquiries of the Ministry

anyone in the Department of External Affairs made any inquiries of the Canadian mission in Viet Nam to secure assurance that no information such as photographs, tape recordings or other information has been turned over at any time by any Canadian military personnel to the United States authorities? Has the government obtained this assurance, or was the denial by the government made before such assurance had been obtained?

Mr. Pearson: The government's denial was made with reference to the allegation that Canadian personnel on the international truce commission were engaged in clandestine activities. I repeat that. As a result of my hon. friend's question of this morning and the reports which have appeared, the whole question is now being exhaustively examined in all its details.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a specific question so there can be no mistake whatsoever. Was the statement attributed to Tim Ralfe, a reputable C.B.C. man who was there, correct or incorrect when he said that copies of dispatches funnelled through the Canadian headquarters in Saigon were sent to the American embassy even before they were transmitted to our external affairs department here in Ottawa? That is the simple question. It is not answered by a statement that we have no spies. We know we have no spies. Is that a true statement?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I dealt with that in the statement I just made.

Mr. Diefenbaker: No, Mr. Speaker. I suggest to the Prime Minister that the question he will not answer is a very simple question.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

QUEBEC—STATEMENT RESPECTING PROPOSED CENSORSHIP

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the hon. Secretary of State.

Can the hon. minister tell us whether she has received from the Quebec government recommendations asking to "block the present tendencies" towards television programs being broadcast by the C.B.C. which are morally injurious, in order to enable the Quebec province to better censor the films shown in theatres?

[*Mr. Douglas.*]

Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Secretary of State): I do not think so.

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

NATO—POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL OF CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence a question I believe to be of the utmost importance. I am sure we all agree that no armed forces commitments should be made without the knowledge of this house.

In view of the decision of the United Kingdom and United States governments to reduce by some 35,000 their military personnel in Europe under NATO commitments, will the minister inform this house as to Canada's position regarding the withdrawal of armed forces from Europe? What presentation is being made at this time on behalf of Canada by the Associate Minister of National Defence at the high level conference now taking place in Europe? I think that is the urgent part of this question.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, this meeting was called to review the work of defence planning groups which have been studying various contingencies within the NATO framework for a number of months under the direction of ministers, and to provide an opportunity for the ministers to give further guidance to the defence planners.

In so far as future commitments are concerned, they will be made known to the NATO planners by the individual member countries later this year. The principle being adopted is to give an indication five years in advance of what are the plans of the countries then to make commitments on a yearly basis in advance. The Canadian government will be studying what might be the appropriate contribution for this country, and I assume there will be further discussions in this regard in the house. Perhaps when the national defence estimates are being considered that might be an opportune occasion to discuss what might be appropriate for us to do in the years ahead.

Some time later this year, before the ministerial meeting in December, we will make known to NATO what we will commit for the year ahead and what our plans are for a five year period.