

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 13, 1958

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TABLING OF SECOND LETTER FROM
PREMIER BULGANIN

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I was asked on Friday about a second letter sent by Mr. Bulganin, the chairman of the council of ministers of the Soviet union. I informed the house that such a letter had been delivered to me by the Soviet ambassador that morning. With it the Soviet ambassador delivered what might be described as an unofficial translation. This translation has been checked against the Russian language original and revisions made where necessary. I am now able to table that approved English translation of the letter.

This new letter from Mr. Bulganin is being studied with care. Similar letters have been received by the governments of other NATO countries, and they will be the subject of further careful examination and consultation in the NATO council. The main proposal in this new letter is that a high-level meeting be held in the next two or three months. The specific proposal, and I quote, is for:

—a meeting of leading statesmen on a high level with the participation of heads of governments.

The agenda proposed for this meeting largely covers the same ground as the proposal made in the previous letter from Mr. Bulganin dated December 13, 1957. On one or two points relating to disarmament this letter is somewhat more specific than the previous letter, and these points are now being studied. They do not, however, appear to contain anything that has not been brought up in the discussions held in the United Nations subcommittee on disarmament.

I believe it is the intention of some of our NATO allies to send replies to the first letter early this week. The Canadian reply which is now being prepared after careful co-ordination of our views with our NATO partners will be sent in a day or so, and the text will be made available to the house. I therefore ask leave to table the letter in question.

Mr. Speaker: Did the Prime Minister intend that the translation of the letter be printed in *Hansard*?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Not unless the house asks for it. It is very lengthy, and I thought it should be tabled and therefore available to hon. members in all parts of the house.

Mr. Speaker: The Prime Minister made two statements. I think, in conducting orderly comment, if the party leaders wish to comment they might deal with the first statement which has to do with the Russian correspondence.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Algoma East): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Prime Minister's first statement I wish merely to ask him this question. Is it intended that the reply to which he referred as likely to be sent from Canada this week will deal with both the Bulganin letters, or the first one only which came early last December?

Mr. Diefenbaker: The first reply will be in reference to the first letter, but I am hopeful that we shall be able to make the replies practically simultaneously.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): May I ask the Prime Minister a question relating to the letters. Last week I inquired whether more than two communications had been received from Russia up to that time. My reading over the week end of the *Manchester Guardian* leads me to believe that a further statement was made by the supreme council of the Soviet union which was handed to the ambassadors in Moscow for delivery to governments and parliaments other than those of Russia, of course, and which contained seven points that in the opinion of this newspaper at least were worthy of consideration.

Has the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State for External Affairs received a copy of that statement from our ambassador? I think it was delivered on Christmas eve or Christmas day to the diplomatic corps in Moscow.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, possibly I might clarify the answer of the other day by reading the explanation which was handed to me by the officials. On Friday, in connection with the second letter from Mr. Bulganin, the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart asked about the number of such communications that had been received. He also raised a question about a seven point program