

Inquiries of the Ministry

the minister have any word for the house to assure us, first of all, as to the safety of our own Canadian troops who are over there and also in a general way with regard to the situation that is continuing there?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I previously intimated, there have been discussions in Geneva and, as a matter of fact, in the NATO council with regard to this matter, in addition to the consultations which were taking place even this morning between certain countries, including Canada. There is no doubt that the fears with regard to infiltrations about which we spoke in the house, both by way of interrogation and response, some days ago, were justified and, notwithstanding the assurances by the two countries concerned, have been confirmed. Various assessments have been made by the United Nations and by individual countries as to the extent of these infiltrations. The information that Canada passed on 10 days ago to the United Nations has been confirmed.

Very important negotiations are under way in three different places. I hope that as a result it will be possible even at this date to bring a moderating influence to bear on all parties concerned, including Greece and Turkey, having regard to their membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, let alone their membership in the United Nations.

Our forces are there as part of the United Nations force and the directions issued to that force come from the commander of the force, General Thimayya, the distinguished Indian soldier who has relieved General Gyani. He acts under the authority given to him by the secretary general pursuant to the latter's directions from the security council. Every consideration is being given to the position of our force and to its place in the United Nations operation itself.

I believe that is as far as I can go at this time. I think that what I have said will indicate that the build-up which has taken place, notwithstanding the protests made in the NATO council, and notwithstanding the requests made by the secretary general of the United Nations, is in the judgment of Canada, and I think in the judgment of all countries who have been considering this matter, contrary to the requests made at the last ministerial meeting of the NATO council in May and at subsequent meetings of the NATO council. I would hope that a second appeal made by the secretary general of the United Nations only yesterday in Geneva,

[Mr. Thompson.]

where he is meeting with the mediator and with representatives of the governments of Greece and Turkey, will elicit a suitable response so that the force may be given the opportunity, in spite of difficult circumstances, to discharge its responsibility in trying to maintain some semblance of order in that disturbed island. I am happy to say that the intervention of Canada's forces even within the last few days, as we all know from Colonel Amy's statement, has been productive of some results. The government continues to watch this situation with great care.

Mr. Thompson: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The disturbing factor is that even though these peace negotiations are going on the military build-up continues. In view of the fact that the president of Turkey and the prime minister of Greece themselves gave the minister their personal assurances that they would do all they could to prevent war and to further a peaceful settlement, has the minister taken the initiative of getting in touch with these leaders in the interval with regard to their own personal obligations?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, not only have I taken an initiative on behalf of the government by speaking directly, apart altogether from ambassadors here in Ottawa, to the heads of the governments of Greece and Turkey, but we have taken an initiative at the ministerial meeting at The Hague and within the past two weeks in the NATO council. Beyond that I cannot go at this moment.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary of State for External Affairs mentioned three separate meetings being held at three separate places. Would he elaborate briefly with regard to who is sponsoring these respective meetings, what nations are represented at them and where they are being held?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): First of all, there is a meeting in Geneva. This meeting has been called by the mediator who announced a week ago Monday that having made assessments with regard to a solution—and this function, exercised under the security council, belongs only to him—he proposed asking the representatives of the governments concerned to meet with him in Geneva. He has been meeting with them individually all week.