

North Atlantic Treaty

own position and the position of the government. These are his words as reported in *Hansard* at page 1223:

. . . no such policy has been decided upon by the Canadian government.

The money, vitally important though that is, is not the question of policy. The Prime Minister told us last Wednesday that no such policy had been decided upon by the government. The statement as checked, revised and printed today as coming from the Canadian Press headquarters in Toronto leaves the statement of policy precisely where it was last Wednesday. I return also to the question of the barracks, because the Prime Minister either has overlooked that subject or has avoided it. The members of this house will recall that from The Hague, the night before the announcement in Rotterdam, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) had announced that Canada was going to build barracks near Soest in Germany at a cost of between \$5 million and \$10 million, and that those barracks would be built by Germans, with the construction starting within a few months.

A new and interesting angle in connection with this matter arose as a result of another Canadian Press dispatch on Saturday—a dispatch published since this house last met—in which it was stated that Canadians have luxury barracks which were built during the Hitler regime. Mr. Speaker, if Canadians now have luxury barracks which were built by Hitler, I should think it would be a good thing if we continued to use those barracks. I cannot imagine a better purpose to which those barracks, originally built for the nazis, could be put than that of housing Canadians. In any event, we have as yet had no suggestion that the Minister of National Defence's statement at The Hague was not correctly reported. We are therefore still left with the statement that Canada is going to build barracks in Germany at a cost of between \$5 million and \$10 million.

May I repeat what was said before. I do not think anyone in this house is raising any question about our fulfilment of any obligations which we properly share as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But surely there are questions to discuss as to whether it is not appropriate that the contribution of some of these European nations might well be the construction of barracks or the building of airfields while we are supplying arms on a divisional scale; according to another announcement made by the Minister of National Defence, our undertaking was to complete the delivery of arms for four divisions. Surely those are questions of policy

[Mr. Drew.]

which are not affected in principle by the amount involved.

I think the explanation given by the Canadian Press as to the way in which Mr. Douglas How arrived at the figure of \$100 million is one that to most members of this house would seem to be perfectly reasonable, they being well aware of the manner in which press reports are prepared and, may I also say, well aware of the manner in which the government at times gives information to the press outside of the regular conferences. In any event, the statement as originally raised stands, and I suggest that what has been stated by the Prime Minister and what was left unsaid about the barracks leaves this house still with no satisfactory explanation of why these policies were not announced here and why we should be left to learn of them through the press.

Mr. St. Laurent: Mr. Speaker, I suppose the leader of the opposition is entitled to get as much consolation as he can about what he has referred to in his last remarks. But I am willing now to leave the matter on the record as it stands in *Hansard*. It will be remembered that the statement which was referred to about the barracks was this:

. . . the minister said the barracks will be built by Germans, the work to start in the next few months and be completed late next year.

That is no announcement of government policy, because it is not the policy of this government to announce what is going to be done by Germans.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fraser: That is a poor one.

Mr. St. Laurent: It is sufficient for us to announce to parliament what the plans of the government are. That has been done and it will continue to be done.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, am I to take it from the Prime Minister's remarks that the Minister of National Defence was speaking on behalf of the Germans when he made that statement?

Mr. St. Laurent: The hon. member can "expand and background" the statements as he sees fit; and I hope that he will not be any less successful than the Canadian Press.

KURT MEYER

COMMITMENT TO WERL PRISON, GERMANY
—REFERENCE TO PRESS REPORT OF RELEASE
TO VISIT HIS HOME

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, you will be glad to learn that this is another question of privilege that I propose to raise. On October 19 last the