

*Inquiries of the Ministry*POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF HOSPITALS FROM
FEDERAL CONTROL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. Chester MacRae (York-Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs but in his absence I will direct it to the Prime Minister. It concerns the statement made yesterday at the Royal Canadian Legion convention in Winnipeg by the Minister of Veterans Affairs that before any veterans hospitals are transferred from federal to provincial or local control there will be consultation with the veterans organizations. Will the Prime Minister assure the more than one million veterans of this country that if the veterans organizations do not concur following consultation with them, no transfers of veterans hospitals will be made?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to discuss that question with the minister and give the hon. gentleman a reply. I think the minister will be back tomorrow.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NATO—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON COUNCIL
MEETING

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs has returned from his trip to the NATO council meeting at The Hague I should like to ask him whether any decisions or developments took place at that meeting which would affect Canada's military or political contribution in NATO.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question as phrased is yes. I would propose that an opportunity be given at the earliest possible moment when a full report on this meeting might be made to the house. The acting house leader is arranging with the other parties, I believe, for discussion of the external affairs estimates on Friday, when I would hope to have the opportunity of making the report in which my hon. friend is interested.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether any decision was reached with reference to a multilateral nuclear force, and whether Canada made any commitment in this regard.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There were no decisions with regard to the multilateral force, which is a proposal made not by NATO

[Mr. Pearson.]

but by the United States. There was no discussion of this particular project as such.

Mr. Douglas: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Are any of the NATO countries supplying weapons to Portugal for use in Angola, where I understand wholesale massacres are taking place; and are any Canadian weapons being supplied to Portugal which could be used for this lamentable purpose?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, Portugal is a member of NATO, and whatever assistance is given to that country by Canada is only in respect of her obligations as a member of NATO. Whatever assistance is given is on the distinct understanding that it is not for the kind of venture to which my hon. friend directs my attention.

LAOS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON SITUATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Is he in a position to indicate in any way the government's attitude or actions in respect of the situation in Laos, where there is considerable Canadian involvement?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Laos has taken a serious turn. Over the week end there have been discussions among the countries represented on the truce commission, Canada, Poland and India, and there have been discussions with the United States and the United Kingdom.

I can only say that I regret to tell the house that in respect of the functions of the commission, the Polish delegate has not cooperated in the endeavours of the commission in recent weeks. I have therefore made representations to the Polish government urging it to assist in the maintenance of stability in Laos by fulfilling the obligations which they, together with Canada and India, undertook when the Geneva agreements were signed in 1962.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): In what particular has the situation deteriorated in Laos as a result of the failure of Poland to discharge its share of the duties of the commission?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe I said the situation had deteriorated because of the reluctance of the Polish member of the commission. The situation has deteriorated because the neutralists and the forces of the right are being actively pursued by the Pathet Lao. The refusal of the Polish delegate to agree to inspection in