

Inquiries of the Ministry

In his address this afternoon the Prime Minister urged restraint in response to this latest statement, but I must say that a great many Canadians are becoming increasingly impatient over such statements. They require the Prime Minister to make his protests on behalf of this country both very loud and very clear. General de Gaulle's statement must be rejected firmly and without apology, so it is made abundantly clear that we in Canada are determined to govern ourselves in accordance with our own decisions and in harmony with our national aspirations.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONSCONCURRENCE IN SIXTH REPORT OF
STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. H. Pit Lessard (for Mr. Macaluso) moved that the sixth report of the standing committee on transport and communications, presented to the house on Friday, November 24, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRSCYPRUS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON
PRESENT POSITION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in view of our great concern about what is going on in Cyprus, can the Secretary of State for External Affairs give the house any further information as to how matters now stand and what action the government of Canada may be taking in this regard?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Cyprus continues to be tense. There is really no change in the situation since I reported to the house yesterday. The special representative of the government of the United States has been engaged within the last few hours in trying to compose further differences between the two Mediterranean countries, Turkey and Greece. He has succeeded, I believe, in narrowing the differences.

Having regard to the suggestions made to the parties by the Secretary General of the United Nations I would hope that before the day is out we might see some more definitive statement from the United States emissary as well as from Mr. Rolz-Bennet, the representative of the Secretary General. At this moment I cannot report a final decision.

[Mr. Patterson.]

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, the mandate under which the peace keeping forces are operating in Cyprus requires authority from the security council before they may be withdrawn. Will the minister take the necessary steps to obtain that prior authority from the security council so that if war breaks out the Canadian troops can be withdrawn without delay?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of National Defence would confirm that there is every confidence in the effectiveness of the plans of the United Nations itself and of the components of the force should they be required.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, it is unusual for me to ask for clarification from this minister, but will he obtain prior authority from the security council so the peace keeping force may take action in withdrawing if that becomes necessary?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, there is of course a difference between the evacuation and the withdrawal of a force. When the withdrawal of the United Nations force in the Middle East took place we took up with the Secretary General what position would be taken with regard to the withdrawal of the force in Cyprus. The Secretary General said that before that force would be withdrawn or disbanded he would refer the matter to the security council.

Having regard to the evacuation or withdrawal of the force for security purposes, that is a matter which in accordance with the plans already made, rests with the commander of the United Nations force.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Defence. Is he in a position to report to the house in respect of dissatisfaction among the ranks of Canadian troops under UN command in Cyprus? I ask this question as the result of a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interview with non-commissioned officers in the force.

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I believe the question of the hon. member is much too general. What he is apparently referring to is a purported declaration by a sergeant that he did not know whether to stand or run. My suggestion to this sergeant would be that he ask his commanding officer, who knows what to do.