

Inquiries of the Ministry

developments warrant it I shall be very pleased to see that any government announcement is brought to his attention.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**LAOS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON PRESENT POSITION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the urgent and deteriorating situation in Laos and the presence in that country of Canada's member of the truce supervisory commission, does the minister have some word for the house?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Laos, as I mentioned yesterday and as we now know from the statement made by Mr. Stevenson at the United Nations this morning, has deteriorated, and this does affect the work of the commission. I expressed regret the other day that the Polish member of the commission had temporarily withdrawn from service on that commission. I said that the Polish government had been requested by Canada to have its member of the commission resume his duties.

The situation is one that is changing rapidly and we will have to await events. I may be in a position to make a statement on this tomorrow when the department's estimates are before the house.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): A supplementary question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Does the government of Canada support the policy of the government of the United States with respect to Viet Nam?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I have already dealt with this question, but I hope to deal with it at greater length tomorrow.

NATO—REPORTED CANADIAN AGREEMENT TO INCREASE MILITARY COMMITMENT

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Can he tell us if there is any truth in the newspaper article stating that the government intends to increase its contribution to the NATO forces? Is it true that Canada is willing to increase its military contribution to NATO?

[Text]

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): The policy of the government was announced in the white paper, and there has been no change since that time.

PUBLIC SERVICE**REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBER OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister and ask him, in view of the expiration of the term of office of Mr. MacArthur as a member of the unemployment insurance commission, whether it is the intention of the government to appoint him for another term. If so, when does the government intend to announce his reappointment?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend the Minister of Labour is not in his seat at the moment. I will discuss this matter with him, and I hope to make an announcement tomorrow or Monday.

[Later:]

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, to follow up my question to the Prime Minister regarding the unemployment insurance commissioner, would he give consideration to the fact that many of the affiliates of the Canadian Labour Congress have forwarded representations on behalf of Mr. MacArthur to the Minister of Labour, and would he take these into consideration?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker. I think I have received some myself.

TRADE**RUSSIA—SUGGESTED EXCHANGE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS FOR WHEAT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to put this question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the Minister of Agriculture, but in their absence maybe I can direct it to the Prime Minister. I may say it deals with a very important matter concerning western Canada. Reference has been made in an article in the *New York Times*, reprinted in the *Calgary Herald*, to negotiations between the government of Canada and the Soviet union to accept petroleum and other oil products in return for Canadian wheat. Is there any justification for this report in the *New York Times*?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Not to my knowledge, but it is important, Mr. Speaker, and I shall look into it.