

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The prime minister of Southern Rhodesia has announced that the referendum shortly to be held in Southern Rhodesia will not be regarded by his government as a mandate for a unilateral declaration of independence.

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

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs?

Could he tell us what is the present situation of our troops in Cyprus and what our Canadians are achieving on that island?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian troops, which are part of the United Nations force, are still performing the duties which that force was asked to perform, that is, to maintain peace as it exists presently at Cyprus.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question?

Is the hon. minister aware that, or can we accept the truthfulness of a statement to the effect that soldiers from other countries lead the life of pashas in Cyprus while our Canadian soldiers live like pariahs?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept this statement which was mentioned in the house this morning.

I read an article which was written recently in a newspaper on that subject. We examined those insinuations, and we can assure the house that they are not well founded.

[Text]

EDUCATION**REQUEST OF UNIVERSITIES FOR INCREASE IN PER CAPITA PAYMENTS**

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): I would direct a question to the Prime Minister. Did the national conference of Canadian universities ask for any increase in the per capita amounts now paid to the various universities? In the light of the view he expressed, that education should be free, does the right hon. gentleman agree that the time has come for an increase in

these per capita payments, particularly because of the very great increase in the operating costs of universities since 1962, when the last increase was brought in, which had the effect of doubling the grant previously paid?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Whether or not the recent meeting of the universities council discussed this matter I am not sure, though I suspect it did. But no request for additional assistance has been received from that meeting which, as a matter of fact, closed only last night. I do not know whether such a request will be made.

With regard to the observation made by the right hon. gentleman, however, I would point out that the amount of direct assistance from the federal treasury to the universities of Canada this year reaches a figure of \$224 million, which is much greater than has been the case in any year in the past.

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): A supplementary question. In his speech to the association the Prime Minister underlined the laudable desirability of free higher education for young Canadians. Does this mean that the government is about to announce a federal university scholarship plan? My second question is this. Will the government soon announce its priorities in the field of social interests, inasmuch as we are also about to discuss a pension scheme and questions of importance relating to a national health plan?

Mr. Pearson: As far as the first question is concerned, perhaps the hon. member did not read the text of what I said. While I personally approve of education being free for all Canadians who are able to qualify for it, I said this was an ideal which would not be possible of realization for some time. As a matter of fact, at the present time there are educational experts who would not consider that to top their list of priorities, though I still believe that is eventually the ideal that should be realized.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: So far as the second question is concerned, it is a much wider question of policy and priorities generally, and when a statement of that kind can be made it will be made in the house—and I hope before long—in connection with the present program of work. Perhaps we will be discussing that at the party leaders' meeting on Monday morning.