

Inquiries of the Ministry

not invited—to participate in the formal discussions in respect of the Indo-Chinese situation.

I am sure that all those who are really interested in peace are much concerned about what can be done and about security pacts that could be useful anywhere. But as to whether or not Canada should be a participant in other security pacts than the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is something which we have not yet had to consider and about which we have not yet had to come to any conclusion. The statement I made in the house stands. If we come to the conclusion that it would be helpful for world peace—and that would mean that it would be helpful to and in the interests of Canada—and decide to make recommendations, we would bring those recommendations to the house and have them discussed here. In the meantime there is nothing I can usefully say following this declaration of yesterday by the President of the United States. The matter is certainly being investigated. Exploratory talks are taking place but they have not yet come to the point where it would be required of us to say whether and under what conditions we might feel it was in Canada's interests to be a participant.

Mr. Green: May I ask a supplementary question? Can the Prime Minister explain how the statement that the Secretary of State for External Affairs is reported to have made in Geneva fits into the picture? From a press report which appeared yesterday purporting to quote the Secretary of State for External Affairs, I quote as follows:

"Failure here"—

That is at Geneva.

"—may well necessitate further collective consideration by those who, as a result of such failure, will feel increasingly threatened, of further ways and means to meet that threat . . ."

Mr. St. Laurent: I cannot add anything more than what the Secretary of State for External Affairs is reported as having said to newspapermen who inquired from him about that matter. This is a dispatch as published last night in the *Ottawa Journal*:

External affairs minister Pearson said today that when he wrote his speech for the Geneva conference he had not had in mind the specific possibility that Canada might join the projected southeast Asia security pact.

He made his comment when asked about the significance of the statement in his speech yesterday that failure of the Far East conference here might result in further collective security measures by the western powers. This would apply particularly in respect of Indo-China.

I cannot add anything to that. At the present time there is sometimes a tendency to try to read into anything that is said

meanings that were not intended by the one who said it. That is quite natural because, as individuals, we are all concerned with the security of the world at the present time and we are all anxious to get as much information as we can get about it. Because of that feeling it is quite natural that there is sometimes read into anything that is said a meaning that was not intended.

[Later:]

Mr. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): I should like to ask the Prime Minister this question arising out of the answer he has given to an earlier question. Since Canada is so obviously and, as the hon. gentleman has stated, so properly concerned about the prospects of success or failure of the conference on Indo-China, did the Canadian government make any representations as to whether or not we should be asked to participate in formal discussions of that conference?

Mr. St. Laurent: The answer is a negative one, Mr. Speaker.

[Later:]

GENEVA CONFERENCE—RETURN OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Donald M. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question that bears to some extent on the answer he gave to the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green). Is it intended that the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson) should continue to lead the Canadian delegation at Geneva throughout the entire conference or is he coming home? Can the Prime Minister give any indication, in that event, as to how much longer the Secretary of State for External Affairs intends to remain at Geneva?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker; I am not in a position at this moment to say when he might expect to be home, nor do I think the Secretary of State for External Affairs himself would be able to do so.

PRIVILEGE

MR. COLDWELL—REFERENCE TO PRESS REPORTS OF VOTE ON BUDGET

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise on a matter of privilege. Several papers today carry stories which misconstrue our vote on the budget yesterday. May I just refer to a dispatch