

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 7, 1967

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### MIDDLE EAST—REPORTED ARMS SHIPMENTS BY FRANCE TO ARAB COUNTRIES

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but in his absence at the moment perhaps I may direct it to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the announcement by the French government this morning that that government intended to remove its ban on arms shipments to the Arab countries, and the further announcement that it will be shipping aircraft and other arms to the Arab states while still maintaining the ban on arms shipments to Israel, is the government of Canada planning any protest to the government of France?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker. I should like to consult the Secretary of State for External Affairs to see whether they have considered this matter in his department. He will be here later this afternoon.

#### NIGERIA—POSSIBLE MEDIATION BY CANADA IN CIVIL DISPUTE

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke):** In the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. In view of the impending visit to Canada of the Nigerian foreign minister, and the continued reports of appalling casualties in that country's internal struggle, will he be offering his good services toward mediating that dispute in a commonwealth country?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** I am not sure that mediation of this particular matter is required at this time by Canada. Naturally we want to do anything we can to help bring this civil strife to an end. I will be seeing the Nigerian foreign minister tomorrow. No doubt he will bring this matter up if he wishes to have this kind of mediation.

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### NATIONAL DEFENCE

#### NATO—POSSIBLE REASSESSMENT OF CANADA'S MILITARY ROLE

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question regarding the NATO council conference which will be taking place in a few days. I ask whether the Canadian government is proposing to reassess Canada's military role in NATO. If so, does Canada intend to suggest the phasing out of the CF-104 squadrons; does it propose any replacement of these by another type of aircraft; and finally, does Canada intend to suggest the transfer of the infantry brigade or any part of it to a reserve position?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, at each annual meeting of the NATO council it is customary to review not only the force plans of the member governments but the policies of NATO countries themselves and the direction in which the alliance should be moving.

That will happen in Brussels next week. I believe there will be a report before the council, called the Harmel report after the foreign minister of Belgium who has been working on it with others, on the goals of the alliance. That will be considered as well as the force plans of member governments. So far as I know there is no proposal before the council which will change radically the force goals or the objectives of NATO. I do not think there is any reason to expect radical changes in Canada's contribution to NATO at this time.

**Mr. Douglas:** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be making a statement to the house on his return from the ministerial NATO conference, in view of the importance which this conference has for financial considerations as well as to keep the house fully informed on the government's policy vis-à-vis NATO.

**Mr. Pearson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I expect he will be back in time to make a statement to