

Inquiries of the Ministry

those experts who are being consulted by the government given access to classified information in order to make more appropriate comments; and if so, are they being cleared for security? Second, are any persons outside of Canada, or non-Canadians, being consulted in this regard with respect to the future foreign policy of Canada?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, on the first question the answer is in the negative. Our understanding is that the academics we would like to talk with do not want to be made aware of any classified information, because in that way they might be inhibited in expressing their views in other places. So I can say unqualifiedly that no classified information will be available to them.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Speaker, I directed another point to the minister. Perhaps he did not quite hear it. Are there any persons outside of Canada, or non-Canadians, being consulted in this regard with respect to the future foreign policy of Canada?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I would very much doubt whether the Institute of International Affairs would be likely to nominate such persons, but of course I do not know who these academics are going to be so I cannot answer that question quite so categorically. I would doubt very much, however, whether they would put forward the names of non-Canadians.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister say whether the advice given by these academics will be made public, so that members of this house and the general public can get the benefit of their advice to the government?

Mr. Sharp: I have never known academics who are reluctant to express their views on foreign policy. I am quite sure that after they have expressed them to us they will express them publicly and loudly.

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence. I hope he will not consider it redundant. Would the minister confirm that it is the intention of the government to maintain this country's military strength in Europe until January, 1970, at least?

Hon. Leo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I believe that was [Mr. Nesbitt.]

implied in the testimony I gave yesterday at the committee.

Mr. MacLean: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Are we to understand that the statement made in the house by the Prime Minister on November 15, I believe it was, to the effect that we can withdraw from NATO during the course of 1969 if we so decide, is in fact an option that is not now open to Canada under the present circumstances?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, if I am asked to comment on that, I think the Prime Minister was referring to the fact that in August Canada could exercise an option or give notice of withdrawal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérald Laniel (Beauharnois): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence and to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In view of the fact that the estimates of the Department of National Defence have been reported to the house and those of the Department of External Affairs will be reported soon, are the two ministers considering the possibility of sending the annual report of the two departments back to the committee on external affairs and national defence, in order to allow the committee to continue its study and perhaps call witnesses who will help its members to form an opinion and advise the government with regard to its policy revision?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the chairman of the committee on external affairs and national defence has plans to that effect, although they have no immediate connection with the estimates of the Department of National Defence, which were passed by the committee yesterday.

[*English*]

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether the Minister of National Defence was expressing government policy when he stated on television last night that Europe is the geographical region where Canada's security is most in jeopardy.

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): He was stating a very important point of view, Mr. Speaker.