

Inquiries of the Ministry

intention to withdraw from NATO's integrated defence program, and to require that Canadian and United States forces assigned to NATO be either withdrawn from France or transferred to French command.

I should like to inform the house that we have now received a further aide memoire, dated March 29 but delivered only late yesterday, setting out the views of the government of France on the timetable which it considers might be followed.

We are now studying this further communication. For the present I would only say that the press reports concerning the dates the French government has in mind appear generally consistent with the information in the aide memoire which we have received. Our understanding with the French authorities is that the text of this communication will be made public on April 1, which is tomorrow. I will therefore table the aide memoire tomorrow.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): With further reference to that question, Mr. Speaker, is the date April 1, 1967, enumerated in the second aide memoire as the date designated for the removal of Canadian troops from Metz and Marville? When the minister is giving his reply will he say, in view of the report that the United States are contemplating the removal of nuclear arms from French forces in Germany, whether the Canadian government has been consulted in this regard, and what is the attitude of the minister in this connection?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): With regard to the reported decision of the government of the United States, I am not in a position to comment on the validity of that report.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Has there been any consultation?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I have no information on that question, Mr. Speaker, other than what I have seen in the newspapers, although there has been consultation among the 14 governments in the NATO council on the position taken by France.

Mr. Thompson: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the minister whether it is correct that April 1, 1967, has been the deadline stated by the French government in this aide memoire.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It has been agreed with the government of France that the aide memoire will be tabled tomorrow, and I

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

would prefer not to take issue in any way with the agreement that we have made.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Minister of National Defence whether Canada will be making arrangements to move these troops to bases elsewhere in Europe, or is it the intention to bring them home to Canada?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker. This is a question which is under consideration by the government at the present time and it will be subject to consultation. When the policy is decided it will be announced in the normal course.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I did not quite understand the minister's reply. The hon. member in his question mentioned bringing these troops home to Canada. Is that also under consideration?

Mr. Hellyer: I should think that in the consideration is included all the possibilities and options which are available to the government, of which that is one.

RHODESIA—REPORTED STATEMENTS BY COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. My question is based on one asked yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition of the Secretary of State for External Affairs with regard to certain statements made by Mr. Arnold Smith, secretary general of the commonwealth association, concerning Rhodesia.

Has the minister now had an opportunity of examining the remarks allegedly made by Mr. Smith and, if so, is the Canadian government in agreement with those observations?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it must be noted first of all that Mr. Smith is at the present time not officially responsible in the same context that he was when he was a Canadian public servant, to the government of Canada. I have had a transcript made of the remarks of Mr. Smith and these are now being studied. I will be glad to see that my hon. friend gets a copy of them. I have also arranged to send a copy to the Leader of the Opposition, who raised this matter yesterday.