

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 22, 1966

The house met at 11 a.m.

[Translation]

BROADCASTING, FILMS AND ASSISTANCE TO THE ARTS

SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Gérard Pelletier (Hochelaga) presented the second report of the standing committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts.

[Note: Text of the foregoing report appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING COMMUTATION OF DEATH SENTENCES

On the order:

Introduction of bills. Mr. Choquette—Bill intituled an act to amend the Criminal Code (repeal of power to commute a sentence of death).

Mr. Speaker: The point of order raised by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition is still under consideration, so this bill will stand.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NATO—SPEECH IN COMMITTEE BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct two questions to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has he learned that statements he made in committee, which have not received the approval of parliament, referring to NATO and Canada's intentions in that regard, have aroused great fear and even consternation among NATO nations?

I ask him whether he heard the broadcast this morning from the C.B.C. representative in Bonn, and whether it is the intention of the government to make changes in Canada's NATO relationships. What is the basis for the plan, to which reference was made in that broadcast, for a rotation of troops every two months? Is the minister prepared to make a statement that will restore confidence among our allies in NATO?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I would not agree Mr. Speaker, that there is any necessity for making a statement to restore confidence in Canada's position in NATO. I can say without any equivocation that Canada's NATO colleagues have the fullest confidence in Canada's interest and concern for the integrity and future usefulness of NATO.

I did listen to the broadcast this morning. My statement that Canadian forces were not in Europe for all time I should hope would gather support from my right hon. friend. Of course that statement does not mean that Canadian forces are going to be withdrawn in the near future, nor was there any such implication in the statement.

The absence of a permanent settlement in central Europe requires a strong NATO. NATO's purpose in addition to providing defence is to promote a peaceful settlement. When a settlement is finally achieved—and I do not wish to hold out false hopes for early success—there will no longer be a need for NATO in its present form.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Years hence.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The right hon. gentleman says "Years hence". That may be so. In the meantime we must do everything we can to promote a peaceful settlement. One might hope that in the long run, with the improvement of the international atmosphere, the United Nations would come to play a larger role in preserving world peace and stability. In that kind of world the substantial deployment of Canadian forces in Europe would no longer be necessary.

Mr. Herridge: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): In the meantime it is not unreasonable to hope that the Europeans will themselves assume increasing responsibility for the defence of Europe. But that depends largely on developments in Europe. While we are needed, of course, Canada has already clearly indicated that she will not let NATO down.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is odd that the minister did not think of this when he made the