

Inquiries of the Ministry

NATO—POSSIBLE CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On April 8 this year the minister discussed in the house the changes in our organization of NATO and the prospect of withdrawing the Canadian air bases from France, and he used these words:

—the government of France does not intend to leave NATO.

I now ask him, has he any information concerning further substantial changes in the NATO organization?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I said, and I repeat now, that the French government has given notice of its intention not to participate in the integrated defence structure of NATO. The government of France has said, however, that it does not propose to denounce the treaty, and will continue to be bound particularly by articles 3 and 5 of the treaty. Formal negotiations on a bilateral basis or between the 14 participating countries and France have not yet been started, but negotiations based upon the determinations of national policy may soon begin.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs, in view of the expressed intention of the United States to press for the removal of the north Atlantic council from Paris and the support the United States is receiving from Britain, West Germany and some smaller NATO powers, what Canada's attitude is in this regard. With the meeting a few days away, the people have a right to know what stand Canada is going to take in this regard.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada have a right to know the Canadian position when that position, after discussion with our allies, has been arrived at. No final decision has been taken as yet by any one country. My right hon. friend based his question on a press report. There will be discussions among the 14 countries next Monday, when this matter will be among those discussed. The general position of Canada in all these matters will be that while we must take action consistent with our belief in a strong NATO, we hope that we will not come to the point of making the

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

organization one that is further removed from French participation.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in connection with these matters I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs when he is going to leave for the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels, and whether he is going to take advantage of his presence in Europe at that time to discuss with the French government the terms under which we will be leaving our two air force bases in France.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we have no alternative but to withdraw from the two bases. Where the units will be relocated has not yet been determined. The negotiations could run up to April 1, 1967. I will be discussing a number of matters concerning our bilateral relations with the French foreign minister next Monday.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Would it not be possible for the government to give effect to the New Democratic Party proposal to return our forces to Canada for training without denouncing the treaty?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It might be possible, but whether it is desirable is another question.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH OFFICE
OF OMBUDSMAN

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): My question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the growing concern over the proliferation of judicial inquiries and royal commissions, would the Prime Minister tell us whether the government intends to bring in legislation establishing the office of ombudsman during this session?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it will certainly not be early in the session.

TRANSPORT

SEAWAY TOLLS—FINAL DATE FOR RECEP-
TION OF BRIEFS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Joseph Macaluso (Hamilton West): May I request some information from the Minister