

*Canadian NATO Policy***MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26****NATIONAL DEFENCE**

REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF CANADIAN POLICY—MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER STANDING ORDER 26

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), to move the adjournment of the house under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the urgent need for clarification of Canada's defence policy as a result of the statement on this subject made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) while parliament was in recess.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Malpeque has given the Chair the usual notices required by the standing orders. I have considered the proposed motion moved by the hon. member and the Chair would like to remind him of the provisions of Standing Order 26, and in particular subsection (5) thereof, to this effect:

● (2:40 p.m.)

In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration, Mr. Speaker shall have regard... to the probability of the matter being brought before the house within reasonable time by other means.

After having given the matter some thought I have reached the conclusion that in my view there ought to be and probably will be within the next few days an opportunity for the house to consider the matter proposed to be raised by the hon. member for Malpeque.

[Translation]

It seems to me we have already had this afternoon a debate of a kind during which it was indicated that hon. members wish to have an early opportunity to discuss the matter.

It seems to me the request could be considered more favourably if the minister more directly concerned was in the house. Under those circumstances, I do not feel that it is advisable, under the standing orders, to put the motion proposed by the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean) before the house.

[Mr. Orlikow.]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

NATO—TIMING AND EXTENT OF CANADIAN TROOPS WITHDRAWAL—RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICIES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister? In view of his statement that the timing and extent of withdrawal of Canadian troops from Europe will be discussed at the meeting of the Defence Planning Committee of NATO in May, can he say whether he or a responsible minister will announce to the house the proposals of the government with respect to the timing and the extent of withdrawal of Canadian troops, as well as the proposal the government intends to make to this NATO committee before it meets in May, so that this house will have the opportunity to discuss something specific with regard to our foreign policy? I ask this question, Mr. Speaker, realizing of course that any statement the Prime Minister might make to the house as to the intentions of the government would be subject to negotiations with responsible NATO authorities.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the government house leader has been discussing or will be discussing this afternoon with house leaders of the other parties the question of setting aside two days for this subject to be debated as soon as the Secretary of State for External Affairs returns next week. If there is such agreement we will be discussing the declaration of principle we made on the Thursday before Easter. I refer to the decision in principle of remaining within NATO and reducing our forces for the European commitment to NATO in a planned way. The next stage is one we are working on now. We shall be very happy during the forthcoming debate to hear from hon. members of the opposition their views as to the way in which this reduction ought to be carried out.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Since when did the government listen to the opposition?

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I have already expressed my views on this subject. Am I to take it from the Prime Minister's statement that it is not the intention of the government to tell the house before the May meeting the proposals it intends to lay before the NATO council?