

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Churchill:** The reply was that there was no confirmation of the report, Mr. Speaker.

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**REQUEST FOR REPORT ON CONVERSATIONS  
WITH U.K. STATESMEN

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if there is anything he could usefully report to the house about the conversations he has just completed with the Prime Minister and the foreign secretary of the United Kingdom?

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition will realize, all I could possibly do is to deal in generalities and not with specific subjects. However, I think hon. members in general will join me in expressing satisfaction that the Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan, and the foreign secretary, Mr. Lloyd, visited Ottawa before proceeding to Washington, thereby enabling these two statesmen to place before the Canadian government the views they intend to explore with the President of the United States.

The private talks which the Minister of Public Works and I had with them, and the discussions which took place at the meeting of the cabinet, re-emphasized the identity of the aims of the United Kingdom and Canada, and as well illustrated that intimacy and the value of the partnership which exists between the two governments.

In general the meetings were concerned with an examination of the questions of Germany, Berlin, and European security. They began with a comprehensive review of the 10-day visit they recently made to the Soviet union, and outlined the discussions which have taken place between them and Mr. Khrushchev; and I think just this general review indicated most clearly that those conversations and talks had been valuable. They gave an opportunity for a first hand impression of the Soviet position, and they enabled Mr. Macmillan to make clear beyond any doubt that there is unity among the western powers in their determination to safeguard their legitimate interests in Europe. The most important result of the visit was that the Russians appear to have accepted, for discussion at least, a settlement by negotiation and not the threatened settlement by force which theretofore had been feared as the epitome of their views.

Mr. Macmillan also outlined the course of his consultations last week with President de Gaulle and Prime Minister Debré in Paris,

and with Chancellor Adenauer in Bonn. In the light of what he had learned in Moscow these discussions with the French and German leaders were most important, in that they led to a reaffirmation of western solidarity as well as advancing western preparations for the wider international negotiations which now seem likely to be held with the Soviet union in view of the statement made today by Mr. Khrushchev.

Our talks were largely in the nature of an exchange of information and a review of the German and Berlin problems and of the various proposals for a settlement of those problems now under study in western capitals and in NATO. I should emphasize that neither Mr. Macmillan nor I attempted to crystallize any British or Canadian position on specific questions under discussion. However, I might add that it is my belief that the United Nations might play some significant role in the solution of the Berlin problem, and that this phase deserves further and more careful study. I think it would be generally agreed that it was clear there was no essential difference in the British and Canadian assessments of the world situation or in the basic aims and policies of our two countries with regard to the complex questions of Germany, Berlin and European security.

I do not think I can add anything more to what I have said. I know the Leader of the Opposition, with his great experience in these matters, will realize that I can go no further than the outline I have just given the house.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I am not strictly in order, but in view of the importance of the subject and the length of the reply just given by the Prime Minister—and I am not complaining about that—I hope I may be permitted to say on behalf of the official opposition that we have listened with great satisfaction to a statement which indicates that the two governments are close together in what we on this side of the house think is a very sound approach to this important problem.

It is particularly gratifying to hear the Prime Minister say that there may be a way in which the United Nations can, in due course, play a part in this Berlin situation in a manner which would be helpful to peace and security.

**Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):** On behalf of this group, may I say that we are always pleased to know that governments are discussing, talking and negotiating. I support the remarks of the leader of the official opposition in respect to the United Nations.