

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Surely this is a question for the order paper.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**NATO—NON-AGGRESSION AGREEMENT WITH WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the reported suggestion by the Secretary of State for External Affairs that the NATO countries form a non-aggression pact with the Warsaw Pact countries, which suggestion was reportedly turned down by the Secretary General of NATO, could the Prime Minister tell us whether this suggestion is government policy?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from New Westminster had given me notice of his intention to ask a similar question. As I understand it, the Secretary of State for External Affairs did not make the proposal to the NATO Council or even to the NATO Secretary General—the proposal for a non-aggression pact between the Warsaw Pact countries and the NATO Pact countries—but he threw out the idea of the desirability and the possibility of such a pact.

This is a matter in which we, and I am sure all hon. Members, have been interested for a good many years. It is a matter of timing and practicability, and I gather there are members of NATO—and they seem to include the Secretary General—who think this is not perhaps the best moment to proceed with that idea.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF CANADIAN POSITION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a question and to apologize for not sending him notice, but I came down to the Chamber in a great hurry. In view of the recent rapid developments in the Dominican Republic—and no doubt the Government has information from its own and other sources—has the Prime Minister anything to report to the House as to the position of the Canadian Government with respect to these developments?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is much I can usefully report on the situation. Hon. Members will know that the Organization of

[Mr. Pugh.]

American States have taken action in regard to it. They have a committee in the Dominican Republic, and I am sure we were all very relieved that the Organization itself has intervened in this matter and that the peace keeping machinery is going to be broadened to become international O.A.S. machinery rather than that attached to any particular country. I think this is a very desirable development indeed.

The information we get shows that the two groups that consider themselves to be the government of the Dominican Republic are facing each other in hostility, and a little more than hostility at times. We have been approached by one of these groups headed, I believe, by General Caamano, for recognition. We do not consider that he has established a claim to recognition, and I think that is all I can say at the moment.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): As a supplementary question may I ask the Prime Minister whether he has received any information from the government of the United States to substantiate the claim that the forces of Colonel Caamano, which are seeking to re-establish the elected government of the Dominican Republic, are indeed communist controlled and communist dominated?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker, I had no definitive information that they are communist controlled or dominated. Certainly they have communists in their—what shall I say—controlling group, but with respect to the extent of the control by communists I am not able to give any definitive evidence.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the Prime Minister said he had received no evidence. If the Prime Minister has received evidence since he made his statement on Thursday last, could he tell us what that evidence is?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, we have received evidence that there are indeed communists in the directing group who are controlling that particular—I was going to call it a government—that particular group seeking governmental recognition. I am not in a position to assess whether or not this infiltration of these communists constitutes control of this group.

Mr. R. W. Prittie (Burnaby-Richmond): Did the Prime Minister base his information upon Canadian sources in the country, or is this from the U.S. State Department?