

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 2, 1969

The house met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Third report of standing committee on justice and legal affairs—Mr. André Ouellet (Papineau).

Fifteenth report of Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, in French and in English—Mr. Gaston Clermont (Gatineau).

[Editor's Note: The text of the foregoing reports appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[English]

EASTER RECESS

ADJOURNMENT APRIL 2 TO APRIL 14—FAILURE TO MAKE STATEMENT ON NATO—REQUEST FOR HOUSING REPORT

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council) moved:

That when the house adjourns at the conclusion of the sitting on Wednesday, April 2, 1969, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, April 14, 1969, at 2:00 p.m.,

Provided always that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker, after consultation with Her Majesty's Government, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, Mr. Speaker may give notice that he is so satisfied, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice, and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time, and

That, if Mr. Speaker is unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Deputy Speaker or the Deputy Chairman of Committees shall act in his stead for the purpose of this order.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the motion to adjourn today for the Easter recess is a sensible one, but I rise on behalf of my colleagues and myself to protest as vigorously as I can against the fact that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has not carried out a hope which all

of us had, namely that before the house adjourned for the recess he would inform parliament as to the decisions of the government on some aspects of the foreign policy and defence review, particularly with respect to Canada's role in NATO.

The Prime Minister has emphasized on a number of occasions that this decision of the government had to be made and had to be announced at least before if not on the day of the meeting of the Council of NATO in Washington, which I think will be on April 10. Since we have not got any statement today it obviously means that the announcement about the policy will be made during the parliamentary recess. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is another example of the cavalier way in which the Prime Minister and his colleagues are treating the House of Commons and parliament.

This is where so important a matter as an announcement of the decision on the policy of Canada's role in NATO ought to be made, so that representatives of other parties in the house may have an opportunity to express their views about the policy on which the government has decided.

I fully appreciate, and I think every other member of the house does, that it is a matter of great importance and that the cabinet had to have time to consider it. But let me remind you, sir, and other members of the house and the people of Canada that this blessed review of foreign and defence policies has gone on for months and that there have been discussions and conferences and arguments for God knows how long.

Last December 4, as recorded at page 3485 of *Hansard*, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) asked some questions on this matter, to which the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) replied. During one of his replies he said:

After the review is completed the intention is to publish a white paper, which would then of course be open for debate.

We have had no white paper. We have had no indication as to what the government policy is. We are all to recess for Easter without hearing that policy, and that policy will be announced outside parliament by the Prime Minister, in front of the television cameras or