

NATO

from the threat or use of force "in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations"—

[Translation]

Now, at the time of the foundation of that Organization, the U.S.S.R. strongly opposed the initiative and exerted all possible pressures to disrupt it, but this could only strengthen its hope of winning over some countries signatories to the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, now, in 1969, the U.S.S.R. seems to be reaching its goal, by means of trade agreements or as a result of the attitude of the member states, and it is succeeding, little by little, in getting various countries to withdraw their forces.

For instance, France, which is directly involved, as a neighbour of West Germany, where the troops are stationed, has withdrawn its own forces. It remains a member of NATO, but has almost no men outside its territory.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that Canada, at the present time, is facing a stalemate. We are asked to withdraw our troops from Germany in order to meet the wish of the U.S.S.R.

● (4:50 p.m.)

On the other hand, the United States contend that forces must be kept in West Germany, in case of aggression. The core of the problem lies in the fact that several European countries are afraid to see the reunification of Germany.

We were told that in Russia, in 1964, when a Canadian parliamentary delegation had accepted an invitation from the Kremlin. They have a deadly fear of the reunification of Germany. France feels the same way.

In Canada, we do not know what to think about our role in NATO. As the leader of the New Democratic party, Mr. Douglas, was saying a moment ago, the Prime Minister tells us: perhaps we will withdraw our forces, and again perhaps we will not withdraw them.

Mr. Lewis: Reduce our forces.

Mr. Caouette: Reduce them, but eventually withdraw them. That is the objective that the government is trying to achieve.

Mr. Lewis: No.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, they want to reduce our forces, but in what sense? The Leader of the Opposition, I believe, asked whether we were to withdraw 12 men from our NATO force.

Mr. Speaker, one thing is sure: Russia wants us to reduce our forces as much as possible and the United States are against it. That is the situation where the Canadian government finds itself.

The Prime Minister does not want to displease anybody, therefore, he says today that we will do something, that we should adapt ourselves to present conditions; that our foreign policy should no longer be directed by our military policy, but vice-versa.

In the past, the army brass used to tell departments, the government, how they should act, and the government obediently followed those suggestions and dictates.

Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister just said, we must revise our policy of participation in NATO. The Prime Minister tells us that from now on the objectives of Canada must be peace and justice in the world.

I for one wonder whether we really need to keep forces in Germany and in all NATO's member countries in Europe. I know that some countries wish their troops to remain over there. They are not interested in bringing them home. In Germany, our soldiers are actually on vacation, which costs a great deal of money to Canadian taxpayers.

I know why those soldiers do not want to come back to Canada. They are wondering what will happen to them here. "Will we become veterans? Will we have to learn a new trade? We have been in the army for the last 10, 12 or perhaps 20 years, and we have been living in Europe for five years. What are we going to do back in Canada?" Those are question they are asking themselves.

There is one fact, however, and that is that once they are back in Canada, we shall not be able to throw them on the street. We shall have to continue to pay them. As far as the Department of Defence is concerned, it will not be able to save a cent. However, the Prime Minister will be able to say that we have reduced our forces overseas.

Canada alone could not, even with its armaments and its forces overseas, maintain peace in case of aggression. With their peashooters and their sling-shots, I do not think that our forces are very efficient. In my opinion, peace and justice are commendable purposes, but before preaching them up to the world, we should see to it that they prevail in our own country, and set an example for the rest of the world.

U.S.S.R. is not seeking to gain ground by means of weapons, but rather by its ideology. When we visited Russia, we saw a subway