

That is a new committee of ten that had been set up. He is also reported as having said this:

The time has come for the west to accept Russian protestations of sincerity at face value in order to find a way to end the armaments race.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that optimistic speculation about Mr. Khrushchev's or the Soviet union's honesty and sincerity in disarmament talks is irrelevant and might be dangerous because of the confusion that it might create. Mr. Khrushchev's sincerity, as indeed the sincerity of the west, can only be tested by concrete proposals and his and indeed our reaction to them. Mr. Khrushchev can be perfectly sincere in advocating disarmament on his terms but that may not help either peace or disarmament very much. Mr. Khrushchev can be perfectly sincere at New York at the United Nations in advocating total disarmament in four years and equally sincere in arguing that the reduction of armaments cannot be conditioned on the kind of control and inspection which alone would make any agreement either effective or safe.

We are beginning a new move for disarmament through a new agency. I can only hope that this disarmament initiative will have more success than unfortunately the previous one had. The Secretary of State for External Affairs is quoted as saying in Paris on December 22:

Canada is going to have a heavy responsibility in connection with the discussion on disarmament.

That is true. But I would point out that Canada has had that heavy responsibility for years, most recently perhaps in the work of a United Nations subcommittee of five which did its best, without success, before this new committee of ten was set up. This preparatory work of disarmament has been going on for decades. There is nothing new about it. It has been going on for fourteen years in the United Nations, and for many, many years before that in the League of Nations.

Therefore, we cannot help but wonder what new steps can be taken. Has the Canadian government any new proposal that can be put forward, any new idea that can be advanced, or any new approaches that can be made?

The experience of the last twenty five or thirty years—and I have, in one form or another, been connected with this disarmament movement ever since the first League of Nations conference on disarmament—has shown that it is the basic political attitudes that determine the progress, if any, that can be made in regard to the reduction of armaments. It is not easy to find anything in basic political attitudes which would justify at the present time any reduction of the west's defensive strength which is not met by a

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similar reduction on the other side, and which is not policed effectively by some international agency.

It would be unwise, indeed very dangerous—Mr. Khrushchev's speech in Moscow the other day underlined this—if we took any unilateral action in this field. There is no room, I think, for that kind of reduction; but that does not mean that there is not a desirability for some change in the form of the defensive military strength of the west, and I may have something to say about that, Mr. Speaker, a little later. The Secretary of State for External Affairs put it to the Canadian Press on December 16 in this way:

There is no inconsistency between the maintenance of a high degree of military preparedness and Canada's strong desire to reach an acceptable disarmament agreeable with the Soviet bloc.

Then he went on, and I agree with him:

The west must not let its guard down.

He also said, according to the Canadian Press of Ottawa, on his return from Paris on December 23 that our military commitments in Europe would be reduced. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that thought certainly is required as to whether the nature of our defence commitments should not be altered. I would go further and say that the continuance in their present form of our NATO military commitments in Europe should depend, first, on whether, after careful examination, they might not be changed so as to make them more effective for peace and collective security and, second, on developments inside the NATO alliance itself, which certainly might affect, as I see it, our NATO commitments.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that there is ground for real anxiety on this score, and that that anxiety has not been removed by the recent meetings of the NATO council in Paris. Again the minister is full of optimism with regard to the importance of those meetings, I might say an optimism which is not shared by a lot of other people. For instance, the minister said on December 18, according to the Canadian Press, that NATO worries, particularly among the small powers, about consultation have been met. I hope the minister is right, but he will forgive me for being a little sceptical, after a good deal of experience myself with NATO, whether finally, for all time, our worries with regard to consultation have been met.

Mr. Speaker, I think the time has now come when Canada should make clear that if she is to continue to participate in Europe in a defence coalition of balanced collective forces—and it should be just that—then the same collective obligations should apply to every member of the coalition, all of whose