

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

is the minister in a position to say whether the government intends to proclaim this legislation in 1949?

**Mr. G. J. McIlraith (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Trade and Commerce):** This question involves a pronouncement of government policy, and I am afraid I shall have to leave it for the minister.

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

## CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed from Thursday, February 3, consideration of the motion of Mr. D. F. Brown for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Drew, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Coldwell.

**Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, my first words in this debate, indeed my first words in any debate in this house, must be those of appreciation for the privilege of representing the riding of Algoma East. In this riding live friendly and industrious people. It is a riding of great undeveloped resources, of beauty of lake and stream and mountain, which makes it a tourist's paradise. I have been given a very difficult task in succeeding, as member for Algoma East, a man who has now been translated to another place and who held for so long the confidence of his constituents. I shall do my best, Mr. Speaker, to follow his example, both in service to his constituents and in his ability to sit here for so long a time. I already realize there is a connection between those two things.

I should also like to add my very warm congratulations to those that have gone before, to the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. I assume there will be a debate on external policy later in this session and possibly a debate devoted more particularly to the ratification of the North Atlantic pact. Much, therefore, of what I should like to say in regard to external affairs generally will have to be reserved for those occasions. Today, I should like to attempt to do two things. In the first place, I should like to deal with some of the points that have been raised in this debate concerning international matters. Secondly, I should like to make a few general observations on the international picture with particular reference to communism and the proposed Atlantic pact, both of which are mentioned in the speech from the throne.

The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) in his speech suggested, if I correctly understood him, that it was a mistake for Canada to become a member of the United

Nations, and that the reference in the speech from the throne to the Atlantic pact constituted an admission by the government of this error in judgment. If I interpret him correctly, he seems to think that the weakness of the United Nations is due to some fault in its structure, and that the members of his group discerned the inadequacy of the United Nations when the charter was signed. No one claims or has ever claimed, Mr. Speaker, that the United Nations charter is a perfect document.

On many occasions this government has expressed the hope that the United Nations will be improved in many respects. The basic difficulty, however, which the United Nations encounters at the moment is not constitutional but political. The unsolved problems which divide the soviet union from the rest of the world today make it impossible, under the present circumstances, for the organization to fulfil all the purposes, or indeed most of the purposes, for which it was designed. It is precisely for this reason that the government is now giving its support to the discussions which are taking place in regard to the North Atlantic pact. By that fact we do not, however, admit that we were wrong in signing the United Nations charter in 1945 or that we are wrong in supporting the United Nations in 1949.

The hon. member for Peace River raised certain other points to which I may just refer, though I am afraid I cannot deal with them in detail. He stated that the unfortunate situation in Berlin, at the present time blockaded, with no corridor leading to the west, could not have been the result of stupidity some years ago, but he suggested it might have been, in part at least, due to the influence of perfidious civil servants. I think those were the words he used. These civil servants, he implied, may have been responsible at that time for keeping Great Britain and the United States out of Berlin and permitting the Russians to enter ahead of them before the end of the war. It has been pointed out on numerous occasions, Mr. Speaker, that that particular decision which resulted in the occupation of Berlin by the soviet union was made not by civil servants, perfidious or otherwise, but by the supreme commander himself, General Eisenhower.

The hon. member also referred somewhat critically to his experience in Germany when he witnessed the dismantling of a steel plant which was going to Yugoslavia. The house will recognize of course that, since Canada is not an occupying power in Germany, we are not directly concerned with these matters which fall within the province of Great Britain, France and the United States. I believe the hon. member said this was a matter about which I should be informing