

Recent Developments in Disarmament

Mr. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, represented Canada at the July meetings of the Disarmament Commission held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Commission met to consider the report on the disarmament negotiations, held this spring in London, submitted by its Sub-Committee which comprised Canada, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

Mr. Martin, whose responsibilities include the co-ordination of civil defence in Canada, represented Canada at the session of the Sub-Committee held in New York during September and October of last year and at previous meetings of the Commission. He headed the Canadian delegation to the tenth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1955.

Recent developments in disarmament were reviewed by Mr. Martin in an address at the annual convention of Ontario Retail Pharmacists Association, held at Windsor, Ont., on June 18.

Excerpts from Mr. Martin's address follow:

... It will be recalled that during the past few years, United Nations efforts to achieve some measure of agreement on the reduction and control of armaments have been centred in the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in the work of which I have had occasion to participate. This Sub-Committee, which is made up of the representatives of five countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, and Canada—has now held four series of private talks, the latest taking place in London earlier this spring. In all, no less than 86 individual meetings have been held. The forthcoming New York meeting of the Disarmament Commission itself is for the purpose of receiving and considering the report of the Sub-Committee's work.

While the results of these prolonged discussions have in some respects been disappointing, they have demonstrated that there is substantial agreement among the Western nations as to the provisions which should be included in any satisfactory disarmament scheme.

At the same time, they have provided evidence that the Soviet Union does not yet appear willing to accept measures which the Western nations consider essential to the successful implementation of even preliminary steps towards disarmament. In particular, I have in mind the Soviet Union's negative reaction to the proposal put forward

by President Eisenhower providing for joint aerial inspection and the exchange of blueprints for military installations.

In the past ten days, the inadequacy of the Soviet Union's position on the matter of controls has been given added emphasis. In letters addressed to the Heads of Government of the other four powers represented on the Disarmament Sub-Committee, the Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Nicolai Bulganin, has called on the Western nations to follow the Soviet Union's "initiative" of May 14 by embarking on unilateral reductions in the strength of their armed forces. Such an action, the Soviet Premier has suggested, would be "of decisive importance" in leading to the creation of conditions more favourable to the achievement of a universal disarmament program.

While these proposed cuts are to be welcomed as far as they go, this invitation would be more meaningful, it seems to me, if we had some concrete evidence that the announced reduction in Soviet forces would actually take place and that it would, in fact, be the expression of a genuine desire to follow a more moderate policy in the future and to renounce aggressive designs. Even if Soviet forces were to be reduced in numbers, the Soviet Union might still be left in possession of forces vastly superior to those available to the Western nations. And there would be no assurance that the demobilization would be