

NATO

For reasons then of change, and for reasons involving the security of Canada and the stability of world order, let us waste no time this evening in approving the motion before us.

THE MINISTRY

RESIGNATION OF HON. PAUL HELLYER—
TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. J. E. Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, may I have unanimous consent to revert to motions?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Walker: Earlier today the Prime Minister indicated that correspondence relating to the resignation of the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) as Minister of Transport would be tabled. I, therefore, would now like to table copies of that correspondence in French and in English.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY
ORGANIZATIONMOTION FOR APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT
POLICY

The house resumed consideration of the motion of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau):

That this house supports the government's policy of continued Canadian participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the intention of the government, in consultation with Canada's allies, to take early steps to bring about a planned and phased reduction of the size of Canadian forces in Europe.

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently suggested in two speeches, one in Calgary and one yesterday in this chamber, that foreign policy should dictate defence policy and not vice versa. I agree. I should like to demonstrate that, instead of contributing to our foreign policy objectives, continued membership in NATO at this time serves mainly as a hindrance.

First of all, I would suggest four objectives of foreign policy which I think most Canadians could agree upon. First is the preservation of international peace, particularly but not exclusively between the nuclear powers. The second is the provision of assistance to the developing nations of the world. The third is the fostering and protecting of democratic societies. The fourth is the maintenance of our national sovereignty.

NATO came into being 20 years ago because the economically and militarily weak nations

[Mr. Gillespie.]

of western Europe felt quite justifiably a threat coming from the Soviet Union. Canada was one of the initiators of NATO. We saw the threat of the Soviet Union and appropriately responded by helping to found NATO. At that time, we had both the financial and military resources that were badly needed by our western European friends. However, now, 20 years after, the North Atlantic world has changed in two important respects. First, western Europe is strong both militarily and financially. In short, the countries in western Europe can, in the main, look after their military needs.

The second point is that it has been recognized for some time that the main deterrent to Soviet expansion in western Europe comes from the nuclear capability of the United States of America. We all know that the United States is not going to withdraw from NATO. What then are the logical conclusions Canadians should draw? The first is that militarily we are no longer needed. The Prime Minister indicated this in his speech yesterday and the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) this afternoon showed the logical implications of his own conclusions in that regard.

The western Europeans are quite capable of replacing our excellent but small military contribution. The only reason for remaining in NATO is, as the Prime Minister again suggested, that membership would be politically advantageous to Canada. It is my view that continued membership in NATO would have in fact a negative and not a positive effect upon our political objectives.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Let us consider the elements I have mentioned one at a time. The first is the preservation of international peace. I suggest Canada would be in a much better position to take meaningful initiatives in attempting to achieve an acceptable disarmament plan in Europe. It is illusory to believe this can be done effectively within NATO. Of course, there is a non-military clause in the charter, which has been there for 20 years, but does anyone seriously think it will be implemented? Does anyone seriously believe that the military figures who dominate NATO will initiate disarmament proposals? Just last week NATO turned down an offer by the Warsaw Pact countries to discuss disarmament.

Quite apart from western Europe, we would be much more acceptable in the world