

way as quickly as possible by setting January 18 as the date for a preliminary meeting in Washington and January 25 as the date on which the Western team of five countries would begin their actual work; secondly, we delegated to the Government of France the task of approaching the five Eastern members of the Disarmament Committee with a proposal to have the full Committee meet in Geneva on or about March 15. On December 28 the Soviet Ambassador in Ottawa delivered a note agreeing to the Western proposal.

The fact that the East-West discussions on disarmament are to commence at a relatively early date is most gratifying to the Canadian Government, which has consistently urged that delays be avoided lest the momentum which had developed on both sides in favour of disarmament be lost. The new negotiations, we consider, will open in an atmosphere more propitious, and therefore more hopeful, than any similar disarmament negotiations undertaken in the past decade or more.

For example they will take place against the background of important developments in the disarmament field at the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly. There both the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union advanced comprehensive disarmament proposals, the latter's including for the first time an apparent willingness to accept the principle of inspection and control. In addition a resolution was adopted unanimously which expressed the hope that measures leading towards the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control would be worked out in detail and agreed upon in the shortest possible time. Finally, they will take place in the improved atmosphere which, for want of a better phrase, is sometimes called the "Camp David spirit."

It is perfectly clear from past experience that mutual confidence is an essential prerequisite to successful disarmament negotiations and I feel that the present mood in international affairs offers a quite unique opportunity to come to grips with this problem.

East-West Summit Meetings

The time at my disposal is too brief to go into other aspects of East-West negotiations, but I might add that Canada welcomes the fact that there is to be not just one East-West summit meeting but a series, to take place in succession in the respective capitals of the participants. We have long favoured a series of summit meetings for a number of reasons; for example because complex questions of international security could patently not be settled in one brief meeting; further, because there is intrinsic value in keeping alive the discussions between the great powers; and also because one all-or-nothing summit conference could easily raise false expectations in the public mind which would almost certainly be disappointed.