

lar participation in two world wars was to quite an extent at arm's length from the people. We spoke of our troops going "overseas". The wars were "over there."

I think it is fair to say that in general our Canadian attitude may have been that expressed by Sir Winston Churchill in his famous phrase about "the New World coming in God's good time to the help of the old." There are reasons, of course, for the change—and I would call it a sudden change—in Canadian public opinion about the importance of Canadian involvement in world affairs. We know the reasons. They are easy to trace. In the forties there was that apparently inexorable movement of the Iron Curtain westward across Europe, a movement which I think we should never forget was stopped in its tracks by NATO. Since the formation of NATO not one single foot of new territory of Western Europe has gone behind the Iron Curtain, and I am sure the people of Czechoslovakia today fervently wish that the NATO front line had swung around their country from West Germany prior to some recent events.

It amazes me that we still have isolationists among us who tell us that our membership in NATO is merely a European involvement. They forget that those initials stand for North Atlantic Treaty Organization and that the front line stretches from Turkey to our Canadian shores. Another reason for the increasing Canadian awareness of our involvement in world affairs is Cuba. We woke up one morning to find that hostile nuclear missiles were located in an area close to Canada's own shores, where many Canadians have spent winter holidays and in an area where many Canadians have homes. Above all, there came to Canadians the realization that the cornerstone of our foreign defence policy today is the fact that if a war breaks out between the two most mutually suspicious nations in the world, who happen also to be the two most powerful, the battleground will not be the Low Countries, the Balkans or Belgium, the small countries of Europe, but big Canada.

I suggest that against this background it is worth considering the increasing importance of the role that parliamentarians can play and are playing in helping to solve today's world problems. Sometimes I seem to hear the people of Canada saying to parliamentarians, "Get into this international business; don't leave it all to the government; don't leave it all to professional diplomats." I sincerely believe that recent developments—and I

stress the word recent—in the activities of Canadian parliamentarians in world affairs constitutes possibly a third channel of action and communication in this area. The first and second channels are, of course, government-to-government relations, and the professional diplomatic relations.

There are limitations, of course, to what parliamentarians can do, but I would suggest that there is also a very great potential which is only just being realized and which in the future will become increasingly more important and may even in time make a more important contribution to world peace than what is being done in the other channels. This is evident in reports such as we have had on the IPU. In my view that report is worth reading and re-reading because to those who have been at some of these international conferences it is amazing the extent to which the same basic problems are discussed and the same basic solutions arrived at.

As I have said, I regard these as a recent development. It is rather interesting to look at the history of these parliamentary conferences. The IPU itself is 56 years old but the conference on which we had the report and which we are discussing today was only the ninth in which Canada has participated since that long and inexplicable break of 33 years from 1927. I think we ceased to participate in 1927 and did not take up our membership again until 1960.

Hon. Mr. Martin: How old is the organization?

Hon. Mr. Grosart: The meeting which we are discussing is the 56th, and I presume these meetings have been held annually since then.

Hon. Mr. Dessureault: It was founded in 1889.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: The honourable Senator Dessureault tells us that the organization began in 1889. But to support my suggestion that the present level of Canadian interest is something very recent, I point to that long break. We were affected in those years by continental isolationism which is something to which Canadians living on this great land mass, close to our American neighbours, are always susceptible. We have over the years looked to the Monroe Doctrine as protecting us. We looked to the close territorial and eco-