

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

that it would be reconvened in January. Has it disappeared? The problems they did not deal with last November have not disappeared, nor have the promises made by the Prime Minister and the government concerning them.

Then there are the very few lines covering those matters that come under the jurisdiction of my friend the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Smith). There are at the beginning of the speech the customary references to foreign relations, but they could hardly be less adequate or less informative. Four lines of a very general character indeed are devoted to our foreign relations, to the search for peace; that is less space than is given to the establishment of a harbour commission at the head of the lakes important, of course, as that matter is.

There is in the speech no reference whatever to the United Nations, to NATO which has just finished an important council meeting in Copenhagen, to the government's attitude toward the abolition of nuclear tests, or to the summit conference. There is no indication of whether, in the government's view, the dangers to peace are decreasing or increasing. Of course I do not expect the speech from the throne to go into these matters in any detail, but surely we had the right to expect some indication of awareness of the importance of these matters, some views concerning them, in a speech of such a lengthy character as the one before us.

Similarly on another matter of the most immediate and greatest importance, namely that of national defence. There we have three lines to the effect that we should maintain, in co-operation with our allies, armed forces adequate to deter any potential aggression. That is all we find. There is no indication of the necessity which has become so apparent lately of a complete re-examination of national defence policy in the light of recent developments, centred around the conquest of outer space, missile development, and particularly the possession by a potential enemy of an intercontinental ballistic missile which will soon—if it has not already done so—make our existing defence arrangements on this continent as inadequate as the Maginot line even though they may have been, when planned and first put into motion, adequate for the conditions of that time. Nor is there in this speech any suggestion that in the light of these developments which have already affected the deployment and the character of the forces of other NATO countries, there is any need for a reassessment of the nature and scope of our contribution to NATO.

It is to be hoped, Mr. Speaker,—and I feel confident that this hope will be realized—

[Mr. Pearson.]

that an opportunity will be provided in this house very shortly for discussions on external affairs and on national defence, at which time these matters can be gone into in that kind of detail which will reflect their vital importance, an importance which is not even suggested in the speech from the throne.

The international situation, however—and surely it is not possible to deny this—remains tense and dangerous. Perhaps it is no worse than it was when the House of Commons met last October, but certainly there has been no improvement significant enough to give us any cause for comfort. On the other hand, the consequences of failure to keep the peace are now even greater than they were six months ago. It is true that the western coalition has developed a powerful deterrent against aggression. It is true that that remains essential. But that simply means that peace, even of the kind which we now have, rests on power so terrible that neither side dares to use it. If we do not soon find a better basis for peace than that we cannot expect indefinitely to escape destruction.

Meanwhile the diplomatic manoeuvring goes on, the slow and devious progress to a conference at the summit. If that conference meets and tries to deal with concrete complicated problems in the atmosphere which now exists between the two sides to the cold war and without satisfactory preliminary political and diplomatic discussions, a conference of that kind is almost certain to do more harm than good.

It is fairly clear, however, that public opinion now demands some kind of summit meeting. The western powers and this government, in view of that fact, I think are well advised to press ahead with preparations. My own view, for what it may be worth, is that the best kind of meeting at this time would be a short and informal one between the heads of the two most powerful nations, namely the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., where views can be exchanged without benefit, or perhaps I should say without handicap, of an agenda and where the effort at least can be made to clear away some misunderstandings and to ease fears through a personal contact. At this moment I merely repeat what I said a moment ago, that I hope there will soon be a chance to discuss these matters in this house—these matters which are of such fundamental importance—in greater detail.

May I now say a few words on one or two aspects of our domestic problems. Two of them I think are perhaps uppermost in our minds, and those two problems are more closely connected in Canada than in perhaps