

*External Affairs*

that the right of free access, a right which the occupying powers were granted at the end of the war in return for very great concessions made to the Russian side, must be maintained and cannot be unilaterally abrogated. But, Mr. Speaker, standing firm is not enough, as the minister himself indicated. Indeed, he supported his statement by reading from the NATO council communique of last December.

So the question arises, when do the risks from immobility exceed those from flexibility? A refusal to yield on Berlin which is justified must surely be coupled with a demonstrated willingness not only to consider proposals but to initiate proposals for an agreed Berlin settlement within, as the minister pointed out, the framework of a German settlement which itself must be within the framework of a European security settlement. I think it should be made perfectly clear to the other side by the western powers most concerned that that includes a willingness on our part to talk about disengagement. I know that disengagement can mean many things. I think it was a mistake to dismiss so quickly the Rapacki plan which was one form of disengagement, a plan which did not seem to me to be satisfactory to accomplish the purpose it may have had in mind but which perhaps might have been used as a basis for discussion. I do not think that disengagement would be too high a price to pay if it could be brought about in a way which really would ease tensions and strengthen security on the European continent.

All I am suggesting now is that Canadian policy should encourage a willingness to discuss disengagement and should encourage the putting forward of proposals to that end. When Mr. Dulles visited Europe a few weeks ago just before his illness—and it is an indication of the courage of the man that he made the visit at a time when he must have been suffering a good deal—he said on his return that his visit reconfirmed the unity and the firmness of the western position. I quote from his statement:

We are resolved that our position in and access to West Berlin shall be preserved.

I certainly do not quarrel with that. He went on:

We are in general agreement as to the procedures we shall follow if physical means are invoked to interfere with our rights in this respect.

It would not be proper, of course, to ask what those procedures would be but one cannot help but wonder on what this unity and firmness is based. One cannot help but wonder what these procedures are on which the four western powers are united. It is certainly appropriate that the Canadian government should know all about them and

I hope they do because this is no occasion for keeping any member of the western alliance in the dark in respect of measures of this kind which could have such far-reaching consequences.

It would be interesting to know—perhaps the minister will be able to tell us this—whether the unity to which Mr. Dulles referred includes the Federal Republic of Germany, whether it is based on a recognition or a refusal to recognize a transfer of authority to control access to Berlin from the Russian government to the East German government, something which the Russians have said they are going to do by May 26 of this year, not so very far away.

If such recognition is then laid down by the East German communist government as a condition for passage through or passage over the corridor, where are we then? Are the powers most concerned agreed as to what they will do if a convoy on land or in the air is interfered with? Mr. Khrushchev has made some ominous statements in Moscow as to what he thinks will happen if any effort is made on the part of the west to run a convoy through in spite of interference.

The minister said this afternoon that Canada's responsibility in this matter is clear, and I agree. As he pointed out, it was established in London some years ago. It is because our responsibility is clear, it is because our commitment in this matter as a NATO member is clear that the government has a right to know every plan and every intention of the four countries most concerned and this parliament has a right to know everything that the government feels that it is appropriate to tell it. We have no right to ask for any more than that in a matter of such grave importance. That makes the situation very different indeed from the last time we had to face the situation of a blockade of Berlin which was met by an airlift conducted by two powers alone. At that time Canada had no special responsibility, no special commitment, and Canada was told absolutely nothing in advance of the decision which brought about the airlift to meet the blockade. We were told about it after the decision had been taken. The situation is very different now. We know in advance, presumably what may happen and we accept—I certainly do not quarrel with it—the responsibility that goes with that kind of commitment.

The minister went on to talk about the United Nations assembly. He made the best case he could for the results achieved by the recent assembly of the United Nations, and so would I if I had been in his place. It did, of course, accomplish some useful things;

[Mr. Pearson.]