

Statement by Mr. Claxton

When NATO was begun five years ago it was faced with a tremendous task.

Just consider what has to be done in planning and building up the defence forces of a single country and then imagine how much more is involved when this has to be done through the voluntary co-operation of fourteen sovereign states.

Let me tell you, very briefly, what has been done. We set up staffs on an international basis. We then had to work out standard systems of communications and battle procedures and train our forces in their use, so that they could work and fight together. We had to establish a great system of military training areas. We had to set up in Europe alone more than a hundred airfields. Then we had to get to know and like each other so that we could work together in an effective group of military teams.

All that has been done, and it really is a miracle of achievement in international co-operation.

Don't think for a moment though that any one of us concerned with this thinks that we have got enough, but we are all agreed that what has been done changes the whole picture.

Today the NATO forces are strong enough to be a deterrent of aggression. In all this Canada has taken an active part in organization, in planning and in standardization. In the contribution of forces we have met every one of our commitments and done this generally in advance of the planned dates. There are now twelve squadrons of Sabre jet fighters fully operational in Europe and England and they are a formidable fighting force. The First Canadian Infantry Brigade is equipped, trained and ready in Germany. Some thirty-six ships have already been committed to NATO for the defence of our coasts and the protection of convoys in the North Atlantic.

There is nothing second rate about our NATO forces and every Canadian can be proud of our contribution on sea, land and in the air.

This has all been a great effort by the Canadian people for the defence of Canada as well as to preserve peace.

We must, we will keep up and succeed in the objectives set out in the terms of the North Atlantic Treaty five years ago today. The Treaty said that the member nations -

"seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area;"

"are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security."

That is what we are doing in NATO.