

It is true that the Soviet bloc is refusing to take part and to co-operate in this great endeavour. But the United Nations is still an indispensable piece of political machinery and cannot be replaced by any international organization on a more limited basis. These other organizations, however, under Article 51 of the covenant have their value; and I suggest that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the most important of them.

The Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has recently met at Lisbon, and I should like to give, in as great detail as possible, the results of that meeting. Those results, in the form in which they have already appeared, do not seem at present to command the acceptance of all members of the House. Indeed, it would be, I suppose, surprising if they did.

The hon. member for Middlesex East (Mr. White) the other night thought that at the recent Council meeting--and I quote his words--we were "overemphasizing the military aspect." The hon. member for Peel has been quoted as saying that at the NATO Council meeting at Lisbon we acted too small and talked too big; while the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar seems to think that we might have acted too big.

Let us have a sober look at what NATO has been doing. It is of course possible, indeed it is easy, to exaggerate the results of the Council meeting at Lisbon. It was the most effective and successful meeting we have had, in the sense that we reached unanimous decisions on matters which had been before us at previous meetings, but which we were not able to settle then.

At the same time we should not, I think, exaggerate the importance of what, after all, are only decisions which are yet to be converted into action. The prestige of NATO must not be based upon illusions. One easy and tempting illusion these days is that a resolution at an international conference is always the same as the result. A resolution is a decision to act; but it is action which produces results. Yet it remains true that if we had not taken these decisions at Lisbon--the ones we did take--the parliamentary and popular decisions which we now expect, and which will lead to action, would not have been possible.

Now, what were these decisions? The first, and the one that has commanded the most attention, deals with the military or defence programme which we accepted there. The collective military goal for NATO, in the sense of total figures, had never been announced by NATO in any concrete form prior to Lisbon, although our own Canadian contribution to NATO had been put very definitely before this House last October, and accepted by the House; and the general NATO policy has, I think, been pretty fully explained in the House--certainly explained as fully as in the legislatures of any of the other members of the Organization.

But the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), speaking on this subject the other night, seemed a little uneasy because not enough information was being given out. He made this statement:

"We now come to the situation this year--"