

Inter-Parliamentary Union

dure worth testing. I want to have most of the time today for the delegates to the Helsinki conference, but if I can exercise the privilege that is mine because I am up first, may I say that one of the proposals contained in the Final Act of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on European Co-operation and Security in Helsinki has very great relevance to Canada. It reads:

Carrying out, in a humanitarian spirit, negotiations at the governmental level with a view to eliminating the problems posed by the separation of members of families seeking to be reunited;

There are other parts of this resolution or proposal that other hon. members will discuss more extensively, but I think that that resolution or proposal has a peculiarly Canadian mix, if I can put it that way.

I noticed the other day in the statistics from the Department of Manpower and Immigration that this country has had over 10 million immigrants since 1867. About one half of our population is of immigrant stock. In many instances, this means that families have been separated and, therefore, it is a peculiarly Canadian wish that the nations of Europe agree with us on a formula for re-uniting many of these families. That was one of the proposals of the Canadian government at the government level. I think it is particularly apt that Canadian parliamentarians speaking for this chamber were able to bring that proposal forward and have it as part of the Final Act of the Helsinki conference.

The resolution is in my name, Mr. Speaker, but there are three parliamentarians who are delegates of the Canadian branch of the parliamentary union. I want to reiterate my thanks to those who were responsible for this first step in the conference of parliamentary associations.

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to take part in this debate on the resolution of the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, note should be taken of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on European Co-operation and Security held in Helsinki, Finland, from January 26-31, 1973.

It was a special event for the Inter-Parliamentary Union to organize a regional conference for the discussion of European Co-operation and Security. Never before had the Inter-Parliamentary Union convened a regional conference or one with a limited topic. The decision was taken in April, 1972 at the spring meeting of the Union in Yaoundé, subject to confirmation at the annual conference in Rome in September. Finland offered to act as host, and the decision was taken to hold a Conference on European Co-operation and Security in Helsinki from November 10 to 15, 1972. At the Rome meeting, the West German delegation drew attention to the election to take place in Germany on November 19. In view of the central role of the Federal German Republic, it was decided at the Rome meeting of postpone the conference and to hold it on January 26 to 31, 1973.

Holding the conference in January was highly fortuitous because the inter-governmental preparatory discussions on security and co-operation in Europe had begun in late November. The representatives of the countries at that conference were mostly ambassadors. Although some of the essential ground had been cleared, talks were

[Mr. Fairweather.]

making slow progress. During the six days of meetings of the IPU conference, it proved to be possible to reach agreement on a major statement of objectives described as the Final Act of the conference. This included reaching general agreement on formulations to cover several issues which remained in contention in the inter-governmental talks already being held in Helsinki and at the Conference on Mutual Force Reductions which opened at the end of January in Vienna. Inevitably, therefore, the Final Act of the Helsinki Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference can be expected to have an immediate impact on the intergovernmental negotiations in both Helsinki and Vienna.

I might say that the countries represented at the conference were virtually all European countries whether or not they were members of IPU, and Canada and the United States were represented because of our keen interest and involvement, not only in security in Europe but in European culture, trade and the many other things that we have in common with the European countries that attended the conference. In addition to this, several countries which are members of IPU sent observers. Among them were Brazil, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Mongolia and others.

The organization of the conference was done in a very effective and efficient manner. The conference opened on January 26 with a formal ceremony at which addresses were made by President Urho Kekkonen, the President of the Republic of Finland, Mr. Johannes Virolainen, President of the Finnish group of the IPU, Mr. John Hall, first vice-president of the IPU Council and Mr. Leonid Kutakov, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations, who represented the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Virolainen was elected chairman of the conference.

All points of organization, which was the responsibility of the Finnish group, were of high, effective and efficient order. The Finnish parliament co-operated fully and the hospitality and other arrangements made for all delegations were excellent indeed. We were not only extended hospitality by the Finnish group and the Finnish parliament, but also by the president, the mayor of Helsinki, the government of Finland and many others.

• (1710)

Canada played an important part in this conference. Prior to the conference itself, the Canadian delegation was one of the very few western delegations to submit a draft resolution. This was on the issue of the uniting of families. At the opening of the conference, the Canadian delegation submitted a resolution on development assistance and its relevance to east-west relations. I had the honour of being one of the members of the delegation. The delegation consisted of three members—myself, the hon. member for York North (Mr. Danson) and the hon. member for Scarborough West (Mr. Harney). They spoke on those two Canadian working papers in the plenary session. Their speeches were of a very high order, and a credit to Canada. I had the honour of being selected as the nominal head of the Canadian delegation, and I took part in the work of the first committee. My colleagues took part in the work of committees two and three, respectively, which dealt with the two Canadian initiatives. They will be speaking more fully later on these questions and I,