

as an obstacle to good and friendly relations with non-communist countries.

The exchange of views with the representatives of all the legislative bodies were very frank and informative, and they justify the optimistic views I have about an eventual détente, as far as many satellites of the U.S.S.R. are concerned.

In connection with our NATO policy, it is interesting to know that the Czechoslovakians were not too impressed by the decision to decrease the number of our troops in Europe. They stated very emphatically that an overall reduction of the military strength of both the Warsaw Pact nations on the one side, and NATO members on the other, would be much more welcome and reassuring. They imply that the presence of the Canadian troops in Europe are rather a factor of objectivity in the policies of NATO, and they would not like the Canadian troops to be replaced, for instance, by German troops, for it is quite obvious to them that NATO cannot at present accept a reduction in its conventional forces, which are already much below the same conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact countries.

To conclude, honourable senators, I believe that these trips by Canadian parliamentarians to Strasbourg and Czechoslovakia have been useful and informative for all concerned. I am a strong believer in the principle of interdependence of nations and in the necessity of increased relations between all peace-loving people through bodies like the Council of Europe or parliamentary organizations. We should not expect too much too quickly from these bodies and from these visits, but we must nevertheless realize that the world situation would worsen rapidly without them.

Hon. John J. Connolly: May I ask the honourable senator a question, which perhaps he or the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Martin) may care to deal with.

As I understood Senator Flynn, the thrust of the work of the Council of Europe seems to be concerned mainly with the matter of fundamental freedoms and human rights. Would he say whether or not they engage themselves in discussing economic problems internationally as between their member states, as they do political problems that arise between them? Does this engage their attention as well?

Hon. Mr. Flynn: Maybe the Leader of the Government would be able to give a better reply, but I would say this. We have mentioned the Commission on Human Rights

because of the convention that has been signed by all member states. Therefore the work of the commission is very regular. That is why it appears as one of the main results achieved by the Council of Europe. Otherwise the Council of Ministers and the Consultative Assembly are constantly preoccupied with problems of economy and other matters, trying to define uniform policies in many fields where the co-operation of the member states is required. That is with respect to the commercial field.

I might also say this happens with regard to water pollution and all problems which in Europe cannot be isolated, cannot be dealt with by only one nation, because there are so many nations within such a limited territory. The need for unity of action in Europe is of course very obvious, and the council is concerned with all these problems that cannot be contained within the borders of one state.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I thank the honourable senator.

I should like to make a few remarks about this item on the Order Paper. I remember the first time I was invited to go to a meeting of the NATO parliamentarians, probably back in about 1958 or 1959. On the morning I left here I had a telegram from an official, who may have been the President of the Council of Europe but I am not sure. I do not know why I was chosen, but it asked whether I could arrange for a representative group from the Canadian delegation to attend a luncheon in Paris to discuss possible relations between Canada and the Council of Europe. I sought what advice I could get, with the result that Senator Louis Beaubien and I went—I think we were the only two.

I must say that I was quite impressed with what they proposed, but I was constrained to say, being supported in this by Senator Beaubien, that if Canadian parliamentarians joined every international organization proposed we would have great difficulty maintaining quora in our two Houses of Parliament. I also said that questions of cost and distance entered very largely into considerations of this kind.

In think one learns as a result of contacts with other countries, and I am certainly in that category. We are members of the United Nations, the C.P.A., the I.P.U., NATO, and many other international organizations. Honourable senators, I think that the result of what we do in this kind of work, even though it seems miniscule at a given time, redounds to the general benefit of the country