

DECEMBER 15, 1987, VICTORIA, B.C.

I - Oak Bay Rotary Club

Approximately 40 persons were in attendance. Two questions were posed, one asking how Ambassador Roche's message coincided with the Government's decision to purchase nuclear-powered submarines. Another member, Colin Smith suggested that the INF agreement would accomplish little as the warheads being dismantled would be mounted elsewhere.

II - Public Forum, University of Victoria

The first panelist, Lt.Gen. Reg Lane (retired) of the Federation of Military and United Services Institutes of Canada, and a member of the Consultative Group, remarked on the more optimistic mood of the meeting compared with that of Ambassador Roche's 1986 tour. While the INF agreement is an important first step, other weapons, including conventional, must be brought to the Conference table. Gen. Lane was anxious to see whether General Secretary Gorbachev will succeed with his domestic proposals. Freeman Tovell, retired Canadian Ambassador, opined that the INF Agreement was just a beginning and was encouraged by Gorbachev's statement to Reagan: "I think we can trust each other". According to Mr. Tovell, the Soviets made significant concessions in inspection and verification. The French and British should be made party to any existing or current superpower agreements. Cautiously optimistic, Mr. Tovell spoke of the need for each side to take into consideration the views of its allies and for "creative courage" and the need to run risks.

Approximately 100 persons were in attendance, posing nine question. A representative of the Canadian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (CPPNW), inquired as to the Canadian position on a Comprehensive Test Ban at the Conference on Disarmament, while another questioner wanted to know Canada's position on the French proposal for an International Satellite Monitoring Agency. Another individual asked when Canada would stop testing cruise missiles and strategic bombers while two others wondered how Canada could be considered "responsible" internationally on the one hand "preaching arms control and disarmament" while on the other testing cruise missiles. It was stated that the White Paper aligned us too closely with the USA and that free trade "would bring a closer relationship between the industry and the military." A representative of Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (VANA), suggested that what is needed is not "balanced reductions" but an entirely new way of thinking. Weapons, he argued, are not a means of defence, but rather a source of danger.