

*Supply—External Affairs*

concern over a possible three nation executive, a three nation triumvirate directing NATO. Now, with the Berlin crisis, West Germany has been taking part in the various discussions on Berlin with the United States, the United Kingdom and France. I think we must take care to see that there is not a four power group assuming executive powers in the organization.

At the last meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty foreign ministers we were very pleased to find that there was practically unanimous opinion that there was no incompatibility in the member nations of NATO taking independent stands in the United Nations, particularly on peace keeping activities of the United Nations and on appeals to world opinion. Canada has never believed that membership in NATO should restrict her activities in the United Nations.

A fourth material factor today is the question of disarmament. As hon. members know, Canada was a member of the ten nation disarmament committee which was torpedoed by the five communist members in June of last year. Two months later, with the United States, we were able to bring the question before the disarmament commission of the United Nations and to obtain a unanimous resolution there that negotiations should be resumed. Subsequently we brought in a resolution at the United Nations general assembly last fall which was designed to help get negotiations under way again. That resolution was co-sponsored by 18 other nations.

During their meeting in London this spring the prime ministers of the commonwealth issued a very significant statement on the question of disarmament. This was particularly helpful because of the membership of the commonwealth. The prime ministers came from practically every continent and they had varying opinions. They did not agree on all things. But on this statement on disarmament they were unanimous and issued a communique in respect thereof. I think in the days ahead as work proceeds on disarmament this commonwealth resolution will be of great importance.

At the session of the United Nations which ran over into the spring of 1961, it was finally agreed that the problem of disarmament and all pending proposals relating to it, which included the Canadian resolution, would be stood over until the session of the general assembly in the fall of this year. In addition the United States and the Soviet union agreed that they would sit down and try to work out a negotiating group, as well as general principles for negotiations, on the question of disarmament.

Since the spring there have been discussions between the representatives of these two

great powers. Canada has throughout warmly approved this attempt to reach agreement on a suitable forum for resuming disarmament negotiations and a satisfactory set of directives to guide the negotiators. We have been kept closely in touch with all that has gone on at each of the meetings, and here again the United States has made a real attempt to devise a satisfactory basis. It has been flexible in its approach during these two nation discussions.

The talks, of course, have been confidential and it is not possible to reveal the substance of the matters discussed. While they have not achieved their goal, the differences between the two sides have been clarified. Yesterday the United States and the Soviet union, were meeting in New York on this question of disarmament.

The last few days, Mr. Chairman, have seen barely concealed threats which, as I have said, we must meet squarely. This situation, however, does not mean that we should downgrade our efforts to further the cause of disarmament. On the contrary far-reaching measures on disarmament are now more vital than ever if we are to avoid even sharper east-west conflicts in a world which daily sees the development of more frightening weapons. We must recognize clearly that until a realistic basis for negotiation is established, we will continue to run the most dangerous risk of all, the risk of nuclear war.

During the past months Canada has taken an active part in the drafting of a new western disarmament plan. Throughout this period the United States and the other countries which represented the west on the ten-nation committee have been in close consultation. The other members of the western alliance who were not on the committee have also had an opportunity to express their views on the new plan. The contents of this plan cannot be revealed at this time, but it does constitute a significant improvement over previous western proposals. We have been represented during these discussions by Lieutenant-General E. L. M. Burns who has played a very large part in the field of disarmament for a long time and who, I suggest, has no peer anywhere in the world in this particular field.

Many of our suggestions have been accepted in the working out of this new plan. A great deal of effort has been put into trying to meet the desires expressed at the commonwealth prime ministers conference to ensure the maximum amount of disarmament in the shortest possible time. Full consideration has already been given to the reasonable Soviet proposals.

This new western plan will be put forward for negotiation, and not on a "take it or