

These proposals represent an earnest and commendable effort to bridge the gap between the Western and Soviet positions and to bring about at long last an agreement at least on basic principles, and so pave the way for further progress towards effective disarmament. Canada supported and heartily approved the initiative of the United Kingdom and France in making these proposals.

The chief complaint of the Soviet Union against the United Nations control plan -- the majority plan -- has been that it postponed until the final stage the prohibition and elimination of atomic weapons. The Soviets have argued that the Western Powers were attempting to bring about international control including inspection within Soviet territory at the very beginning, and postpone everything to do with atomic weapons until the last stage which they said might never be reached. The new proposals dispose of the Soviet contention by providing for an immediate prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction except in defence against aggression. At the beginning of the programme there would be a freeze on military manpower and expenditures including atomic. The prohibition of the manufacture of nuclear weapons would follow at an intermediate stage. The process would be completed by the destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their conversion to peaceful uses. Moreover, the international control organ, which is central to our conception, would come into being progressively and would grow up with its task. There would be no question of international inspectors exercising all the rights granted to them under the international agreement until the final stage in the disarmament programme is reached. The new proposals also dispose of the Soviet argument that the Western Powers are only interested in securing information on the armed forces of the Soviet Union. The atomic side is covered from the outset and no step is proposed which would not apply to all countries alike.

Soviet representatives have also objected to the Western concept of stages, maintaining that the last stage could be indefinitely postponed. The Anglo-French proposals go some distance towards meeting this criticism. Not only are the stages reduced in number from five to three, but as I have said earlier, the progression from one stage to another now depends only on the decision of the international control organ that it is ready to carry out the controls necessary for the succeeding stage. Nothing more is required. Nothing less would be prudent. Assuming the co-operation of all member governments, the whole system of disarmament would now go forward from stage to stage automatically. Given the same degree of co-operation by States, we could confidently say that the new proposals would take less time to implement than the old.

Although there are other points which could be made, I shall mention only one way in which the new conception seeks to meet Soviet criticism of the majority plan. Under the latter, the functions and powers of the international control organ called for the "ownership in trust" of all atomic enterprises. The new proposals, as Mr. Lloyd suggested in London, envisage the possibility of inspectors supervising the disarmament convention with powers which would enable them, as Mr. Lloyd said, to "be in on" all the decisions of the national management of atomic enterprises, and all the information available to the management