

As Hon. Members know, these negotiations began in the spring of 1960, but in June they were broken off when the five Eastern members walked out. In August, following that walkout, Canada and the United States succeeded in bringing about a meeting of the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations which is composed of all the member nations.

At that meeting we got through a unanimous resolution calling for a resumption of the disarmament negotiations at the earliest possible date. Nothing had been done when the General Assembly met in September and Canada then introduced a disarmament resolution, co-sponsored by Sweden and Norway, which in essence called for a prompt resumption of negotiations for the selection of a neutral as chairman and for co-operation of the United Nations with the negotiators through the Disarmament Commission. For example, we had in mind that the Disarmament Commission should set up ad hoc committees to assist the negotiators and also to check the work that they were doing. Eventually, we were able to get a total of 18 co-sponsors for that resolution.

However, the atmosphere at the United Nations last fall was very tense and that ... is putting it in mild language. It really was worse than that. It was very difficult to have agreement reached on any question, let alone on the subject of disarmament. We were not able to gain our objective before the adjournment in December. Fortunately, during the session which ended last Saturday morning, there was far less tension. I cannot say whether or not this was because there had been a change of administration in the United States or because everyone was tired of that quarrelsome attitude just as we in this House get tired of such an atmosphere after a few hours and decide it might be better to be less pugnacious. There is a good deal of the element of human nature in the deliberations of the United Nations, just as there is in those of the Canadian House of Commons.

Whatever the cause, there has been far less tension in the United Nations during these recent weeks.

Eventually, the United States and the Soviet Union, with a good deal of assistance and a good deal of prompting from other nations -- I am not being immodest when I say Canada took a prominent part in this prompting and in these negotiations -- decided that they would get together and try to arrange for the resumption of disarmament negotiations at about the end of July of this year. After all, these two nations are the key nations in any disarmament negotiations. They brought in a joint resolution before the General Assembly which was passed unanimously. They were unable to agree on the composition of the negotiating group. One side had suggested that there should be an impartial chairman and vice chairman. The other side wanted five uncommitted countries added to the five Eastern and the five Western countries. Agreement was not finally reached, but I believe that in these intervening weeks that question can be worked out.