

East to make very important strategic movements that would not justify an immediate nuclear answer from NATO. Moreover, this danger would be increased if other countries were to imitate France and withdraw their troops from the authority of the NATO command. Here, it is nevertheless necessary to stress that the French forces, even if they no longer belong to the integrated NATO forces, are still cooperating with them, in particular in the Mediterranean where, as it is known, the Soviets have introduced a naval strength which represents a very serious threat to the Southern flank of the Alliance.

Incidentally, I would like to quote a NATO Bulletin dated January 16, 1969. This is what it says:

At the meeting of the Committee of the Defence Plans, today—

—it is about the meeting of the Ministers of Defence of NATO members—

—the decision has been made to approve the principle of an allied naval force, based in the Mediterranean area and which could be summoned on request. However, before such a force can be established, there are still many practical and political problem to solve. Five countries at least are likely to participate; Greece, Italy, Turkey, Great Britain and the United States.

We should note that France is already in the Mediterranean.

Consequently, the delegates showed concern about the possibility expressed by the Canadian government of simply withdrawing from NATO or, alternatively, of withdrawing its troops presently based in West Germany, under the European high command.

I do not think I am misinterpreting the Canadian delegates by suggesting that none of them seriously believes that Canada might withdraw from NATO. To do so would mean that this country has lost faith in the principle of collective security or—and this seems unbelievable for such an attitude would be totally cowardly and irresponsible—that we are gladly taking for granted that the United States would assume our defence. The idea has already been expressed that such was the reason that might justify our withdrawal from NATO. On the other hand, nobody will suggest that we can genuinely believe that any serious danger of conflict is now over.

Anyhow, if such were the conclusion reached by Canada following its reappraisal of its defence policy, we would certainly not

be the only North Atlantic country to hold that belief. On the other hand, can we contemplate withdrawing our troops under the high command in Europe? Such a decision would imply that we cannot do otherwise. Apart from the fact that such a movement might be prejudicial to the other member countries, it would bring comfort only to the countries of the Warsaw Treaty; it is difficult to imagine, if Canada must maintain military forces, that she could thereby make a substantial profit. If we bring back to Canada the troops which are quartered in Europe, they will miss the opportunity to participate in the operations of the integrated force, which seems to me an obvious tactical advantage. On the other hand, Canada would have nothing more to say within the Command in Europe and would simply be militarily in tow of the United States.

The more we consider the statements of the prime minister regarding NATO, the more embarrassed we are, unless we come to the conclusion—and I have done so—that the Government does not consider seriously the possibility of withdrawing from NATO or repatriating its forces quartered in Europe and that it is only aiming at reviving public interest regarding the Alliance. Certainly a very large segment of our people, especially among youth, has very vague ideas about NATO and the meaning of Canada's participation in it. Asking questions may create a sound curiosity which may make it easier for the Government to come to the conclusion that NATO remains an alliance essential to the collective security of North Atlantic countries, and that Canada cannot get away from its responsibility of playing a part commensurate with her importance and her capacity.

If these are really the views or the tactics of the Government—and I think they are—I wish to tell them: For goodness' sake, stop procrastinating. Hurry up in the interest of security and make the decisions expected by the people.

[English]

On motion of Hon. Mr. Martin, debate adjourned.

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

Hon. Richard J. Stanbury moved the second reading of Bill S-25, to amend the Export and Import Permits Act.

He said: Honourable senators, the purpose of this bill is twofold, one to add the Canadian Dairy Commission Act to the list of acts to