

NATO

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) spent some time on what was bound to be an unsuccessful attempt to explain the unexplainable so far as the conflicts are concerned in what he, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), and other ministers have said. In addition, he gave us a few generalities. The only definite point in his speech was that he made it plain that the consultation referred to in the motion means no more than telling our allies in NATO that our troops will be withdrawn and advising them to take the necessary steps to fill the gap. That is all the consultation amounts to. This is the one thing the Secretary of State for External Affairs did make clear.

The motion of the Prime Minister is in two parts. The first part states that Canada will remain in NATO. The second part states that we will withdraw from NATO our forces in Europe. It is quite evident that the two parts of the resolution are in direct contradiction of each other and therefore in essence the motion is a fraud.

• (3:20 p.m.)

During the past year there has been almost complete confusion as to the government's intentions in respect of NATO. This has been the result of the conflicting statements of the Prime Minister and other ministers about what the government intended to do in so far as NATO was concerned. The present motion and the Prime Minister's statement and explanation of it continue this confusion. We now know definitely that it is the intention of the government to remove a number of our troops from Europe. As pointed out yesterday by my leader, we do not know whether a few or practically all our forces in Europe will be withdrawn. The confusion still exists and we are still up in the air in this regard.

We must consider the whole matter in conjunction with the Prime Minister's earlier statements, both before he occupied his present position and since. For the most part these statements, particularly some of his earlier ones, were definitely along the line that Canada should withdraw its forces from NATO. Thus the only conclusion I can come to is that the Prime Minister intends to end our military contributions as quickly as possible.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Harkness: An hon. member opposite applauds. There is no doubt that his attitude is shared by a few members but not by the

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard).]

majority in this chamber, including many on the Liberal side.

Let me put this another way. The Prime Minister's policy is one of scuttle—get out just as fast as possible. This is the same policy General de Gaulle followed. The only conclusion one can come to is that the Prime Minister is using General de Gaulle as an example in this regard and intends to do exactly the same thing, with perhaps one difference in that he intends to do so in slower stages. The final result will be the same.

Yesterday the Prime Minister in effect accused those of us who do not agree with his views in respect of NATO of living in the past. As recorded at page 7867 of *Hansard* he said:

Canadians must be prepared to face the world of actuality, the world of 1969.

That is exactly what the Prime Minister is not doing. He does not recognize that the basic threat to our security which brought NATO into existence in the first place still exists and that we have a responsibility to continue to play a role commensurate with our population and resources to counter that threat.

A great deal of wishful thinking has taken place in the last few years along the lines that the aggressive intention of Russia has disappeared and that a period of détente has occurred. Some people believe that all that is necessary is to treat Russia with kid gloves and in a nice way and this détente will continue. The events in Czechoslovakia last year ended these illusions very abruptly for most people. It did not end them for everybody. These events ended the hopes of those people in Europe who are under a direct threat. This was made abundantly clear to the members of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence who spent two weeks in Europe immediately before Easter. This was the reaction we observed in every country we visited, whether a NATO country or a neutral country such as Switzerland or Sweden.

Let me point out that the first object of the foreign and defence policy of any country is to maintain its security and independence. In the past many countries were able to do this on their own; however, that time has long passed. Security and independence can only be maintained now by most countries, particularly countries of our size, and I have in mind population, through alliances with like-minded nations. These people face the same