

the United Kingdom, the United States, France and the Soviet Union, meeting at Geneva, as one of the members of a ten-power East-West negotiating group on disarmament. This Committee, you will recall, consists on the Western side of Canada, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States, and on the Eastern side of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Roumania and the Soviet Union. Although not a United Nations agency, its creation was favourably noted by the recent United Nations General Assembly and it is to keep in close touch with the United Nations. On this ten-power group the main responsibility will rest for devising, negotiating and ultimately implementing a practical programme of controlled, phased disarmament. In effect, it carries the hope of all nations for world peace.

As you will see, the recent NATO decision to make the five Western members of that committee also a working group for preparations on disarmament questions for the East-West simply gave the group a dual foundation. It is, however, unlikely that anything more than directives or general guidance will come from the East-West summit on disarmament questions. The real work will take place in the ten-power group. The Canadian Government attaches great importance to the work of this Committee and for this reason such a distinguished Canadian public servant as Lieutenant-General E. L. M. Burns, until recently Commander of UNEF, has been appointed to represent Canada on the Committee.

Steps were taken in the course of the recent Paris meetings to get the work of this ten-power committee under way. Taking advantage of their presence in Paris for the NATO meeting, the foreign ministers of the Western five met on December 20 to discuss preparatory arrangements. At that meeting we took two decisions: first, to get Western preparations under way as quickly as possible by setting January 18 as the date for a preliminary meeting in Washington and January 25 as the date on which the Western team of five countries would begin their actual work; secondly, we delegated to the Government of France the task of approaching the five Eastern members of the Disarmament Committee with a proposal to have the full Committee meet in Geneva on or about March 15. On December 28 the Soviet Ambassador in Ottawa delivered a note agreeing to the Western proposal.

The fact that the East-West discussions on disarmament are to commence at a relatively early date is most gratifying to the Canadian Government, which has consistently urged that delays be avoided lest the momentum which had developed on both sides in favour of disarmament be lost. The new negotiations, we consider, will open in an atmosphere more propitious, and therefore more hopeful, than any similar disarmament negotiations undertaken in the past decade or more.

For example they will take place against the background of important developments in the disarmament field at the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly. There both the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union advanced comprehensive disarmament proposals, the latter's including for the first time an apparent willingness to accept the principle of inspection and control. In addition a resolution was adopted unanimously which expressed the hope that