

the same old system that had for years been denying people their freedom and, indeed, their human rights. This is where the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe has really shone, in fighting the battle for human rights throughout its jurisdiction. As time goes on, it will become very necessary to have a worth-while organization. We are now talking in terms of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe forming an assembly where we will have delegations from the various member countries discussing the issues that are very prominent before them that are important and must be tackled.

• (1240)

I want to say from personal experience what a great thing it is to have parliamentarians from different countries getting together to discuss issues because they become the bridge. They go home and inform their governments in their individual countries what discussions went on. I have had many years of experience in the North Atlantic Assembly where we had delegations of parliamentarians from all members of that organization. I was vice-president of that organization for two years.

In closing, I want to say that the most solid foundation upon which any international organization can be built to last through the years is the fact that nations must be willing to sit down as a family and talk business, mean what they say, do what they decide and have the political will to solve the problems of the day.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by proclaiming our full support for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Members of this House of Commons can unite in supporting the Paris summit of heads of states and governments involved in the CSCE. My personal hope is that the Paris summit will breathe new life into the CSCE process and that this renewal will be the base for security and co-operation across Europe, North America and the north Atlantic over the next decade and beyond into the next century.

The motion supporting the CSCE contains an important and even vital parliamentary dimension. It is this dimension that I would like to explore in discussing the motion today. I believe that the involvement of parliamentarians as an adjunct to the CSCE is vital to its success in maintaining democracy into the next decade and for the future.

Government Orders

Let me begin by explaining the involvement of parliamentarians with international organizations. I should start by saying that when we look back over the almost 50 years since the end of World War II, we realize that the much-maligned international organizations from the United Nations, but including many other pan-European, Asian, Pacific organizations, have in fact succeeded in maintaining world peace over those very troubled years, through the cold war and in other times.

While the international organizations, and particularly the United Nations, at times had their credibility questioned, the fact of the matter is there has been peace in our time, so we can look at it from the perspective of 1990 and say the system has worked, even though we might have doubted its workings at times in the past.

The same can be said of the parliamentary organizations that are adjuncts to many international organizations. I have attended many of them, and at times you wonder whether you are making any progress, whether you are accomplishing anything of a positive nature. When you realize that peace has been maintained and you see the dramatic changes across Europe and throughout the world, you realize that the spirit is there among the people represented by their parliamentarians and brought to international organizations. We now must make sure that we continue to support those international organizations so that they can continue to fulfil their role in maintaining peace and security throughout the world.

Let me talk for a moment, Mr. Speaker, about some of the parliamentary organizations as they relate to our country and to North America, but especially to our relationship with the European Community.

There are in existence a number of organizations. Of course, everybody is familiar with the European Community and the European Parliament which plays a vital role among the 12 nations that are involved in that particular organization. But on a more general basis, as has already been mentioned, there is the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly connected with the Council of Europe. That is a much more co-operative organization, based on mutual understanding and not based upon any legislated text. It is that kind of organization with which we in Canada can participate because we are not held to any specific law-making functions or binding decisions. We maintain our sover-