

CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(FIFTEENTH SESSION)

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Statement on Disarmament by Mr. W.B. Nesbitt,
Q.C., M.P., Chairman of the Canadian Delegation,
in the First Committee, on December 17, 1960

Mr. Chairman:

As you have reminded us, time has become of the essence in our current consideration of the disarmament items on our agenda. The adjournment is now very close at hand. We have had a particularly long and comprehensive discussion. I can, therefore, be very brief in explaining the changes incorporated in Document 255/Rev. 1, co-sponsored by my delegation, and in setting forth our ideas on how we might wind up this phase of our work on disarmament.

There is general agreement among us that one of the most immediate, and from the long-term point of view the most important question on our agenda is that of disarmament. This is not a matter which we or public opinion at large would care to see ignored or neglected in these times of strained international relations. There is also widespread recognition that the United Nations has the ultimate responsibility for disarmament and that the role of the Disarmament Commission in this field should become more meaningful.

At the same time few would deny that real progress towards disarmament will come only from patient and serious negotiation among the great military Powers. As has been said often in our debate, nothing can be gained, and indeed it might even be harmful to attempt to direct the course of disarmament by means of majority votes in this organization.

These are, I believe, the considerations weighing heavily with delegations as they assess how best to proceed with the many resolutions tabled before us - some thirteen in number. It would be unrealistic to seek a definitive vote on every one of these before the conclusion of this part of our session.

We are, therefore, faced with three decisions relating to the method of procedure we should adopt at this juncture. First, we must decide what we are prepared to