

North Atlantic Treaty

Mr. Coldwell: No. Of course, as the hon. member for Greenwood says, it is not a trade secret, because after all the newspapers have told us that Canada voted one way and then voted another way. If that is not true, the minister might inform us as to what inaccuracies there are in these reports. In any event, newspapers seem to give us information that we should get from the government and from the minister. At least, then it would be authoritative, and we should not be misinformed in any particular.

This morning the minister also went into the matter of including in the North Atlantic alliance, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, bringing into association with the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Germany, and the necessity perhaps of some German rearmament. I think that all of us are very anxious indeed that whatever is done shall not in any way establish again militarism in Germany. We have had two world wars, both of which were at least started militarily; and whatever the background of the first and second ones may be, whatever arguments there may have been about the beginnings of these hostilities, nonetheless the first hostile moves were made by Germany. I can quite understand why it is that France, Belgium and other countries in western Europe are fearful lest we once again promote German militarism and bring into being a German military staff. Consequently I think we should hesitate in approving plans for the integration of German forces into the European army, or in association with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, until we know precisely what is to be done and how the objective is to be achieved.

We should pay attention to the internal situation in Germany itself, because after all the political situation in Germany is pretty fluid, and while Dr. Adenauer is now in charge of German policy and the government, an election may change the picture and we might have Dr. Kurt Schumacher in power, which does not seem at all unlikely, a man who has stood against communism and fascism all during his years, but who is not at all sold on the idea that there should be a German army until he is assured that if and when an aggression is committed, if war should follow, the defence will be made on the river Vistula or on the Niemen; in other words, in the east of Germany and not on the western side when Berlin and other parts of Germany would be subjected to new devastation. I think we have to watch that carefully.

Then, there is something to be said with regard to our own contribution, militarily. I must say that I regret this debate is being

held today at a time when the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes) is about to leave Europe for Canada. I wish he were here, because, if newspaper reports are correct, the views he expressed are very different indeed from the views which I understood the official opposition to express, and different, as I thought, from those I had heard General Pearkes himself express in the house from time to time.

I should like to place this newspaper article on record. The dispatch is dated December 22, from the Canadian Press bureau in Paris, and states:

Major General G. R. Pearkes, V.C., Canadian delegate to the United Nations, said today the Canadian government policy of sending infantry troops to Europe is "unwarranted."

And the word is in quotation marks.

The 63-year-old Victoria Cross winner who acts as military spokesman for the Progressive Conservatives in the Canadian House of Commons said in an interview he believes it would be better to send technicians instead of fighting men.

Pearkes, who has travelled in various parts of western Europe for two months, said he found that Canada's 27th brigade is composed of fine Canadians and is well-housed and well-treated.

"But I do not believe that the money which is being spent by Canadian taxpayers is getting anything like the return in defence assistance to the North Atlantic treaty organization that the Canadian people have a right to expect."

Canada, by sending men, was exporting her most valuable asset. He implied they were being wasted by being sent to countries where manpower was the least of problems.

"I feel that the Canadian government had not fully informed itself or the Canadian people as to actual conditions in Europe before sending the 27th brigade and committing Canada to a long-term policy which to my mind is unwarranted and extremely expensive."

That is a statement made by one for whom, I may say, I have always had and have today the very greatest respect. I know the record of the hon. member during the first war when he was awarded the Victoria Cross, and also during the second war when for a time he was in command of the forces which were subsequently engaged in the Dieppe raid. And, so far as information regarding his views on the raid is concerned, those are views he must be left to express himself. As I say, however, I have the greatest respect for the hon. member and his views on military matters.

I think there is something in what he has said. I am sure other people in this country share my view that while we have a North Atlantic treaty, in the light of the present world situation we have emphasized far too much the military contribution, and have overlooked the economic contribution to which we are committed by article II.

I noted the other day that in the British House of Commons, when the matter was