

# *External Affairs in Parliament*

## **NATO Ministerial Meeting**

*The following report was given to the House of Commons on December 17 by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard Green:*

... In the background of this particular NATO meeting was the Cuban crisis; and by the way, may I say that this crisis should not be regarded as having been finally settled as yet. It is true that big steps have been taken toward a settlement, but this has not yet been concluded. The Cuban crisis has had quite noticeable effects on the Alliance. One is that as a result of the crisis the diplomatic position of the Alliance itself has been considerably improved. Then, in my opinion, the crisis has served to draw the allies much closer together than they were previously and in the case of the government of each country — and certainly this is true of Canada — it has increased the value we place on this defence Organization.

The meetings in Paris lasted for three days and were very harmonious. In fact they were the most harmonious meetings of NATO that I have attended. Great credit, of course, was given to the United States for the firmness yet moderation shown in the Cuban crisis. Some question was raised with regard to methods of consultation in a crisis like this, but no real complaint was made against the United States for the manner in which the allies were consulted or informed.

I think we in the Alliance face a new position with regard to consultation. Many threats are of global nature, and furthermore one can never be quite sure in what part of the world the next threat is going to come. Then there is the question of the rapidity with which a crisis may arise. That, of course, was true in the case of Cuba, and it made consultation difficult. The Permanent Council will be studying from now on methods by which consultation can be improved. There is no doubt that we could have a better system, and an attempt will be made to work one out.

On the first day of the conference there was an extensive review of the international situation dealing primarily with East-West relations. On behalf of Canada, I took the position that NATO now has the initiative as a result of the Cuban crisis, and that every effort should be made to retain that initiative rather than getting into the position of always waiting for the Communist world to make the first move with NATO, then acting in response to Communist initiatives.

It was agreed that the Alliance must be kept strong, and we believe as well that it should be prepared to negotiate at all times. I think that is a sound policy provided there is no letting down of the guard. We also suggested that there should be an attempt made now to do some contingency planning, as it is called, in the political and diplomatic fields. There has been such planning in the military and economic fields, but not sufficient in the diplomatic field. For example,