

External Affairs

achieved and express the hope for further progress in the near future.

You will note that in the communiqué, which I shall table at the end of my statement, Mr. Speaker, the member governments confirmed their readiness, as soon as talks on Berlin had reached a satisfactory conclusion and in so far as other ongoing talks were proceeding satisfactorily, to enter into multilateral talks to explore when it would be possible to convene a conference or series of conferences on security and co-operation in Europe.

The question of mutual and balanced force reductions is one NATO has been pursuing actively in recent years and is of particular concern to Canada. In Brussels the NATO ministers renewed their earlier invitation to interested states to hold exploratory talks on the possibility of negotiations on force reductions and indicated a readiness within this framework to examine different aspects of the question, including the idea of foreign force reductions which was publicly advanced by the Warsaw Pact countries last summer.

In the course of the foreign ministers' meeting, I expressed Canada's satisfaction with the results of the recent NATO sponsored colloquium on oil spills, which recommended that the governments should work through IMCO to eliminate by 1975, if possible, all intentional discharges of oil in the sea as well as to minimize accidental spills. This could be a breakthrough in one area of maritime pollution, particularly since the undertaking involves countries representing a high proportion of the world's oil carriers. It is an excellent example of NATO's ability to contribute in a practical way to the solution of problems of current concern to its members.

On the defence side, the decisions taken helped to place the respective roles of North America and Europe within the Alliance on a more equitable basis and to ensure that in the period of negotiation ahead the Alliance will be able to proceed with confidence.

Turning to my bilateral discussions with European leaders, I was struck by their determination to make progress toward integration. I have already spoken about enlargement. Discussions are taking place about an economic and monetary union and, perhaps more remotely, a common foreign policy. These internal preoccupations have overshadowed the problems enlargement presents to third countries and for multilateral trading arrangements.

I sensed, however, a growing recognition of the wider responsibilities that an enlarged Community must shoulder, resulting from its sheer size and wealth as the world's largest trading unit. I found as well an awareness of the dangerous deterioration in international trading relations which would arise from a confrontation between a protectionist United States and a Europe bent on consolidating its own economic progress.

In my discussions I expressed the positive Canadian view of the movement toward greater European unity, while stressing that EEC enlargement should not and need not be brought about at the expense of third coun-

[Mr. Sharp.]

tries like Canada. I impressed upon my European colleagues the need for a renewed dialogue between the Community and North America to avert the very real danger of trade confrontation apprehended by qualified observers on both sides of the Atlantic. In this connection, I am encouraged by the fact that Signor Malfatti, President of the European Economic Community, has accepted my invitation to come to Canada next spring.

At the NATO meeting I called attention to the impact of such a confrontation on the solidarity of the Alliance and suggested that NATO governments should be thinking of how best they could contribute to the continuing dialogue needed to avert the dangers foreseen.

While in Europe, as hon. members may recall, I had the unexpected pleasure and privilege of welcoming Mr. James Cross back to England in good health and spirits. I am sure that all members of this House would gladly have shared this privilege with me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): On a procedural point, Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised when ministerial statements arrive in opposition offices so late in the day. I am troubled because I cannot believe ministers are so ill organized that these statements are not ready, or that they would want to make it difficult for the opposition. Therefore I think this is a matter which must be turned over to Information Canada.

I should like to welcome the minister back; we are always glad to have him back. As I read his statement I thought that perhaps it was obvious that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) had been there ahead of him, and if there is to be a marriage of these departments I fear the minister will not be the senior partner.

I note, too, that he had an extra talk with the French Foreign Minister. I remember the days when this would indeed be news.

I quite agree that events in Europe are moving rapidly, as the minister states. This is still a dynamic and important area of the world which must not be, as I fear at times it has been, downgraded by this government. I favour, as the minister does, the enlargement and the rapidly accelerated moves toward integration of that very important part of the world. I think the European leaders and people are moving forward with imagination and vigour, and I think that Canadians can do nothing but salute them for their forwardness.

I note, too, that the minister found in Europe buoyancy and confidence. I wish he could have reported the same about Canada. I wish we did not have such problems as unemployment and a sluggish economy to dampen our own desire for the buoyancy which every forward-looking country should have.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: I note that the minister says Canada is and has been for some time following the developments in Europe with the closest of attention. I submit