

years: to secure peace and to secure prosperity. There are reasons for cautious optimism in the future. First, I should like to make a few remarks about the peace initiative undertaken by the Prime Minister, after which I shall address myself to the economic and social issues.

● (1520)

Canada has never had a major war or a major revolution on its soil. Yet, within our boundaries we have all the elements that cause other countries to go to war. We have pronounced ethnic and religious differences and major regional disparities. Yet we have always managed to resolve our differences peacefully and amicably through the art of compromise. The patriation of the Constitution and the adoption of the National Energy Program are two cases in point. Because of our ethnic make up and our two official languages we are psychologically prepared to play a credible role in the cause of world peace.

Indeed we have precedents in this area. We all recall Prime Minister Pearson's peace initiative during the Suez Canal dispute in 1954 which brought about peace and stability for a number of years in the Middle East. So it is in the Canadian tradition to continue to play this role for humanitarian as well as for economic reasons.

One third of Canada's wealth is derived from exports. We have a vital interest in promoting and maintaining international stability. It is with this background that our Prime Minister, consistent with his efforts of several decades, has embarked on a new peace initiative at this critical time of high international tensions.

Prime Minister Trudeau and his government have not only continued the Canadian policy of abjuring nuclear weapons, but have also launched a number of initiatives to encourage nuclear disarmament and thus help to prevent a nuclear holocaust. Although a member of NATO, which includes three of the five nuclear powers, and fully capable of producing nuclear weapons herself, Canada has nevertheless renounced the production of these weapons since their advent in 1945. Under the leadership of Mr. Trudeau, Canada has withdrawn from any nuclear role by her armed forces in Europe and is now completing the process of replacing the nuclear-capable aircraft assigned to the defence of North America with sophisticated but conventionally armed aircraft. Canada has thus become the first country to have chosen to divest itself of nuclear weapons.

In his speech of May 26, 1978 to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, Prime Minister Trudeau identified the "technological impulse" that lies behind the development of strategic nuclear weapons as a dangerous and de-stabilizing factor in the nuclear arms race between the superpowers. Each new weapons system raises concerns about a first-strike capability, about verification, and about the erosion of the difference between nuclear and conventional warfare. To counter this threat, the Prime Minister proposed four concrete measures which, taken together, would curb the technological dynamic of the nuclear arms race and buy time for further negotiations leading to actual reductions in nuclear arsenals. These four measures involved the negotia-

tion of agreements to impede further development of nuclear warheads by means of a comprehensive test ban; to complement the ban on the testing of warheads by stopping the flight testing of all new strategic delivery vehicles; to set a definite limit on the availability of nuclear weapons material by prohibiting all production of fissionable material for weapons purposes; and to limit and then progressively to reduce military spending on new strategic weapons systems. It was a tribute to the stature of the Prime Minister as an international statesman that his "strategy of suffocation" was substantially embodied in the Final Document and Programme of Action of the Special Session.

The events leading up to the Prime Minister's most recent initiative are well known. Relations between east and west, between the United States and the Soviet Union, have deteriorated to a dangerous degree under the impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the needless shooting down of a South Korean civilian airliner which strayed over Soviet territory this past September. The Prime Minister publicly described the latter incident, which claimed 269 lives, as an illustration of the danger of hair-trigger reaction in the nuclear age.

Internationally and in Canada, public opinion is increasingly concerned about the build-up of nuclear missiles in Europe at a time of growing Soviet-American animosity. There was, and is, an inarticulate demand that someone do something to arrest the downward spiral towards a confrontation of the great powers.

After a period of study and consultation, the Prime Minister announced his forthcoming initiatives in a speech on October 27 to the Conference on Strategies for Peace and Security in the Nuclear Age. This speech expressed the conviction that:

—just as war is too important to leave to the generals, so the relationship between the superpowers may have become too charged with animosity for East-West relations to be entrusted to them alone.

While the two-track response of NATO to the Soviet build-up of SS-20 missiles in Europe remained valid, he proposed a "third rail" of high-level political energy to speed the course of agreement. In his tour of West European capitals in early November, Prime Minister Trudeau began the process of attempting to organize the political will necessary to break the stalemate in east-west relations.

The Prime Minister's initiative has now received the firm support of the Commonwealth Heads of Government assembled in New Delhi. He has had the opportunity of discussing the details of his program with Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang in Peking; the Soviets have displayed sufficient curiosity about his initiative to agree to see a Canadian emissary to discuss it; and, within the past day or so, President Reagan has indicated his willingness to meet with the Prime Minister in Washington around the middle of the month.

Prime Minister Trudeau has never underestimated the difficulties, differences and animosities which his initiative faces. He has not overestimated and does not overestimate its