

NATO

But agreements of some kind are reached, perhaps for diplomatic reasons, under which Canada is asked to serve as a go-between, for instance between Communist China and the United States or between the U.S.S.R. and the United States. That is what is going to happen and it seems that hon. members do not realize it.

The Prime Minister knows very well why he is advocating his present participation policy towards peace and justice in the world.

Mr. Speaker, we, of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, feel that too much money is spent on armaments. One and a half billion a year is too much. Parasites benefit from these expenditures, contractors and financial party backers in particular. The government is aware of the situation while the citizens should be served and respected by parliament.

Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister wants to withdraw some of our troops from Germany, it is not for the same reasons. If he does not want to offend Russia and at the same time not to offend the United States too much, he should agree to our proposal and use available funds for the economic development of our country, to provide our people with security along with personal freedom.

However, we do not want security at the expense of freedom. We do not want the freedom of the individual to be dependent upon the good will of the state. We consider the individual as the most important element in a well organized economy. We maintain that a government must serve the individual and not enslave him and that all available resources must be used in the interest of the human beings and not for destruction purposes.

This is why we do not object to a reduction in our military establishments but we regret that the Prime Minister and the government take no concrete action to establish in Canada a system which would show the whole world, including Russia and Communist China, that men fully free—and not slaves of finance companies—can fight efficiently those who would like to hamper the freedom of the world.

The individual is the most important factor in a society. Let us legislate on the basis of the individual and Canada not only will have set an example but will also have provided the social, economic and political balance of the Canadian nation.

[Mr. Caouette.]

● (5:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Ian Wahn (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, the subject raised by this resolution is not a subject on which to be partisan or deliberately controversial. Nevertheless, I should observe that if we have any difficulty answering the criticisms of members of the opposition it is simply because the criticisms are contradictory. The right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) declared that we were making a fundamental and disastrous change in our defence and foreign policies. The Leader of the New Democratic party (Mr. Douglas), on the other hand, complained bitterly because we were making no change at all. As is usually the case, the truth probably lies somewhere between these two extremes; in other words, our policy is probably just about right, and that naturally annoys members of the opposition.

The right hon. Leader of the Opposition, to loud cheers from his supporters, also claimed that he was very confused. With that I think we can all agree. But in order to lessen his confusion perhaps we should try to avoid oratorical flourishes and instead examine the problem before us quietly and rationally.

It is entirely right that Canada should review its NATO obligations and decide its future military role at this particular time. Canada was one of the founders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization over 20 years ago. At that time western Europe was poor and weak. Its economy had been disrupted by war and it possessed very little effective military strength. The western European countries lived in fear of Soviet aggression and had no effective defence against it. Military and financial help from North America was essential. Through NATO it was made available in generous measure, and the fear of aggression from the east was removed. Since that time, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said, the western European countries have made a remarkable recovery, until today they rival the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact not only in population but in wealth, productivity and potential power.

Mr. Thompson: Everything except military strength.

Mr. Wahn: It is important to realize that the North Atlantic Treaty did not impose any specific military obligations on its members. Its members agreed that aggression against