

External Affairs in Parliament

STATEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

The purpose of this section is to provide a selection of statements on external affairs, by Ministers of the Crown or by their parliamentary assistants. It is not designed to provide a complete coverage of debates on external affairs taking place during the month.

Disarmament

On March 20, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson made the following statement on the Anglo-French disarmament proposal:

The discussions of the United Nations disarmament subcommittee, of which Canada is a member together with France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union, were resumed yesterday in London. As the House knows, the subcommittee meets in private in accordance with the recommendation of the United Nations General Assembly. In view of this, I do not feel that it would be appropriate for me to comment on these highly important and delicate negotiations at this very early stage in the negotiations.

I can say that Western delegations have given earnest consideration to the various aspects of this problem during preliminary discussions which took place during last week, and that there seemed to be substantial agreement on the measures which should be taken as a first step in a disarmament program. I do not think it would be appropriate for me to add to this for the time being.

Together with the other Western members, Canada will do its utmost to widen the area of agreement which may already exist between the East and the West on this vital issue in order to bring about some measure, at least, of effective disarmament which would contribute to diminishing international tension and by the same token facilitate the settlement of other outstanding issues. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think I should add that a disarmament scheme on paper which did not include effective methods of control and supervision would not, I think, contribute to these desirable ends.

During the last twelve months a number of significant and constructive proposals have been made in this field, and the subcommittee will now be offered the challenging task of finding whether it will be possible to develop proposals which will be generally acceptable. The Canadian delegation at the London meeting will do its best as a member of the subcommittee to help bring about such agreement.