



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA'S ARMED SERVICES AND NORTH ATLANTIC DEFENCE*

An address by Mr. Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence, at the Annual Meeting of the Quebec Command of the Canadian Legion, B.E.S.L., in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on April 19, 1950.

....It has become evident to all that the prosperity, the peace and the security we seek is threatened only by one force and that is the Soviet Union and her satellites. Their attitude alone has made it necessary for us to spend twenty times as much as before the war on our national defence. However, we know that a nation of thirteen millions occupying three and a half million square miles of territory cannot defend herself alone, nor can any nation.

We therefore took an active part in promoting the North Atlantic Treaty and I have attended the three meetings of the Defence Ministers of the twelve countries concerned.

We have made good progress with planning and programmes but now we are moving to the next and more difficult stage, that of translating plans and programmes into action. Fortunately for us that requires no major changes because our role in any future emergency is clear.

The only new thing is that our role in an emergency has been publicly and repeatedly stated by a minister in peacetime.

Our aim is to work with other nations to deter aggression, and if necessary to defend our country and to defeat any enemy that may attack us - deter, defend or defeat - that was the way it was put by Defence Secretary Johnson of the United States at The Hague meeting.

I said our role was clear. At sea, to defend our coasts and enable our ships to travel across the North Atlantic or wherever else they may be required.

At home we must have the force - a highly mobile, largely airborne brigade group - to deal with an attack on the scale and of the kind that might be made. We must have an air force which can best use the resources available for our own defence and as the means to develop a greater ultimate effort.

We have achieved a great deal of unification in the armed services, between the three forces, Navy, Army and Air Force, between active and reserve, wiping out the differences of caste and standards and conditions of service, and then finally between the services and the civilian population.

* An excerpt from an address originally entitled THE LEGION.