

*External Affairs*

ministers controlling the destinies of NATO and not always reporting back to the house, because of lack of time or for some other reason. I do not like the idea of our policy being in the hands of men, no matter of what good will, who are essentially generals, admirals, air marshals and so on. I should like to see a more democratic control over the policies of NATO. That is why I have suggested this concept of the Atlantic assembly.

I noticed with some interest in one of the December issues of the London *Economist* there was an article arguing along somewhat similar lines to mine. It stated, quite significantly, that Canada was one of the nations that was dragging its feet in this matter. We are entitled to know whether there is any justification at all behind that charge. I am quite satisfied that it is not true of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The other day, having read some of the debates in the British *Hansard*, I put down a question on the order paper inquiring as to whether any invitation had been received from NATO for parliamentarians to go over to Paris to see what was going on. If so, I asked, what was the position of the government? Up to the present, I have received no answer. In due course, I shall undoubtedly get one.

If there has been such an invitation extended I should like to know what or who is blocking it. As I say, I do not think the Secretary of State for External Affairs would object to it. The other ministers who are primarily interested in NATO are the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott). Perhaps they object to this idea of members of parliament examining NATO. I am convinced that from the point of view of the general well-being of NATO itself it would be advisable to create some sort of assembly such as I have suggested as soon as possible. If NATO is going to be a success, then the Canadian people must know what NATO is doing, and what NATO hopes to do. I believe the best way of conveying that information would be through members of parliament.

Now, what about the economic and social picture? Again I refer to the same copy of the external affairs bulletin, but this time to page 4 where we are told:

The broad lines of future NATO defence planning to meet the threat of aggression over an extended period were agreed. Member countries would have to be prepared to maintain a high level of military preparedness, while at the same time strengthening their economic and social structures.

As I have said, we in the C.C.F. argued even before NATO became reality that the very essence of such an agreement would be the economic co-operation which would

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result from it. We have seen lamentably little of such economic co-operation in the last few years. I am not quite certain as to the government concept of this economic co-operation. I know there have been some very distressing statements made by ministers of the crown, and not the least distressing was that made by the Minister of Finance at Couchiching, if the report in the *Globe and Mail* of August 14, 1952, is correct. The minister stated:

If the European countries, six years after the war and with the aid they have received, are not able to make their economy viable we can't do it for them. Any nation can only survive as a result of its own efforts.

There is just enough truth in that to make it brutally unkind. If we have prosperity in this country, it is due in no small measure to the havoc and the destruction which has been wreaked in Europe as a result of war. There are many areas in Europe which have been devastated twice within the history of one generation. To expect Europe, immediately after the war, to become again an economically sound area, is to expect the impossible. Europe has to rebuild itself; Europe has to improve its standards of living if the member nations in the west are going to become allies worth anything at all to us. The standards of living are declining if one can take as a yardstick the wholesale price indices that one sees published in various countries.

There can be no security in NATO as long as the economies of our European allies are weak. Yet, what has been done in the nature of non-military co-operation? There may have been changes lately I do not know. But I do know the Secretary of State for External Affairs was asked that question some time ago by the then member for Melfort. This is what he had to say, and it is worth-while considering what he said on page 672 of *Hansard* in 1952 in the light of what the Minister of Finance had to say later:

I cannot give any information in concrete terms as to what has been done in the field to which I just referred.

He was talking about the field of economic aid.

Indeed, very little has been done in the field of non-military co-operation. I admit that, and I think we must all be disappointed that more has not been done.

We are not only disappointed, we are alarmed that more has not been done because we can see the consequences very clearly of what is going to happen to NATO if the economies of our allies crumble and weaken still further.