

*NATO—European Defence Community*

this session. And yet when we look around the house we see a slim attendance. At the moment there are 33 members occupying seats. When the spokesman for the official opposition began his speech there were not many more, and there were not many more when the minister himself was on his feet introducing the resolution and discussing what he himself says is one of the most important documents to come before this parliament.

As the hon. member for Peel (Mr. Graydon) said, and as the minister himself said, this matter has arisen a short time after the appalling results of German armed might under nazi leadership had been understood and felt by the people of Europe and of the world. It was only seven years ago last month that the war ended in the surrender of Germany to the allied nations. I agree that seven years later the nazi militarists are still a danger both in Western Germany and in the eastern zone. In fact, one of the remarkable statements that have come out of the Soviet union was the statement that they were prepared to see a united Germany with a German army officered, indeed fashioned, by officers who officered the nazi army under Hitler. That I think is a very revealing statement that we of the western nations cannot overlook.

Any proposal for the rearmament of Germany does involve grave risks to the rest of the world, and we would be completely opposed to any suggested rearmament of Germany which might be considered to be in the nature of a separate or independent rearmament of Germany. The only manner in which German troops can possibly be integrated into the European defence community, as we see it, is as a part of the forces of the community and under the control of the western democratic countries through their general staff and through their high officers. I say that is the only manner in which we should as a country consent to any proposal for the rearmament of Germany. But having said that, we have to consider the proposed ratification of this protocol in Canada in the light of the political atmosphere in western Europe, and when that is viewed in its proper perspective one realizes that the proposal to ratify at the moment, before the situation in western Europe has been clarified, may be, in the words of the minister on another occasion, both premature and unwise.

Our people want peace. Indeed the people of all the nations want peace, and consequently we should ask ourselves whether the ratification of this protocol and the subsequent acceptance of the proposed peace treaty with Germany does really make for

[Mr. Coldwell.]

peace in the world. Recently we have seen powerful political parties in western Europe—and indeed within the last week the government of France, one of the countries occupying a very vital position in connection with European defence—urging that before ratification of this protocol and the acceptance of the peace treaty, a further attempt at a settlement of the German problem should be made in the hope that understanding may lead to removal of this fear of war which overhangs the people of Europe at the present time.

One of the questions we have to ask ourselves is, does the ratification of this protocol at the present time improve the possibilities of reaching such an understanding, or does it actually make understanding more difficult? Before we approve of this protocol in this house we must satisfy ourselves as to the answer to that question. The minister said that the road to ratification of the peace treaty will be difficult and it will be dangerous.

I think the Russians have won something of a propaganda victory in the last four or five months. Their proposals are obviously unacceptable to us in the democratic countries, but when these proposals were made did the western allies make counter-proposals that were in any way likely to be equally acceptable to Western Germany, or was their reply somewhat inept? I am inclined to think that their reply was inept—and someone suggests that that is an understatement. We have the best cause in the world, and we have done the worst propaganda job in connection with it. We have always allowed the Russians to take the initiative, and indeed they are taking the initiative today in connection with germ warfare in another field when we might, when they made the charge, have taken the initiative and asked for a meeting by the security council of the United Nations where that question could have been examined. Now the Russians have proposed it, and again we lose the battle of propaganda, and I think we to some extent lost out in connection with proposals for the solution of the German problem.

What then is the situation in western Europe? Mr. Speaker, since it is one o'clock may I discuss that phase of what I am going to say when the house resumes after lunch.

At one o'clock the house took recess.

The house resumed at three o'clock.

Mr. Coldwell: Mr. Speaker, when I was speaking this morning I perhaps was a little