

Negotiation the Key

In the discussion in the General Committee and earlier in the meeting of the Disarmament Commission which took place in mid-August, the Canadian Delegation drew attention to the basic truth - and I point out today that this is the basic truth - that, if the deadlock in disarmament is to be ended, negotiations must be resumed. The key to the situation is negotiation. I suggest that the main task of the fifteenth UN General Assembly is to bring about negotiations, not just speeches but negotiations.

The practical way to bring about a resumption of negotiations is by considering all the various disarmament items in the First Committee. Discussion there is more informal than in plenary session. Ideas can be more easily exchanged; questions can be asked and answers given spontaneously. The whole atmosphere is more conducive to reaching agreement.

Plenary Debate Mere Repetition

Moreover, a debate on disarmament in plenary would merely be a repetition of the general debate which has been under way for nearly three weeks; practically every speaker in that general debate has dealt with the question of disarmament. What useful purpose will it serve to begin another general debate after the debate that has been going on for three weeks?

It is interesting to recall that one of the main arguments used in the General Committee in support of allocating this item to plenary was that heads of state would be taking part in the debate and that it would be inappropriate for them to do so in the First Committee. I could never understand why they could not appear in that Committee, but that was the argument. It was never a valid contention, and it certainly is meaningless now, with the last heads of state departing.

By the end of this week I predict that there will be no more heads of state in New York than you could count on the fingers of one hand. But, if they want to come back later in this session to consider the results of the First Committee's deliberations, there is no reason why that could not be arranged.

Soviet Item Not Unique

Then it should be remembered that this Soviet item is not the only one dealing with disarmament. Premier Khrushchov mentioned no other item on disarmament, but his is not the only one. Yet an attempt is being made to single it out for discussion in plenary, leaving the others to the First Committee. Each one of these other items on disarmament is of equal importance. For example, the report from the Disarmament Commission of the UN contains the resolution adopted unanimously in that Commission less than two months ago, after a first-class discussion which lasted three days.