

Governments of nations have an inescapable responsibility at this hour. The world is divided into hostile camps through suspicion and distrust and through failure of nations to bring their mutual relations within an agreed system of justice and order. As representatives of Christian churches we appeal for a gigantic new effort for peace. We know how strenuously governments have discussed peace in the past. But sharp political conflicts continue, and atomic danger develops uncontrolled. We urge governments to enter into negotiations at once again and to do everything in their power to bring the present tragic deadlock to an end.

We must all agree, of course, with that. It is essential however that any new move designed to insure peace by removing international differences must be taken only after the most careful preparation. At the same time the free peoples must make it equally clear, as they can do, that they are not for a moment prepared, because of anguish over the present situation, of fear or insecurity, to make any unrequited sacrifice, through which they would weaken their position in return for nothing. There is no use in giving way to unreasoning panic. We are stronger now than we were. But however strong we might become, it would be folly to base one's policy on strength alone. As has been said, the first obligation of diplomacy is to avoid a situation where power alone talks. We can and should, therefore, reaffirm our desire to seek again, through negotiation, a settlement of the divisions which now beset the world.

Even in the best circumstances, however, a settlement of the problems which divide the communist world from the free world will not be easily reached. Some new interventions, such as those suggested by the member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), in his interesting analysis of the present crisis, might be a useful beginning for such a process. Certainly this government would give every support to any new beginning which gave any promise of success. Let us not forget, however, in our determination or desire, our anguish to do something, that the road ahead will in any case be long and difficult. We shall have to walk it with patience and with caution, with persistence and with realism. If a new approach, for instance, did not get us anywhere--there is always that possibility--we must not even then give way to the inevitable reaction of despair which would follow.

This point is well put in a leading article of the February 18 issue of the Economist, which no doubt some hon. members have read. One paragraph of that article reads as follows:

Behind the hopes of a quick agreement with Russia lies more than a trace of the belief that peace can really be had quite cheaply, by a single bargain, and not, as is the grim truth, by an intelligent, costly and sustained political effort lasting over a generation. Repeated talk of settlements and agreements and pacts can divert the attention of both statesmen and peoples from the fact that the only possible diplomacy for the western world--that of agreement through strength--is about the most difficult diplomacy that democratic nations can be asked to sustain. It means that for years to come a measure of military preparedness and a high degree of economic stability will have to be maintained throughout the non-communist world.

I suggest we will also need a high degree of democratic unity to face the communist policy of aggression, directed from one, and only one, centre, and without the limitation of scruples