

*Supply—External Affairs*

relate well to a NATO policy under which, while remaining in the alliance, we refused to continue indefinitely the garrisoning of Canadian troops in Europe. I think there is an onus on the government to indicate what the cost differential would be as between continuing our military presence in Europe and bringing our troops back to Canada and continuing a commitment to NATO while maintaining our men and equipment in a high state of readiness and mobility in case circumstances should develop in which they were needed in Europe.

The occasion I had last fall to attend a NATO parliamentarians' meeting in Paris along with 10 or 15 other members of the house gave me an opportunity to discuss matters relating to NATO with counterparts in the other member states. There is a great deal of consternation about what is being done in the alliance, and now outside the alliance, by the French. The reason, it seems to me, that France has taken certain policy decisions difficult for us to understand is that the alliance as a whole has been very slow to face and adjust to changing conditions in Europe. I do not wish to be misunderstood, but I wish to say that France is becoming more and more convinced that the communist threat on the continent of Europe is diminishing. In view of this, and the increasing strength of the western states, it becomes more than ever unnatural to continue to maintain large numbers of troops on the soil of the western European member states. France has disengaged from the military aspect of NATO while retaining a voice in the political part of the alliance. But because she has withdrawn from military commitments she is already in a position to take advantage of increased trade opportunities in eastern Europe.

Some of us may not approve the extent to which France has gone in disengaging from the NATO military structure. The fact remains that in the opinion of French policy-makers there is no further need to maintain the alliance in the form in which it has existed over the past 20 years. They sincerely believe there is an opportunity for a détente in Europe and that as long as NATO continues to be an exclusively military mechanism as it has been for all its past, it is not likely to contribute toward the achievement of a détente.

How often in the past 20 years have formal attempts been made by NATO to engage in talks with the Warsaw Pact authorities with a

[Mr. Schreyer.]

view to arranging reciprocal reductions in military strength? It is my understanding that not once in 20 years have any formal attempts of this kind been made by either one of the two military pacts. If this is the case, a strong argument can be made for getting out of the alliance so that it will not be able to hamper the credibility of national governments trying to seek a détente through bilateral arrangements.

As I said earlier, I am not one who challenges the necessity of the alliance in its initial years. But after 20 years, just how critical and perceptive a review or investigation is being made of its continued usefulness by Canadian foreign policy-makers? To what extent are they willing to admit that there have been these rather profound and obvious changes in conditions in that part of the world, which would tend to justify a changing role for Canada in that alliance even if we do, and I suggest we should, renew our participation in it?

● (6:10 p.m.)

I now wish to refer to our foreign aid programs. The Leader of the Opposition spoke at length in this connection and with much, if not all, of what he said I find myself like-minded. But it seems to me that even if we do increase the amount of our foreign aid from three-fifths of one per cent of our gross national product to one per cent, the figure we ultimately hope to arrive at in a couple of years, we should now be preparing ourselves for the rather frustrating performance that may be expected.

Despite the amount of money given as foreign aid by donor states over the years, statistics show that the economic growth of the recipient states has been very slow. In some cases growth has been non-existent. This is due to changing patterns in world trade. I am not sure whether the Leader of the Opposition made reference to this aspect of the problem. The fact is that many of the underdeveloped states are dependent on the sale of primary products, but world trade patterns are tending to depress the prices of these products. It is doubtful whether the world community can develop a new kind of trading mechanism that will help increase the value and price of such primary products whereby underdeveloped countries might achieve a higher return and enjoy a more favourable balance of trade. But despite this, Mr. Chairman, we must try to do much more in the field of foreign aid.