

those conditions of stability and security in which peace flourishes. Nor does it in any way conflict with the charter of the United Nations. So far as this government is concerned, Mr. Speaker, it pledges itself not to take part in any activity under the North Atlantic treaty which contravenes the principles and purposes of the United Nations charter, or which is provocative or aggressive in character. I am sure the other governments which will sign this treaty can also give the same pledge. The aims and purposes of the North Atlantic treaty are precisely the same as those stated in the charter; and the effect of the proposed alliance can strengthen the United Nations by creating conditions in which it can do more effective work.

Canada's support of this pact, therefore, is not in any sense a change in our policy toward the United Nations and what it stands for. The Canadian government still hopes that the problems of post-war settlement, which have prevented the United Nations becoming what it was originally intended to become, may be solved. We hope, moreover, that the United Nations itself will contribute toward that solution. So far negotiations, either inside or outside the United Nations, on the major issues which divide the U.S.S.R. from the rest of the world have produced, as the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) pointed out this afternoon, little but failure and frustration. No doors are closed, however, and no one has permanently left the council table. So far as this government is concerned, no process of negotiation is too onerous and no conference too tedious that will lead toward settlement. We are prepared to support every effort in every council, every conference, committee, working group or whatever agency of negotiations may be suggested, to solve the problems which exist between the western world and the Soviet union. More than that, we believe that by these methods the long-term problem of security can best be solved. But in the meantime the North Atlantic treaty will serve as an instrument which, by strengthening the position of the free democracies, will make it possible for them to use the United Nations with greater confidence and more hope of success.

The negotiations leading to the preparation of the draft treaty now before the house commenced about ten months ago in Washington. A series of exploratory and non-committal meetings were held in that capital. In these meetings, which were attended by members of the United States state department and the ambassadors in Washington of the interested governments, the draft text of the treaty was worked out. As is always the case when drafts are worked out by representatives of many governments, the text and indeed the ideas in the text represent compromises and the highest possible measure of agreement between representatives of differing governments. The preparation of this treaty, I think, is an admirable demonstration of the way in which foreign affairs should be conducted amongst democratic countries. While the discussions in Washington have been confidential, their general purpose and the principles behind them have been well known to the public in all the countries concerned. Each participating government has been able to test public opinion in its own country as the agreement was being formulated. In this country there have been frequent public references to the negotiations which were proceeding in Washington. The government has missed no opportunity to tell the public that a draft treaty was being prepared and that the Canadian government was participating actively in this work of preparation. We have also given a clear indication of the purposes of the treaty and the nature of the commitments which would be involved, as the work was going on.

At the same time, however, the men who actually participated in the discussions and the governments who instructed these men, have been free from day-to-day public comment on the specific details as opposed to the principles under consideration. In the result, it has been possible to reach a conclusion generally satisfactory to all parties in the give and take of private discussion, without the difficulties which often arise when the early stages of delicate, detailed international negotiations are conducted in public. Honest differences of opinion, when they occurred in the afternoon, did not become sensational world headlines in the six o'clock editions, and of course there is nothing more difficult for a democratic government to abandon than a headline. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is often somewhat difficult for certain governments to get headlines.