

In some of the statements that have been made in this debate, Mr. Speaker, reference has been made to the European situation and certain questions have been asked of me in that regard. Some of these speeches have filled the gaps in my own statement of yesterday morning and have added, I think, very materially to the information of the house with respect to European problems. The hon. member for Peel (Mr. Graydon) said that in my statement it would have been helpful if I had said more about the situation in western Germany and western Europe. I agree it would have been helpful if I could have said more. Although I spoke for quite a long time, I admit, Mr. Speaker--and in fact I stated at the beginning--that there were serious omissions in my statement. I did not say very much about western Germany or indeed about western Europe. I did say, however, and I should like to repeat it, that we welcome the establishment of a federal democratic government in western Germany. We hope that it will soon be able to extend its jurisdiction over a united Germany. The development that has taken place already has a bearing, of course, on the German peace conference. It looks now as if the possibility of holding a peace conference for the whole of Germany is more remote than it was a year ago. This is of course due to the split in Germany itself, and the difficulties at the present time of establishing a modus vivendi with the Russians which would make possible the healing of that division. Meanwhile we have the western federal state of Germany which has become a going concern. We are recognizing that development by planning to establish very shortly a mission to represent Canada at the capital of the state, which is Bonn. We will for that purpose be appointing, as head of our mission to Bonn, the official who is now the head of our military mission in Berlin. This change in the situation in Germany will make it possible to reduce the mission in Berlin to the status of one or two officers.

Reference was made also by certain speakers to the position in regard to the German and Austrian peace treaties. I have mentioned the German peace treaty. So far as the Austrian peace treaty is concerned it looked a few weeks ago as if substantial progress had been made and that an Austrian peace treaty might soon be worked out by the four great powers. But there are still difficulties in the way, and these difficulties seem to revolve around the impossibility of the U.S.S.R. on the one hand and the other three states on the other hand getting together over the difficult question of reparations.

A more important point, I think, was mentioned by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) this afternoon, and was touched on by other hon. members in other statements, when I was asked to clear up the question of our commitments under the north Atlantic pact. I stated in my remarks yesterday that we did have such commitments, and I repeat that statement now. However, it was pointed out this afternoon that my colleague, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), in a statement in this house the other day had said that we had no commitments under the north Atlantic treaty. There might, therefore, seem to be some contradiction in these two statements; but I submit, Mr. Speaker, that there is no such contradiction. When the Minister of National Defence was speaking in the debate to which reference has been made it was quite clear at least to my mind after reading his statement, that he was referring to the military aid commitments which result from the implementation of the treaty. That seems to me to be clear from a reading of the paragraph in question. If I am in order, Mr. Speaker, I should like to repeat what the Minister of National Defence said at that time. He said, as reported at page 1698 of Hansard:

It is perfectly clear that we have no commitments whatever under the north Atlantic treaty. The organization under the treaty has just been set up. The regional groups have been organized and the appropriate officers and representatives of the various governments concerned are considering what should be the various strategical plans and requirements.

This is expressly dealt with in paragraph 12 of the statement I gave, in which I said:

"It is still too early to spell out the consequences of the pact in terms of men and dollars."