

*NATO—European Defence Community*

Western Germany itself. It is a further step, and I think a valuable step, in the development and the reaffirmation of collective security and collective action which is the best preventive of war in the present circumstances. I think the hon. members of the house, in view of the importance of this matter, would wish me to set this protocol and its implications, especially its implications for Canada, in the wider framework of a statement which I shall keep as short as possible on the European situation with special reference to Germany.

It is, I am sure, clear to all of us that over the continent of Europe today hangs the threat of aggression the driving force of which is a compound of Russian imperialism and communist ideology. Even with that threat facing us, it is not easy to banish memories of the appalling results of German armed might in the service of a totalitarian regime. There are few European countries today in which the material and spiritual wounds of the second world war have had time to heal completely.

National economies, which with the help of the Marshall plan and other assistance have been gradually returning to something like normal conditions after the destruction of war, have had once more to shoulder the added burden of large-scale rearmament. It is heartening, therefore, Mr. Speaker, to see that in spite of these trials of the body and spirit men have been found who realize that the battles of the past should not determine the policy of the future and who realize also the urgent necessity of uniting Europe—of uniting Europe for peace on the only basis on which this can be done.

I need hardly remind the house that in any scheme for European integration the position of Germany is of central importance. This is abundantly evident from the efforts which have been made and are still being made by the western nations to secure the support—and by the Soviet bloc to secure the submission—of the Germans. Germany lies in the very heart of Europe and it is not surprising that western policy in general, and indeed United States policy in particular, regards German participation as essential to the effective defence of Europe. This I suggest should be the easier now that the long feud between France and Germany has lost much of its reality in a world where the important divisions are no longer inter-European—and the old-fashioned balance of power concepts are based on larger than national considerations.

So, the nations of Europe which are still free to choose—and they are not all free to

choose—are realizing, in spite of neutralist sentiment in certain countries and certain quarters, how important it is for their survival that they unite as Europeans in the face of this common menace and common danger. This process of European integration seems often painfully slow to those of us who watch it from across the Atlantic ocean. To the Europeans themselves I often suspect it must seem immoderately hasty.

It is not my purpose to recount all of the steps taken in recent years toward the unification of Europe. They are well known to all of us but it is perhaps not always realized that there have been so many. Because the urgent necessity of avoiding a third world war has filled the minds of free men, particularly in North America, we have underestimated the enormous strides which have been taken in the last few years towards the solution of complex European problems, many of which have persisted throughout generations.

This progress has been made in spite of deep-rooted, understandable nationalist feelings and traditions and serious political difficulties such as the legitimate desire of some nations to retain their economic and political association with countries outside Europe. It follows, I think, from these considerations that the integration of Europe will be a gradual process achieved through the creation of supranational authorities with limited but definite powers in certain specific fields—such as the coal and steel authority under the Schuman plan and the Benelux convention. This functional approach has proved to be more acceptable to the nations concerned than the theoretical approach of those who want to establish a formal federation at once. European unity then, I suggest, must grow and not be imposed. It must be a voluntary and constructive union—not anything like a shotgun marriage.

The European defence community treaty by associating the Federal Republic of Germany with the defence of Europe is one far-reaching step toward this more closely integrated Europe. The E.D.C. treaty, like the Schuman plan, is the result of a bold idea for the solution of a major European problem—the return of Germany to the community of free and democratic nations. It takes its place in a complex of agreements all of which show this same trend toward Europeans coming together.

As so often in the past, it was on this occasion the keen and imaginative political intelligence of the French leaders which gave birth to many of the ideas which have helped to create this more closely united Europe.