

In the company of like-minded peoples we tried to find means by which the free world, of which this nation is a part, can remain free. More important still, we tried to find a way to work with other nations to search out and remove the causes of war. The North Atlantic Treaty, the draft of which is before the house, is the present answer to these demands. It is the step which we can take now while we try to bring about conditions in which the United Nations can fully perform the functions for which it is designed.

The objects of this draft treaty are very simple and straightforward. In it the nations of the North Atlantic community will agree to pool their resources in the face of common danger. By doing so they will greatly increase world stability and the chance of lasting peace, for once this treaty is made effective further aggression against any of its members cannot be undertaken with any hope of success.

The North Atlantic nations have by this draft treaty decided to put an end to the casual and piecemeal destruction of freedom which has taken place when free states stood separately against aggression. By taking a stand now they may make unnecessary a desperate stand later like that of 1940. That year of danger and dread must never be forgotten. Is there anyone in Canada, no matter where he lives or what language he speaks; no matter what religious belief he holds or what political party he follows, who does not recall with dismay the events of June, 1940? France was prostrate and the whole vast continental area from Bordeaux to Vladivostock had fallen under the control of two mighty totalitarian powers in temporary evil partnership. Staunch and steadfast Britain alone stood between ourselves and the formidable military power of Nazi Germany. Those twenty miles separating the German armies from the white cliffs of Dover, from the last free country in western Europe, were more important, so far as our safety was concerned, than the whole wide Atlantic ocean. Never was the future of this country in such peril. Those few miles of channel alone kept the war from our shores. This is the dire extremity which must never be allowed to recur. We can prevent it first by removing the causes of conflict, and secondly by demonstrating beyond any shadow of doubt to any possible aggressor that, if he takes a step against any member of this North Atlantic community of nations which are pledging faith to one another, he will face the total and unremitting efforts of all until he stops his aggression.

It is not enough, however, simply to stand on guard. Active and not merely passive defence is essential. In the long run peace can be assured only in a stable world; stability is reached when economic conditions are improving, when trade flows freely, when political problems are being solved by consultation among states determined to settle them peacefully. Security is a commodity produced as much, indeed, possibly more, by economic well-being as by military preparedness, as was pointed out this afternoon by the leader of the C.C.F. group (Mr. Coldwell). We must, therefore, co-operate as effectively to achieve the former as the latter. Security is also produced when men know that other men share and understand their basic beliefs. This is also something that we shall seek among the states which sign the North Atlantic treaty. They inherit common traditions, and the political and social practices they follow spring from a common background. The faith they have in the validity of their free institutions is strong, and it will be strengthened by the pledge which they are now giving to each other to maintain and defend them. Daily we see these beliefs attacked and defamed by the advocates of an alien, dictatorial, political creed -- communism. The power of the communists, wherever that power flourishes, depends upon their ability to suppress and destroy the free institutions that stand against them. They pick them off one by one: the political parties, the trade unions, the churches, the schools, the universities, the trade associations, even the sporting clubs and the kindergartens. The North Atlantic treaty is meant to be a declaration to the world that this kind of conquest from within will not in future take place amongst us.

The purpose of the proposed treaty, therefore, is to increase the security of the North Atlantic community, and at the same time to make more effective the efforts of this group of states to remove the economic and political causes of war. That is why this pact is an instrument of peace. It will promote