

and provided for the entry of the Federal Republic of Germany into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. You will be asked to approve the agreements reached at those meetings.

Our country continues to give full support to the United Nations. The Canadian delegation took an important part in the deliberations of the recent meeting of the General Assembly in New York. It is earnestly hoped that the adoption of the resolution on disarmament introduced in the political committee by the Canadian delegation may lead to agreement on an effective system of international safeguards.

While no final settlement has been reached in Korea, the lessening of the threat of renewed aggression in that area has made possible the withdrawal of a substantial portion of the Canadian forces.

At the invitation of the Geneva Conference Canada has accepted the heavy responsibility of serving on the Armistice Commissions which have been formed to supervise the restoration of peace in the Associated States of Indo-China.

Last autumn our nation was the host at the annual meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan. You will be asked to approve Canada's continued participation in the Plan as well as in the United Nations' Technical Assistance Program.

A meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers will be held in London at the end of this month to consider a number of problems affecting the peoples of this great association of nations. My Prime Minister plans to attend this conference.

During the summer arrangements were completed to permit the navigational facilities of the St. Lawrence River to be enlarged and a hydro electric project to be undertaken in the International Rapids section.

Work on these two projects has already begun and my ministers are convinced the stimulus to the national economy resulting from their construction will be shared in all parts of the country.

Since you last met, Cape Breton Island has been linked with the mainland by the new causeway, which will be ready for service as soon as the ship canal has been bridged.

It is expected that, in the course of the coming season, the new ferry between North Sydney and Port aux Basques will be in operation and the ferry service between Yarmouth and Bar Harbour started. Construction of a new ferry to operate between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island will be undertaken early in the present year.

To improve navigation on the Pacific Coast, you will be asked to make provision at this session for the removal of Ripple Rock.

Canadians learned with deep regret of the loss of life and damage to property caused by two severe storms felt heavily in the province of Ontario and the province of Nova Scotia. An agreement has been reached with the province of Ontario to assist those persons whose homes were damaged or destroyed, and assistance has been given under the Agricultural Prices Support Act to the producers of apples in Nova Scotia. You will be asked to make the necessary financial provision for these arrangements.

The Disabled Persons Act which you passed at the last session was proclaimed to come into force at the beginning of the present year. The governments of all the provinces have announced their intention to participate in implementing the program to assist those who are totally unable to care for themselves; and my ministers are now in a position to conclude the necessary federal-provincial agreements to bring this humanitarian measure into operation.

Although the national economy is in a generally healthy condition, the relatively poor wheat crop is being reflected by a small decline in the total national income. Some unemployment of a regional and seasonal nature is being experienced. To help meet this situation work on public construction projects already approved is being accelerated and you will be asked to make financial provision for construction in the programs of various departments and agencies on a scale that will make possible a substantial increase in the total expenditures for this purpose.

The Government proposes to introduce legislation immediately for the amendment of the Unemployment Insurance Act to provide for an increase in the duration and scale of supplementary winter benefits. It is also proposing to introduce, during the session, broader amendments designed to make unemployment insurance a more effective instrument in providing financial support to unemployed workers.

The National Housing Act, 1954, enacted early in the last session, which authorized lower down-payments and larger loans, and which enabled the chartered banks for the first time to make loans on the security of residential mortgages, has been an important factor in stimulating the construction of a record number of houses in the past year. The prospects are favourable for a high level of house building in 1955.

It is proposed to bring into general operation on the first of February the provision of the act under which loans may be made for