

sarily multiplied by the united nations. During a recent visit to the seat of the organization at Flushing Meadows with some of our distinguished colleagues, I began to wonder whether such statements were entirely accurate. I am not in a position today to give any definite opinion in that regard because it is difficult to analyse the situation with fairness.

At the opening of the special session of the general assembly on the question of Palestine, which I had the privilege to attend, several of these commissions, eight of them, I think, were formed by the united nations' delegates. I do not think any of my colleagues present had the time to find out exactly the functions of these numerous new commissions. As a matter of fact, our chief Canadian delegate at the conference, Mr. Pearson, whose competence is highly recognized in all international circles, had the honour to be appointed chairman of one of these committees to investigate some of the political aspects of the Palestine question.

But among the more permanent international commissions already formed by the united nations, it appears to me that this new commission on human rights is one of the most important. Again our country was given the distinction of being represented on that commission on human rights by a capable Canadian, Mr. John P. Humphrey. Mr. Humphrey, who was a former professor of international law at McGill university, is very well known and has always been a credit to his country. On many occasions he has expressed his opinions and his desire to see unity established in Canada. In that respect his advice was often quoted, and it has demonstrated his wish to see better understanding and tolerance between the English and French groups in Canada. On such occasions he has proven that he knows well the problems of our country. His ability and broadmindedness will allow him to understand better the great problems facing mankind and also the task he has been called upon to fulfil as secretary of the commission on human rights.

At the time of its formation, the new commission was given by the council, among other things, specific instructions to submit a report regarding the adoption and acceptance by all the united nations of an international declaration on human rights and the rights and duties of states. The task imposed upon the commission was great, and its importance for the betterment of relations between individuals and nations and for the establishment and maintenance of peace cannot be exaggerated.

In its past and often useless efforts to prevent wars, the world, through its international

organizations, has constantly tried to define certain great principles concerning the rights of individuals and peoples, and to force their recognition and observance by all nations. It has always been because such principles have been misinterpreted, ignored or violated by a nation or a group of nations in particular that conflicts of all kinds and wars of ever-growing intensity have devastated mankind. The same remarks apply to the numerous civil wars which, from time to time, have plunged certain nations into misery, desolation and even complete destruction.

But, if these former international organizations have, on different occasions, proclaimed their belief in certain general principles, it often happened that nations could not agree on these basic rules and their opinion could not be unanimous. The immediate consequence of such disagreements was the sudden discovery of undeclared hostilities, which gradually increased and developed to become sources of quarrels resulting in conflicts and wars.

One of the causes for such failures may be attributed to the fact that such international organizations understood their tasks too late; instead of working to secure the consent of all their members to the recognition of the intangible rights and duties of each at the beginning of negotiations, they waited until differences were actually created and then sought to find a solution. When passions have been aroused, it is often too late to intervene.

It is for one of these reasons, I think, that the economic and social council of the united nations has decided to define or enact for the benefit of its negotiations a declaration of rights and duties which will be accepted by all.

Since Canada has decided, by signing the united nations charter, to do its full share in the organization of this new post-war world, and wants to take an active part in all the deliberations of the new international council, I was glad to read of the intention of the Canadian government to participate in a constructive way in this new task of preparing this international charter of freedom. Such intention was indicated in the speech from the throne and also appears clearly in the order of reference of the new committee to be appointed.

But a strange thing struck my mind when I discovered that we, members of this parliament, were called to study the preparation of a bill of rights to be applicable to the world at large. If I rightly understand the nature of our task, we are to work as a nation, together with the other nations of UNO in