

and Canada have suggested the possibility that, for the time being, the United States and Canada should enter into informal, but I hope effective, relationship with O.E.E.C. This suggestion was made after consultation with Mr. Stikker, the Netherlands foreign minister, who is chairman of O.E.E.C. I expect that it will be considered by O.E.E.C. itself sometime in the near future. The circumstances connected with this decision were made known to the house in a statement by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), I believe on May 18. We are hopeful that, whatever form of organization eventually emerges, it will develop into an important agency for social and economic co-operation between free Europe and free North America; co-operation which may one day lead to an Atlantic commonwealth of free states.

Independent of this O.E.E.C. development the council, at its meeting in London, and to emphasize its recognition of the importance of article 2, decided to direct its committee of deputies to study and report as to what further action can be taken under article 2 of the treaty, this report is to be made available for the next meeting of the council in September. These studies will refer to both economic and social questions, and consideration will also be given to the possibility of greater co-operation in preparing and making available information about the aims and objects of the North Atlantic alliance. May I quote again, Mr. Speaker, the relative paragraphs of our communiqué, where the council, through its different deputies, was charged with the duty to

... promote and co-ordinate public information in furtherance of the objectives of the treaty while leaving responsibility for national programmes to each country;

consider what further action should be taken under article 2 of the treaty, taking into account the work of existing agencies in this field.

While most of the decisions taken at the North Atlantic Council meeting were, as I have pointed out, decisions in principle, decisions in principle are of little consequence unless the details are worked out and given effect. We discussed for some time the question of setting up some kind of more permanent machinery to follow up our work, and to see that the work is made effective as possible. There were two ways by which this could have been done. One was by making the central figure the secretary-general, and by building a machine around him, an international secretariat under the North Atlantic Council. The other procedure would have been the establishment of a committee, who would meet in more or less continuous session as deputies of the members of the council, and who would be assisted by the necessary secretariat. The latter course was adopted, and the adoption of that course, I hope, will in a sense put the North Atlantic Council into permanent session. It is expected that the governments concerned will appoint their deputies shortly, and that the deputies will then elect a chairman who will become, I suppose, the key figure in this permanent machinery which we set up.

The paragraph in the communiqué dealing with this point reads:

To enable the council effectively to carry out its responsibilities and to exercise them continuously, each government will appoint a deputy to its council representative. Each deputy will be in a position to