

Human Rights

ness, Hazen, Macdonnell (Muskoka-Ontario), Massey, Miller, Irvine, Jaenicke, Stewart (Winnipeg North), Hansell, Herridge be members of such committee, as far as the interests of this house are concerned, to consider the question of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the manner in which those obligations accepted by all members of the united nations may best be implemented;

And, in particular, in the light of the provisions contained in the charter of the united nations, and the establishment by the economic and social council thereof of a commission on human rights, what is the legal and constitutional situation in Canada with respect to such rights, and what steps, if any, it would be advisable to take or to recommend for the purpose of preserving in Canada respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

That a message be sent to the senate requesting that house to unite with this house for the above purpose, and select, if the senate deems advisable, some of its members to act on the said proposed joint committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour at this time to move on behalf of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), who is absent from the house on a mission of devotion and duty, this resolution. I shall not repeat the words of the resolution which you have just been kind enough, sir, to declare to the house, but I do desire at once to remind the house that this is an implementation of the message contained in the address of His Excellency in the speech from the throne that a joint committee of both houses be appointed to consider what I consider to be one of the most important issues of our time.

We have had discussions in this house on many occasions on the subject of human rights and personal and fundamental freedoms in their relationship to matters of domestic concern. Since then events in a wider sphere have brought this question before us in a different form. We are to consider the subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms, not only as a Canadian problem but in relation to our obligations to other peoples, to the recently liberated peoples of the fascist states, to the awakening masses of Asia, to the citizens of our former allies whose concepts in many cases of human rights and freedoms, however tenaciously held, would seem to differ vastly from our own.

The inspiration for this international approach came in our day from what I might without extravagance term the memorable terms of the Atlantic charter. I am not going to go through the details of that charter this afternoon, as every hon. member of this house knows them as well as I do, but I will just quote:

[Mr. Mackenzie.]

They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them . . .

The rest of the articles of the charter, to which I could easily refer, will be left for the discussion which may ensue.

When the united nations was formally constituted at San Francisco in April 1945—some of my hon. friends in all parts of the house were there—the very preamble of the charter set forth the supreme purpose of the united nations in the following terms—I shall quote only one paragraph because I shall be fairly hurried in my summary:

We the peoples of the united nations determined . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small . . . and for these ends . . . have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

All through the charter, Mr. Speaker, we find the same ideal kept in the foreground.

Article 1, defining the purposes of the united nations, I need not read.

Article 13 includes this purpose among the principal functions of the united nations by providing that:

1. The general assembly shall initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of:
(b) promoting international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields, and assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

Article 7 of the charter, which establishes the principal organs of the united nations, lists among them an economic and social council.

Article 55, is the basic article surrounding this debate, together with article 56. Article 55, dealing with the subject of international economic and social cooperation, pledges the united nations to promote, *inter alia*:

universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Article 61 provides that:

the economic and social council shall consist of eighteen members of the united nations elected by the general assembly.

Article 62 authorizes the council to initiate studies and reports with respect to the purposes assigned and in particular:

It may make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.