

*Paris Trade Conference*

course of events. As the date for Paris drew near the Canadian government received inquiries and representations from a number of other governments, some in the commonwealth and others outside. All of them were worried by the possibility that important movements were on foot, and important decisions were to be taken, in which their interests were involved but in relation to which they had no direct voice. These governments may rest assured that in the recent meetings the Canadian delegation did all that it could, and not without some success, to ensure that their interests were not neglected.

These representations served to remind us vividly of the dangers and damage that could attend restrictive regionalism, whether in Europe or elsewhere. Political and commercial interests go hand in hand. The most constructive, least divisive, solutions for commercial problems are to be sought not by one region of the world seeking insulation from the rest, but in arrangements that can encompass all free nations on a basis of harmony and equality.

It may simplify matters at this point if I explain that in Paris last week there were in fact three successive, and in a sense quite separate, meetings, and that three themes ran through all three of them. The first meeting was of the thirteen; the second was of the twenty, as independent equals; the third meeting was of the OEEC council where all twenty were present, but where Canada and the United States were only associate members, without voting rights and without obligations. This was the first occasion on which Canadian ministers had attended an OEEC meeting. In the past Canada's representation has been by officials rather than ministers.

The three themes of the meetings were trade, aid, and organization; that is to say, the reorganization of OEEC. Each issued in a resolution, which was first adopted by the thirteen, and then adopted without alteration by the twenty.

I now table the texts of these three resolutions, and suggest that, if it is the wish of hon. members, they may be printed as annexes to today's *Hansard*, for the assistance of hon. members.

[Editor's note: For texts above referred to, see appendix]

It is convenient to begin by reporting what developed in the field of organization. It quickly became clear that there was widespread support amongst European countries for a revision or reconstitution of OEEC that would fit it for the tasks of the 1960's,

rather than the Marshall plan and the 1950's, and would at the same time make it suitable for adherence by Canada and the United States as full members.

This task of reconstitution is to be undertaken in two stages. First, four experts in their personal capacities are to compile a report with recommendations. After that there will be such meetings and discussions among the twenty governments as the matter may require. The first meeting will take place on April 19. The whole process of approval, including ratification by the United States congress, would inevitably last well into next year. One of the experts will come from the Six, one from the Seven, one from the United States, and one from the remaining countries. I shall be informing the house of the names of the four experts as soon as this information can be officially released.

During the meetings the United States representative declared the willingness of his government to join the reconstituted organization, subject to agreement on a satisfactory constitution and subject to congressional approval. As for the Canadian government, our wish would be that Canada would also find it possible to become a member. Europe has now fully emerged from the period of post-war economic difficulties and is an increasingly important force in world affairs. Hon. members will agree that in these circumstances Canada, with vital European and world interests engaged, should be prepared for full participation.

The second theme in Paris was aid, and on this I can speak briefly. European countries are showing not only an increased capacity but an increased disposition to provide aid, not only through multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the international bank for reconstruction and development, but also bilaterally, just as we have done for nearly ten years under the Colombo plan and in other ways. It has been agreed that, pending reconstitution of the OEEC, eight countries should pool their experience and know-how with regard to aid programs. No financial commitments are involved, and no change in Canada's aid program, as included in the estimates for the coming fiscal year, is to be anticipated. The members of this group, in addition to ourselves, are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with the commission of the European economic community. The committee has power to add to its numbers. The group will consult the international bank, and thus avoid overlapping of activities with that or other international institutions.