

I think I can say without exaggeration this is an historic occasion. It is certainly one of the greatest steps toward world peace and security that have been taken since the end of the first world war, and if we look at the history of relations between this European continent and the new world of the western hemisphere, I think we can say this agreement marks the opening of a new era of co-operation and understanding. This is the first time the United States of America have ever felt able to contemplate entering into commitments in peacetime for joint defence with Europe, and it is a most famous historical undertaking into which they are now entering in common with the rest of us. We shall with them, and the rest of those who join in this pact, make our due contribution in the firm belief that the step now being taken will bring peace and security for our common civilization for many generations to come.

Let me add one sentence from the speech of France's foreign minister, Mr. Robert Schuman:

Today we have obtained what we vainly hoped for between the two wars. The United States has recognized that there is neither peace nor security for America if Europe is in danger.

We in Canada also recognize that there is neither peace nor security for Canada if western Europe, quite as much as any part of this hemisphere, is in danger; but we feel that, by uniting our efforts, by making our peaceful intentions clear, by making our preparations serious, and by forcing the totalitarian rulers of the communist states to realize that we mean business, we are not contracting our strength but expanding it. We will create a situation which will enable us to speak in the only language they recognize, the only language they understand -- the language that speaks from strength.

This is, of course, a serious step for this young nation, but I think it is a step that will implement the desire of all the Canadian people that civilized Christian nations should at some time abandon trial by might for the rule of law. Although I invite all hon. members to consider the general tenor of the draft treaty, and to express their views by their votes or otherwise on this resolution only after having done so, I do insist that there be full opportunity before ratification of the treaty -- that is to say, before it becomes binding on Canada -- to consider it again in detail in this house, with the knowledge that the language being considered is the definite language that is there to stand.

(The last part of Mr. St. Laurent's speech was delivered in French and translated in Hansard as follows:)

Mr. Speaker, to all Canadians of my own race and creed, the bitterness with which the pact is being opposed by the few communists who unfortunately live in our midst, is sufficient proof that it is in the interests of true Canadians to approve the pact.

I would like to quote from one or two examples of the literature that is being distributed by those communists throughout the country. I was in Oshawa during the weekend. There, a meeting was being attended by several hundred persons. At the door of the hall, a young man handed out a circular entitled: "Don't Let Them Sign Your Death Sentence."

"Whether you are of military age or over, male or female, the signing of the North Atlantic pact concerns you directly. It might prove to be the signal for the U.S. Brass Hats to start dropping atom-bombs. Your personal survival -- the fate of your family and loved ones -- as well as our country's national existence -- is at stake."