

tribute to the reality of the freedom permitted by the British commonwealth that the Irish Free State has exercised its right as an autonomous state to stay out of this war. I disagree with its decision but I recognize the historical value of its right to make that decision. On the other hand the Union of South Africa is fighting by the side of Canada and other component parts of this great commonwealth in the war in which we are now engaged. In considering these contrasted situations, one must first trace the history of the relationship between Great Britain and Ireland, the long period of disunity, occasionally of repression, of frequent application of the special crimes act, and of attempts to enforce upon Ireland certain decisions of the central power; and note the results of that policy. Think on the other hand of the result of Britain's wisdom, immediately upon the conclusion of the South African war, in giving to the Boers complete freedom to govern themselves within the framework of the British commonwealth. When I see the dividends which that policy of tolerance and generosity has paid in the results which have flowed from it, I say that the commonwealth of nations has set an example to the united nations which they may well respect and follow, and from which they can draw useful lessons.

In reflecting upon Canada's war effort, the magnitude and amazing success of which in its contribution to the common cause is generally recognized, I am struck by the advantages we have reaped by profiting by the mistakes which were made in the last war and in the period which followed that war. In the setting up of an organization to preserve international peace and security, I believe we would be wise, as most of the speakers have indicated, to study the experiences of the past and observe why the efforts which were made after the last war were not as successful as it was hoped they would be. Some of those errors are quite apparent. One was that the task was not undertaken until the completion of the war. Over sixty nations gathered at Versailles without the unifying influence of a common war effort and attempted to find by discussion there a basis of peace and of the establishment of a league of nations. Looking back, one is not in the least surprised that in the atmosphere of selfishness, hatred and bitterness engendered by the war, the human beings who led the conference at that time found it impossible to establish a successful institution. I am delighted that in our day we have shown wisdom in not waiting until the end of the war to sow seeds which in time may grow into a strong

and vigorous organization to preserve the peace of the world. I think too that we have gained greatly from the conversations which have taken place between the heads of states and from the various conferences which have led up to the one which is to take place in San Francisco.

Another mistake which was made in 1919 was in tying the league of nations covenant to the peace treaties, which were signed as it were under duress by enemy nations. One of the wisest things that those who took part in the Dumbarton Oaks conference did was to separate completely from the work of the united nations organization the task of dictating or enforcing peace terms between the belligerents in this war. It will give that organization the opportunity to stay apart from the inevitable dissatisfaction which will result from those peace treaties, signed under duress, as necessity dictates, with all the implications of continued occupation and control which they must contain. So I am greatly encouraged, as I say, that in these conferences, seeking to eliminate a good many of the things which might divide the larger conference, we have already taken many steps towards ensuring the success of the San Francisco conference. You will recall that as early as May, 1943, at Hot Springs in Virginia, a conference was called to consider and make recommendations with regard to food and agriculture. Then at Atlantic City a little later there was another conference to deal with relief and rehabilitation; then at Bretton Woods a conference to deal with monetary and financial matters, and finally the conference held at Dumbarton Oaks to consider the setting up of the framework of an organization to preserve international peace and security. It is true that the organizations dealing with these specific matters are functional in their character, as has been said; but it is hoped, as indicated by the suggestions for a charter contained in the Dumbarton Oaks agreement, that finally the assembly of the united nations will undertake the task of correlating the activities of these different economic and socially-minded groups.

I think, too, that the great powers who took part in the Dumbarton Oaks conference, in the long run, did the cause which they seek to serve a great service by not being too specific in the setting up of the proposed organization. I was pleased this afternoon to hear the Prime Minister suggest that it might be wise to provide in the charter for a future meeting, say in five or ten years' time, in which, in the light of the atmosphere of that day, such changes could be made in the organization as were found to be necessary.