

*United Nations Agreement*

terms, six retiring each year and each being eligible for immediate re-election. The powers assigned to the council are important. The council may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters and may make recommendations to the general assembly with respect to any such matters, to the members of the united nations and to the specialized agencies concerned. It may prepare draft conventions for submission to the general assembly. It may call international conferences on matters falling within its competence. It may set up commissions in the economic and social fields.

We have had it reported to us that the Canadian delegates played a leading part in writing the sections of the charter dealing with the social and economical council. Canada gave leadership, it is our proud boast, in writing in these sections of the charter. Let Canada follow that up in succeeding sessions of the assembly and of other bodies of the united nations organization and try to give the nations of the world leadership in the social and economic fields. It may be that there is our greatest opportunity to make a great and lasting contribution in the international field. Let us seize that opportunity; let us by all means urge that Canada be given a place on that council.

In passing, I want to lay stress on this, because in an earlier address this afternoon there was, I thought, a suggestion to the contrary. There was a suggestion that the Christian conception of the sanctity of the individual had been completely overlooked by the framers of this charter, that there was contained in it no bill of human rights. It is true that there is not to be found in the charter as it stands to-day in precise terms a bill of human rights, but provision is made right in the sections I have read—as a matter of fact it is one of the first duties laid upon the social and economic council—that it should frame such a charter of human rights. How can anyone give any other reading to those sections of the charter? Regard must be had for human rights and the fundamental freedoms, the freedoms that are to be put before all men and all nations as their right. I do not see how it could be better put than it is right in these sections. The whole of the work to be done by the united nations in years to come was not done at San Francisco. How could it be? Those who went there were framing a charter; they were setting up an organization through which these nations in years to come should seek to work out those purposes and objects which have been declared to be the purposes of all the nations,

[Mr. Fleming.]

and one of the greatest of those objects has been set forth as the safeguarding of the rights of human beings the world over.

I do not think any hon. member should be invited to subscribe to this charter without full appreciation of certain facts. In the first place, no international organization or international agreement can be of any benefit to mankind which does not command commitments from nations. If one is simply thinking about the kind of organization which will permit us to subscribe to or reject proposals from time to time, I do not think much can be expected from that type of agreement. If we have any hope of seeing this united nations organization made the means and vehicle for the establishment of peace throughout the world for years and years to come, commitments—binding commitments—must be entered into; and had our delegates brought back from San Francisco anything less than an agreement which called for commitments on the part of this and other nation members, they would have failed in their duty.

We are asked to make certain commitments. We are also asked to pledge ourselves to adhere to the commitments we now enter into. It may be thought by some a rather trite observation, but the history of the world—yes, including the history of this country—has shown that nations have sometimes entered into commitments and then have sought, when it suited their purposes, to deny adherence to their commitments. The commitments which are involved in this charter are in the field of the defence of nations, not just our own nation, but a contribution to the defence of nations which may be attacked by aggressors, and which we are called upon to assist, as undoubtedly this country would be. We are called upon to make commitments in the field of diplomacy, and in our social and economic programme.

As good a summary as I have seen of the commitments which Canada undertakes under this charter is contained in a brochure issued by a worthy organization, of which I am proud to have been a member for many years, the United Nations society in Canada, formerly known as the league of nations society. This is the way it describes the more important pledges which Canada undertakes in this charter:

1. To conduct our foreign policy and international relations on the basis of the principles set forth in the charter.

2. To accept and carry out (in accord with predetermined arrangements) the decisions of the security council even if the use of force is involved.

3. To endeavour to settle all disputes by peaceful means.