

amendment procedure under the charter. Under that charter each of the five great powers possesses the right to veto the coming into force of any amendment. It is to be hoped they will not employ this veto power in such a way as to give the charter a rigid character.

During the interval between the signing of the charter at San Francisco and the convening of the first sessions of the principal organs of the united nations, a preparatory commission has been set up charged with making certain essential interim arrangements. The two main tasks of the commission were, first, to study and make recommendations on certain questions which could not well be handled at San Francisco, and, second, to expedite the work of the new organization by thorough preparation for its initial meetings.

In order to make it possible to set up the commission immediately, the instrument creating it was put in the form of an inter-governmental agreement with provision that it came into effect on the date on which it was signed, the 26th of June last, the same date as the signing of the charter. The commission consists of one representative of each signatory government. It is provided that the executive committee which is now sitting in London shall exercise the functions and powers of the commission when it is not in session. This committee is formed of the same states as those which made up the executive committee of the conference, namely, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Iran, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yugoslavia.

Canada is at present represented on the committee by Mr. D. F. A. Turgeon, Canada's ambassador to Belgium. The committee's work is now well advanced, and it is hoped to hold a meeting of the preparatory commission in the near future. I understand a tentative date for the first meeting has been fixed on the 8th November, and it is hoped that a sufficient number of ratifications will have been deposited with the state department of the United States before that date.

Mr. Stettinius stated recently that already thirty of the nations had adopted approval proceedings, but formal instruments of ratification, according to the latest information available to us, had been filed only by eleven states, and it was hoped that if the two houses of the Canadian parliament are agreeable to the approval of the charter, the Canadian instrument of ratification can be signed by His Majesty and filed with the state department in Washington by the end of this month.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

In looking back on the achievement of the San Francisco conference, I think it may be said that foundations were laid for a system of international cooperation in the interests of order, security and progress. We hope on these foundations to build world peace and security, but the work of the conference cannot be isolated from the urgent and difficult problems of the post-war period. Only if these problems are wisely solved will the united nations organization have an opportunity to develop its potentialities. In particular, the conditions under which the new organization will function will depend on the nature of the peace settlement in Europe and Asia. I use the term "peace settlement" in its widest sense to include not only the treatment to be accorded the defeated enemy but the relations between the victorious allies.

If there is to be an effective united nations organization the great powers must remain united under the strains and stresses of the post-war period. At the same time it is essential to any lasting system of security that the middle and smaller powers should be accorded a voice in the peace settlement proportionate to the contributions which they have made in winning the war and which they are willing and able to make to the problems of peace.

To build a solid and enduring structure of international security will be no easy task, but the risks of failure are beyond calculation. The coming of the atomic bomb has opened our eyes to the appalling possibilities which may face the world if the united nations should fail to achieve international cooperation. The charter of the united nations is a first step in the direction of that cooperation between the nations which appears to be essential to the survival of civilization.

In concluding my remarks in support of this motion for approval of the charter, I beg leave to quote from a short speech made by the Canadian Prime Minister at the opening of the San Francisco conference. This is what he said in part:

The people of Canada are firm in their resolve to do whatever lies in their power to ensure that the world will not be engulfed for a third time by a tidal wave of savagery and despotism. That is why our parliament overwhelmingly endorsed the acceptance of the invitation to Canada to participate in this conference. That is why our parliament accepted the proposals of the inviting powers as a satisfactory general basis for the discussion of the proposed charter. That is why the delegation from Canada received from parliament a mandate to use its best endeavours at this conference to further an agreement to establish a world security organization.