

they said their special deputies would hear representations with reference to those treaties. When the special deputies met in London we made the representation which was read in this house by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) on January 30 and which received such universal support. On receipt of that recommendation the special deputies met, and it is well understood everywhere that they were unable to agree unanimously on the procedure, and they had no power to decide anything in the absence of agreement. Therefore the matter is now referred to the council of foreign ministers who will be meeting at Moscow. They will consider it and our hope is that they will make some arrangement, satisfactory we trust to this and other countries in a similar position, which will recognize not only our right to work with them in determining the main lines of the peace but also the fact that on the record, and because of our position, we can render useful and constructive assistance in that great work.

We are not interested in this for reasons of status. Our status as a nation does not depend upon any council of foreign ministers; it has been won and settled for all time. This is a question of procedural machinery, a question of working out something which we believe to be of vital importance. We believe it to be such because we believe we can make a useful contribution toward what we all have in mind and all people everywhere have in mind; that is, that having won the war and won the right to say what the terms of peace shall be, we can now lay the foundations of peace again for ourselves as a first instalment of that better world for which we hoped and worked and fought, and which it is now in our power to have.

Mr. ROCH PINARD (Chambly-Rouville): I wish to offer my sincere congratulations to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) on his great contribution to this afternoon's debate. By this, we can judge his contribution to the international conferences, which has been along the same line. I wish also to congratulate other hon. members who have taken part in the debate.

Since this debate allows the discussion of international affairs, and since we are dealing with the treaties to be signed both with Germany and with Austria, I do not wish to let this occasion pass without underlining certain deficiencies which, because of their seriousness, may, in my opinion, endanger and in considerable measure, the collective effort of

nations of good will toward the betterment and stabilization of enduring peace in international relations.

If it is true that during the last conflict the democratic nations, with whom we were then pleased and proud to join, shared in the common fortunes of total war; if it is true that we have the right on our side, it must also be recognized that it is now their common duty and ours to work with our enemies toward peace. Even if it is admitted by all that the right was on the side of the victorious nations, let us not trample that right under foot, because it would then become the principal argument of our opponents and a good reason for them to refuse to accept conditions of peace which no victorious nation has ever acquired the right to impose upon a vanquished people.

We have seen the reactions of the Italian people and even of its unstable government at the time of the signature of the Italian peace treaty—signs of discontent and strong protests coming from a nation which we thought did not even have strength left to speak, so much had it suffered and is still suffering. That government hesitated to sign a treaty the contents of which may well correspond to the complete subjection of the nation itself. Must it not be contended that the Italian peace treaty, in which Canada could not participate as she wished, already contains the seeds which eventually may produce a revolution? Has it not been overlooked that this overpopulated nation, the resources of which are insufficient to ensure a decent standard of living for its people, is in absolute need of other resources and of the advantages of a world market?

I will not contend that imperial Italy should have been reestablished, but I think the rest of the world should provide for that nation, which has always been one of the most cultivated and civilized, the means whereby it may maintain itself today. Italy has the right, as every other nation, victorious or defeated, to enjoy the fundamental liberties which will allow it to survive in the dignity which is indispensable to any free nation.

An important warning may result from the publication of the terms of the Italian peace treaty and from the reaction of the Italian people itself, and it should serve as a guide in the drafting and discussion of the other treaties to be signed, like the treaties we are dealing with this afternoon: the Austrian and German treaties.

So far as I am concerned, I have approved the gesture of our Canadian government, which refused to sanction the clauses of these