

tragic days, hours full of anguish. We were on the verge of war. Never since the fateful year of 1914 had we faced a crisis so full of momentous events, where the slightest blunder on the part of certain statesmen might have started a European conflict in which our whole civilization would have perished.

The Czechoslovakian crisis was provoked by the coming into play of the interlocking alliances and ideological passions of two important groups, one led by Hitler and the other by Mussolini. These two leaders of men are characterized not only by the dictatorial organization they have given Germany and Italy, as Paul Van Zeeland tells us, in effect, but by the personal magnetism with which they succeeded in galvanizing their peoples and expanding their forces, thus increasing the power of the two countries to a formidable degree. What brings them still closer together is the fact that, in order to attain their purpose, they both took advantage of the struggle against communism, destroyer of internal order and a menace to the peace of the world.

The Sudeten Germans, encouraged by Berlin, demanded autonomy and a radical change in the foreign policy of Prague. Hitler, encouraged by the successful Anschluss, sought to extend the influence of the Reich towards the east. The problem was all the more serious as France was bound to Czechoslovakia by a guarantee of assistance, the validity of which she publicly affirmed on several occasions. Military preparations and unfortunate border incidents made the situation worse. London attempted diplomatic manoeuvres but conferences and negotiations proved unsuccessful. Hitler wanted war at all costs, and massed his troops on the Czechoslovakian border. It was then that Chamberlain, a man who had never travelled by air, made his historic flight which resulted in the Munich agreement. This pact has been the butt of bitter and violent criticism. Now that the storm has abated, however, and calm is restored, who can in all sincerity affirm that Chamberlain did not act wisely? Could France effectively defend Czechoslovakia had Germany attacked? Had England completed her rearmament program, and was she ready for war? Would Russia have intervened in the conflict in the face of a domestic crisis? And, inwardly, was Russia not rejoicing at the prospect of a war which would have weakened the four European powers and left her a free hand towards the west? These questions must be answered in the affirmative if Chamberlain is to be condemned.

And what of the attitude of our Prime Minister, who at the time of the crisis was also severely criticized by extremists clamour-

ing for a promise of intervention? He remained calm and wise, as usual. Strengthened in the attitude he took at the time of the Chanak incident, he stated that the Canadian parliament alone could decide whether Canada should participate in a war which might affect other parts of the British empire. After the Munich conference, the Prime Minister approved of Chamberlain's peace gesture, and all right-thinking citizens endorsed the government's policy.

(Text) At this juncture I should like to turn to another subject mentioned in the speech from the throne and which to my mind is equally as important as the one I have just discussed. I refer to the tripartite agreement which was signed at Washington in November of last year. Ever since this government has been in office it has sought by all the means at its disposal to break down the barriers of economic nationalism by opening up channels of trade. No sooner had the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) been returned to office in 1935 than he succeeded in negotiating a treaty with Washington which expired in January of this year. The treaty which was signed recently is more important and will have far wider effects than the previous one. It may be considered from two points of view.

In the first instance, a challenge had been thrown out to democracies in recent months that they were impotent, unwieldy and slow and that their hope of preserving liberty and freedom was on the wane. The treaty was a complete answer to totalitarianism. It showed the world that the democracies were no longer paralyzed, but were very much alive. In the matter of trade at least it showed that they had left the dictatorships lagging far behind. This treaty, coming as it did after the dark days of September which brought us closer to world conflagration than anything that has taken place since 1914, had the desirable effect of uniting in a common bond of friendship the great democracies of the world.

In the next place, the treaty may be regarded as conferring great benefits upon Canada's primary industries. The fishermen in the maritimes and the potato growers in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have easier access to the markets of the United States through larger quotas. The lumber operators were able to get unanticipated benefits in connection with British Columbia fir, red cedar shingles and hemlock. The farmer of the prairie provinces was not forgotten. The dairymen of eastern Canada have obtained important concessions on milk, cream and cheese.

The manufacturers of textile goods fear that they are being injuriously affected. The *raison d'être* of their fears will be confirmed or dis-