

Similarly, in international politics the things that divide the free and democratic nations of the world are as nothing compared with the gulf that separates these free and democratic nations from those subjected to the total tyranny of present day communism.

The tragedy of Czechoslovakia in September 1938 and March 1939 was a prelude to war. The tragedy of Czechoslovakia in February 1948 need not be a prelude to war. It does, however, underline the necessity for the free states of the world to unite their material, their political and their moral resources to resist direct and indirect totalitarian aggression.

May I now cross the world to the far east.

The situation in the far east is, in the long run, hardly less menacing than that in Europe. During the years of Japanese aggression in east Asia serious strains were put upon the political economic and social organization of that part of the world. The defeat and withdrawal of Japanese forces have left in the countries of the far east a legacy of political unrest and economic chaos. In circumstances such as these, the danger is particularly great that foreign penetration will be accomplished through local revolutionary forces.

The immediate need in the far east, therefore, is, as in Europe, a general peace settlement and the return of economic stability. As far as peace with Japan is concerned, the views of the Canadian government have already been made clear in the review which I gave the house on December 19 of the discussions that had taken place with regard to a Japanese peace conference. It has since then been made clear that the U.S.S.R. seeks to prevent countries other than the great powers from participating in any effective manner in preparing the Japanese treaty, and that procedures similar to those advocated by the U.S.S.R. for the peace settlement in Europe should, in the Soviet view, be adopted for Asia. These proposals we of course regard as unacceptable. It is the view of the Canadian government that an equitable settlement in the far east, reflecting the views of all the principally interested states, can be prepared only in a broadly representative conference where one or two countries do not have the power to block the wishes of the great majority. It is also the view of the Canadian government that the immediate menace of communism in the far east should not be met by the restoration of Japan to a position of such power that she can once again become a threat to peace.

I pass now to two brighter subjects - Canada's relations with the other nations of the British commonwealth and with the United States. First the British commonwealth.

Our relations with the United Kingdom and the other nations of the commonwealth, will, we always assume, and with good reason, be characterized by what is lacking in the world today, mutual confidence and understanding, frankness and good will. Constitutional issues, one of major importance in commonwealth relations, are now virtually things of the past. The principles of equality and complete autonomy are now the accepted postulates of policy for all member states of the commonwealth. The present status of all members is in fact well described in the phrase, now often used, as "independence within the commonwealth".

The commonwealth relationship has, however, never been and cannot remain static. The dangers and uncertainties of the present world situation have compelled Canada to assume greater responsibilities as a North American nation. For the same reasons the United Kingdom has boldly assumed the leadership in reorganizing the security and increasing the economic stability of western Europe. Australia and New Zealand are likewise greatly concerned about security in the south western Pacific. Yet the assumption of special regional responsibilities by commonwealth nations has not weakened their general and close association.