

We have followed with intense interest the evolution of the Republic of Western Germany. It is hard to realize that it only came into being in the year 1949 and that the First Bundestag met for the first time on the 7th day of September, 1949. You, Sir, became the first Chancellor of this newly-created state and only recently you have again been confirmed for the second time in that position.

During the lifetime of your first Parliament certain definite policies emerged. During that period Germany, through her government and Parliament, decided to become a member of the European Defence Community. The decision was taken that Germany's future lay in close association with the free powers of the West. In the recent elections you sought the approval of the German people for this policy. I think they clearly gave you their answer on September 6.

I would like to assure you that the Canadian people and the Government of Canada have been watching with careful interest and appreciation the great work of reconstruction and rehabilitation which the German people have been carrying out.

We know that what has happened here and is happening here will have a determining influence on the future course of world history.

We have known too much of war in our generation. Twice since 1914 we in Canada, have sent the best of our young men abroad to fight, and it is a sombre thought tonight that our men on both occasions fought against yours. I think that we cannot forget those dark times, nor should we, for they are a lesson to all of us. But I am sure I need not remind any audience in Germany today how terrible a catastrophe is war, nor how precious is peace and security.

It is to the preservation of peace and the maintenance of security that we must dedicate ourselves in these times. I believe that we are all firm in our agreement on this. Only in a secure world can we preserve the values of freedom and respect for human life, without which life loses its meaning. And only in a peaceful world can mankind progress towards the eradication of poverty, ignorance and distress.

With the end of the last great struggle, Canada in common with a majority of nations and all peoples hoped that we would move into an era of peace and understanding, an era in which the burden of armaments and threats and dangers of war could be lifted from the backs of mankind. It took us some time to realize that this was not to be and that the Soviet Union had a very different outlook. To protect our civilization from a return to the Dark Ages the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created. Canada was one of those countries which, from the first, felt the need for such a body.

I do not need to tell you that Canada stands squarely behind its commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. More than ten thousand of our soldiers and our airmen are in Europe, a majority of them in Germany, in fulfilment of our obligations to NATO.