

Austrian State Treaty

the time the treaty was signed in Vienna on May 15, 1955, to enter into force on July 27, 1955, there was no obligation on the part of Canada to accede to it, though provision was made in the treaty for the accession of Canada and other allied and associated powers. If there has been delay in our accession it was due to a variety of reasons which, I think, were legitimate ones.

I recall that some years ago the Austrian government invited Canada to accede—it was in 1956—expressing the hope that we might decide to do so at that time because, they stated, they attached considerable importance to the accession of a country such as Canada, feeling that this might encourage accession by other states and so strengthen the basis of the new state. At that time, however, there were a great many arrangements in the treaty governing assets, reparations and other matters arising out of the war which had not been satisfactorily concluded between the new state and certain other European states which were not at that time accessory to the treaty. These arrangements came under article 27 of the treaty, and it was our view at that time—and, I may say, this was reinforced by conversations we had with some of these other European countries at that time—that accession to the treaty might be delayed until these matters had been cleared up.

Now they have been cleared up, and it is entirely appropriate, I think, that we should accede to this treaty. Austria is, I believe, the first example in history since the second world war of a country, divided as a result of war, which has been reunified on a free and democratic basis. Perhaps it could be put this way: this is the first unfreezing of a situation in the cold war which was brought about by military arrangements concluded during and immediately after the war, which arrangements established boundaries which went, not around countries, but through countries. Another example of this type of division is, of course, Germany, which we have very much in mind at this time. Korea and Viet Nam are other examples. However, Austria has managed to extricate herself and is the only postwar country to have emerged from that unhappy divided position which is a source of danger to peace and security in those countries where that state of affairs still exists. This was the result of quiet, continued and patient diplomacy conducted by the four powers over a good many years in the face of great obstacles which at times appeared to be insurmountable. But success was finally achieved, and Austria became free from both division and occupation.

[Mr. Pearson.]

Of course, as the treaty indicates, there was a price which the Austrian people paid—and paid willingly—for this freedom. They accepted neutralization. They accepted the obligation—and I think this is embodied in the treaty—not to join in any power alliance. They accepted other limitations, including limitations on their right to use certain armaments, and they accepted one very important limitation which brings to mind a similar limitation in the treaty of Versailles after 1919—article 4 embodying a prohibition of *anschluss* with Germany, a prohibition which was contained in the treaty of Versailles but which, unfortunately was not maintained between the two wars.

This has been an encouraging and, indeed, happy development—a country freed from foreign occupation, from Nazi occupation and from communist occupation; a country which is now united on a free and democratic basis. In this regard it is interesting to recall that before the treaty was signed there was a plebiscite in that part of Austria which had been occupied for many years by the Russian communist forces. In spite of the pressure which must have been brought to bear on the people in that area and in spite of the indoctrination which must have taken place, I think some 94 per cent of the people voted to join the new unified and democratic Austria which is now, as the Prime Minister has said, playing a good part in international affairs and with whom we have the friendliest and most cordial relations.

I am glad the Prime Minister paid tribute to the part played by Austria in the reception of Hungarian refugees a few years ago. The actions of Austria at that time not only illustrated great generosity on the part of a small and not especially rich state, but also courage in the face of pressures both political and economic which must have been hard to bear at that time.

We hope this occasion will establish a new chapter in the friendly relationship between our country and this gallant and historic little state in the middle of Europe.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): On behalf of this group I am very happy to endorse the remarks made by the Prime Minister with respect to this resolution for the approval of the treaty re-establishing an independent and democratic Austria.

This most interesting country has a colourful history. For centuries, during the period of the empire, it had power without authority or stability, and existed in a situation where compromise without agreement was a constant state of affairs. For 650 years under the Hapsburg dynasty the roots of these people were largely related to the Danubian basin.