

the bank and the fund, the food organization, the economic and social organization, PICAQ, the international refugees committee and the trade conference which is now under way, as well as the various conferences of the united nations, he will find that Canada has played not a boastful, vauntful place, but a useful place, a place which has been recognized by others attending these conferences as objective, fair-minded, free from self-seeking and always headed and staffed by people well informed, well briefed and competent to do their job.

I ask the hon. members I have mentioned, who have taken part in these conferences, if they will not bear me out in saying that as they moved around among the other delegations, whether it be our good friends to the south or the Latin-American countries; whether it be the Europeans or the Soviet Union and its associated countries, no matter what the countries are, they found that their representatives usually were ready to say that they were surprised that Canada, a country of twelve million people, should be able to secure the representation that she has been fortunate in having in international conferences. I believe that the hon. gentlemen whom I have mentioned would also agree with me that in our Department of External Affairs we have a group of representatives of our country which is second to none throughout the whole world today. Incidentally, from what I have seen at several of the conferences, I believe that they are seriously overworked and I hope that when the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) brings down his estimates he will secure support from the house to ensure that we do not continue to put the burden on our representatives abroad that we do today.

In addition to what we have been able to do at these conferences, there is the very special position of Canada. Canada has no particular or selfish interest or demands. That was the view expressed by the Prime Minister at Paris—and repeated on every occasion when the occasion arose. We want nothing from any nation except the chance to work with them—to lay the foundations of a lasting peace and of that degree of prosperity among all nations which is an essential ingredient of peace.

Canada has a special interest in international security because of our dependence on world trade. We have a special stake in peace because almost thirty-five per cent of our national production ordinarily comes from world trade; but that also gives us a particular equipment with which to see the needs of other nations. Another reason why we can play a part is the nature of our people them-

[Mr. Claxton.]

selves, the fact that we are essentially a people of minorities, which gives us a special position to understand minority and other similar questions.

It was not just coincidence that at the Paris conference one of the members of the Canadian delegation, Lieutenant-General Pope, head of our military mission at Berlin, was asked to sit in with the representatives of Hungary and of Czechoslovakia to try to act as an umpire in a discussion of some of their vexed minority problems. Hon. members with experience will agree with me that the times when Canadians, because of their experience and because of their objectivity, are asked to act either as chairmen, as draftsmen or as the third men in the ring for an informal discussion, are positively embarrassing. Then, too, because of the nature of our people, because some thirty per cent have as their mother tongue French it usually follows that our delegates are more bilingual than those of other countries. That was so at Paris when practically every member of the Canadian delegation had a working knowledge of both French and English. That gave a tremendous advantage in discussions with other nations.

Mr. Speaker, we have a new-found capacity to be of service in the cause of international peace. That lies in the unity of the Canadian people as represented in the house and through the country on this all-important question. It is no longer possible for some hon. members who take a colonial point of view or a totally nationalist or isolationist point of view to say that they represent any substantial part of the Canadian people. These are the noisy extremes; but in the wide centre lies the great bulk of the Canadian people who recognize our position in the world, recognize how it has been won, recognize the obligations and the opportunities it gives. The people who take this view are not only in a majority but as represented by spokesmen for all parties of the house, newspapers from end to end of the country and people everywhere they are the great bulk of the Canadian people. On this as, I believe, on all fundamental questions where the vital interests of Canada are involved we stand together, and this debate is important as showing it.

Now let us see what the position is. The council of foreign ministers met and had a long series of discussions at New York when they discussed the terms of the treaties with the five satellite powers which were ultimately settled in December. They had a limited number of meetings, discussing preliminary arrangements with regard to the treaties with Austria and Germany, and having done that