

175 million people; and, as matters now stand, Canada is in the centre, isolated economically, the one member of the NATO organization remaining as a citadel of protectionism.

I believe that if nothing is done this will create untold difficulties for us in the future. Our industries, both export and domestic, will be in a most difficult position. The process of bleeding to death, such as Nova Scotia and other Maritime provinces are already encountering, will be further accelerated.

My proposal is this. I believe that Canada should follow the example of the United Kingdom in seeking to become associated with the European Economic Community, by progressively removing tariffs and other obstacles to trade over the next 14 years, as Britain is contemplating, until complete restrictions on trade have been removed; and that, as well, we should seek to enter into a similar arrangement with the United States of America.

I am making this proposal because I consider it of the utmost importance, but not with the thought that by any manner of means it will meet with the approval of all honourable senators; indeed, its terms may be violently challenged. Also I think it desirable that a thorough discussion should take place on our future trading position before the two important conferences are held this year, which delegates from the Senate will be attending. I refer to the Atlantic Congress to be held in London under the auspices of the NATO Parliamentary Association, which is to be opened on June 5 by the Queen and will have in attendance 650 delegates from the NATO countries, 45 of whom will come from Canada; and to the meeting of Canadian and United States legislators to be held in Ottawa later in the year for consideration of matters of mutual interest to our two countries.

I might add that, although I have no information on it, I understand—and if it is so I have no doubt His Honour the Speaker will advise us—that an invitation is also likely to be forthcoming from the Council of Europe, the body under which the economic development of Europe is taking place. As honourable senators know, Canada and the United States are not members, but observers, and there has been a desire in the past that they be represented. I believe at one time we were represented, but not recently. As I say, from some source I understand that an invitation to this council will be forthcoming this year, in which case there would be a third gathering.

With respect to the two conferences to which I referred, I presume we shall be informed in more detail as to what is contemplated when our delegates to the recent NATO conference in Paris and to the recent meeting in Washington report to the Senate. I believe it is of the utmost importance that the delegates who represent us at these two important conferences should be well advised as to what is the viewpoint of the Senate, for it is my experience that unless our delegates do their homework before attending such conferences they will be greatly handicapped in making an effective contribution. I hope, therefore, that discussion on this matter will take place during the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I also hope that the report of our delegates to the recent conferences will be in such form that questions can be asked and comments made. Indeed, it might be well worth while to have our standing committee on Canadian Trade Relations or External Relations afforded an opportunity of hearing from governmental officials and other witnesses.

That, honourable senators, is the basis of my argument. If I may be privileged to do so, I would make a few comments.

As respects our own position in Canada, I want to suggest to this house my opinion, for what it is worth, that despite the very rosy picture which my honourable friend the Leader of the Government in the Senate (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) painted for us last evening—and to which I am taking no exception, because I do not have the information he has—that for Canada, from an economic standpoint, particularly in respect to our trade, the honeymoon is over.

Since the close of the recent war we have had tremendous development. As honourable senators know, there has been a ready market for the products of our natural resources and industries, with little world competition and with steady production costs. Much the same situation has existed in our domestic industries. There has been a tremendous capital boom in Canada, which to a great measure has provided markets for our domestic industries.

Now, honourable senators, we are approaching a change. I do not know how soon its major effects will be felt. As the honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate said yesterday, there are many factors which indicate continuing progress, and I do not quarrel with him in that respect. However, I would point out, first, that our export industries—which after all have been the keystone to Canada's progress—are facing a changed situation. I need only mention the coming competition from Russia, which our