

Difficult days lie ahead for Italy. The communists, having failed to get power by constitutional means, may resort to the threat and use of force. But we are confident that Italy will prove as successful in dealing with these threats as it has been in dealing with the communist attempt to gain power by using the democratic process of an election.

I would also like to mention three other important, indeed historic steps which have been taken recently, in the organization of democratic action. The first was the passage by the United States Congress of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, authorizing an appropriation of \$5,300 million for the first twelve months of a European recovery program designed to last some four years. The second was the adoption on April 16 by the sixteen free nations of Europe and by representatives of the three western zones of Germany of the convention for European economic co-operation. The third was the signing of the Brussels pact. As to the first, on behalf of the government of Canada I hope I can say even the people of Canada would like to pay tribute to this generous and imaginative act of high statesmanship by the government of the United States. By the enactment of the Foreign Assistance Act, the most powerful democratic state of our day has given new confidence and vigour to all the free peoples of the world.

In their turn, the western European nations have given proof of their ability to respond to the challenge of the Foreign Assistance Act by the adoption of the convention establishing an organization for European economic co-operation. They have established an organization for self help and mutual aid in economic matters. The purpose of the organization, as set forth in the preamble of the convention, is the --

speedy establishment of sound economic conditions enabling the contracting parties as soon as possible to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of economic activity without extraordinary outside assistance, and to make their full contribution to world economic stability.

This signature of the Paris Convention took place less than a month after a third great historic event -- the signature on March 17 in Brussels of the five power treaty of mutual assistance by the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg. The convention agreed to in Paris is a long step towards economic unity in western Europe. The treaty signed in Brussels is a long step towards closer political and cultural unity as well.

This "western union", proposed by Mr. Bevin in his great speech of January 22, the nucleus of which has now been created by the Brussels treaty, is no mere military alliance directed against a possible aggressor from the east. It goes further and deeper and seeks to mobilize the moral as well as the military and economic resources of western Europe. It seeks to restrain the aggressive forces of communism, not by a Maginot line but by building up in the liberal, democratic and Christian states of western Europe a dynamic counter-attraction to them.

The difficulties which the governments and peoples of western Europe will have to overcome in order to create a western European community are formidable. To fail to comprehend their magnitude would be to demonstrate a lack of understanding towards the peoples of that part of the world. To us in this continent of vast spaces, western Europe may seem small and compact, but it is composed of many great nations, each with a long and splendid separate national tradition; each proud of its distinctive character, its peculiar institutions, its national independence. These difficulties are inherent in the rich diversity of the great European tradition. But the move towards the creation of a union of all the peoples of western Europe has been successfully started. We welcome that move and