

our national safety is closely bound up with theirs.

For these reasons Canada sent its representatives to the discussions which were taking place in Washington. In these meetings the terms of an agreement were worked out by which the free governments of the western world would work together to protect their common stake in peace and freedom. The governments which have taken part in these discussions believe that by these means they can make the cost of aggression so high for any possible disturber of the peace that he will not venture on any act of aggression. They believe they can do even more than this. They have faith that by co-operating amongst themselves they can help build a stable, prosperous, peaceful world. This is no mere negative proposal for a defence alliance. It is meant to be the beginning of a positive development in co-operation -- economic, social, cultural -- amongst the free nations of the Atlantic community.

What are the States that will be asked to sign this Treaty? Let me name them for you: Belgium, Denmark, Canada, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States. These twelve states which border on the North Atlantic or which are close to it, occupy a large area. They command large resources, and their industries are well developed. They are inhabited by many millions of people, and these people are generally self reliant and independent in spirit. Their association is a natural one geographically. It is natural also because of the common heritage they have -- in political and in social organization; in culture and in religion. They can help one another in many ways. Together they can restore the western world. Together they can frustrate the Soviet veto on peace. Together -- under the Treaty -- they can begin the building of the North Atlantic community, based on a common tradition of liberty and democracy.

What will Canada be expected to do if we sign the Treaty? The best answer to this question is to be found in the text itself. Article 5 contains the most important commitment. The States which sign this Treaty agree that "...an armed attack against one or more of them shall be considered an armed attack against them all". They also agree that if any one of them is attacked, each will "assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area". If such an attack occurs -- and with this Treaty that dread contingency is far less likely to occur -- no one knows what type of action will be necessary to bring the aggressor to terms. Whatever this action is, we agree to play our proper part in it in co-operation with the other members of the group.

This by no means implies that we as a nation, will be giving a blank cheque to others who will tell us what to do. Not at all. On the Council which it is proposed to set up under the Treaty, we shall have a voice in making any plans which the group will jointly recommend to their governments. If there is an emergency, we shall have far more influence than we have ever had before in determining how this emergency shall be met. If there is no emergency, we shall through this proposed council, be able to take part in the very significant measure of economic and social co-operation which is provided for under Article 2 of the Treaty.