

resolved to set forth on the great adventure which must, if it succeeds — as succeed it will — enable us to save all that is dearest and finest in our common inheritance

Therefore this draft Treaty is not only a moving message of reconciliation; it testifies to our confidence in the future.

It is more than a mere document drawn up by politicians and lawyers; it is the positive effort of men who are resolved to preserve inestimable treasures and a heritage of ideas which we cherish all the more because of the aggression to which they are exposed.

Your Excellencies,

In this work of creating Europe it was you who, in Luxembourg on 10th September last, bravely took the first decision. We for our part accepted the difficult task entrusted to us and we have brought it to a successful conclusion. To-day a new stage is passed. Let us not arrest our forward march, let us not relax our efforts. We must, without losing time, pursue our common task.

This I ask of you in deep sincerity and confidence.

(Loud applause.)

SPEECH BY M. GEORGES BIDAULT

*Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic,
President of the Council of Ministers of the E. C. S. C.*

M. BIDAULT spoke as follows:

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Lady and Gentlemen.

As a result of the normal rotation of functions in the Council of Ministers of the European Coal and Steel Community, I have to-day the privilege and the very great honour of speaking at this Meeting.

On 10th September 1952, in Luxembourg, as you, Mr. President, have just recalled, the six Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands invited the Members of the Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community to join with the representatives of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and engage in a common endeavour to work out, by 10th March 1953, a draft treaty setting up a European Political Community.

Beating the clock by twenty-four hours, in response to a request by my Government, you are to-day duly keeping your appointment.

Because of the novelty of the subject, a vast amount of work had to be done in order to complete the task successfully in time for this meeting. The men who worked out the conclusions which you are now

submitting for the consideration of the Governments have constantly kept before them, with a perseverance born of faith, the nobility of an ideal and the wisdom of a purpose.

The Committee, which has in such outstanding fashion prepared the way for your task, met in several countries, seeking its inspiration in the noblest cities of Europe. History, and the caution which it teaches, and the future in whose mirror fear and hope are both darkly reflected, have constantly guided its labours. On behalf of the Governments, I would express to the craftsmen who have produced this great work and to all of you, Gentlemen, our thanks and our deep appreciation of your magnificent effort.

Remembering that I myself have sat on these benches, having by no means forgotten what I have had occasion to say in this House, and not having personally changed my views when changing my seat, I am happy to pay to you, in admiration not unmixed with envy, the tribute addressed by the first Elizabeth of England to the founders of an Empire, "Salute to adventurers!".

One of the questions confronting us all is that of knowing whether the Europe we are going to build, and which we all agree is a necessity, is a mere dream, a wraith, the improvisation of a speaker, or whether it is, on the contrary, a vitally essential creation. When the name of Europe was once again uttered amid the ravages of war, those who refused to fetter the future to the unhappy past were universally acclaimed; all the countries vied with one another as to which would be the most European, the most determined to heal the scars of history and rebuild the brotherhood of man across the frontiers.

We are now nearing the hour of decision. Honesty demands the admission that the undertaking is vast and beset with difficulties. Misunderstandings arise to bar the road. Men whose irreproachable attachment to ancient traditions inevitably designs them to be the spokesmen of the earth and of the dead feel misgivings about an undertaking which they fear may finally lead to the disappearance of their homelands. And yet our sole aim is to reconcile, to unite and to enlarge those lands. It is they which are sacred and holy. Not the frontier barriers and Customs posts. Nor did the voice of our ancestors ever preach the gospel of hatred.

We have undertaken to make a Europe. We could have wished it to be bounded by the frontiers of geography. Here in Strasbourg we have accepted a Europe bounded by the frontiers of freedom. At this moment, though we do not feel that these boundaries can endure, we are making a beginning at the frontiers of free will.

Far be it from us to wish to build this Europe for herself alone. Europe is not a thing apart; Europe exists to serve the world. On the banks of the Rhine, below the spire of the Strasbourg Minster, an age-old tradition proves to us that our present endeavour is the prolongation and expansion of the experience of centuries.

There is an inevitable division of labour between men with bold and independent minds and Governments whose honour and impediment it is to carry the responsibility; and in this you have doubtless the better part, which shall in no wise be taken from you. It now falls to the Governments of our six countries to take over and carry on the task which you have begun. The separation of functions and respect for the institutions which govern our peoples make this our solemn duty.

In the coming months we must, in Bonn, in Brussels, in Paris, in Rome, in Luxembourg and at The Hague, each and all of us, study the document we have just received. We shall devote ourselves to this study, you may be sure, firmly resolved to keep faith with the ideal which has inspired you, and equally concerned to gain a full realization of the difficulties or objections which might be encountered in each of our countries by one or other of the suggestions you have made, suggestions which, if we were foolish enough to underestimate their importance, would lay us open to the serious, the intolerable danger of having tarried by the way.

It will then be the duty of the Governments to tabulate the observations and conclusions which they have had to adopt. That will be the purpose of the conference envisaged in Article 38 of the Paris Treaty which, working on that basis, will be able to complete the draft Treaty that will serve as the Charter of the European Political Community.

You expressed the wish, Mr. President, that in these two stages, first in each of our own countries and later at the inter-governmental conference, our six Governments should not fail to call once again on the assistance of those eminent men who in the past six months have guided and inspired your labours. You need have no doubt that we shall at all times call upon their experience and their devotion which we so highly esteem. Our responsibilities, which are convergent, must go hand in hand but must not be merged. The Council of Six Ministers has consequently felt that it should be left to governmental circles during these two phases to determine how the Treaty should be drawn up.

When it has been signed by our six Governments, this text will finally be submitted for ratification to our different Parliaments. In the Committees, and on the floor of the Assemblies of which you here are the chosen representatives, each of you, I am sure, will bring all his faith, his abilities, his authority and his influence to bear, so that our common labours may secure the fullest approval of our national representative bodies.

Let us beware of thinking, if I may say so, that all things are possible to hearts that are sincere. But let us also be ready to fling wide the gates of hope. May the day soon come when each of us

will be free to say: "Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Luxembourg, or France is my motherland, but Europe is my destiny." (*Loud applause.*)

The President and the members of the Bureau handed copies of the draft Treaty to each of the members of the Council of Ministers of the E. C. S. C. (The Representatives rose from their seats and there was prolonged applause.)

The President. — The Sitting is closed.

The Sitting was closed at 7.40 p. m.