

decisions for the maintenance of world peace and also to see serious consideration given to the reduction of national armaments so that the productive capacity of the world thus conserved may be used for improving the living conditions of all peoples.

There was no very enthusiastic response to that suggestion from our friends of eastern Europe. A month later, speaking again for the delegation, I said:

The Canadian delegation feels that it would be premature to call in question in this first session of the general assembly the rule of unanimity set out in article 27. What we do call in question is the manner, or perhaps rather the number of cases and the kind of cases, in which that rule of unanimity has already been applied.

I went on to say:

The security council was given primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations. But the experience of the past nine months can scarcely be said to have demonstrated that the security council would be capable, under its present practices and procedures of taking prompt and effective action.

And further:

In the unsettled state of the world, which is the inevitable aftermath of the war, circumstances or disputes may be expected to arise where it would be important that the security council should be capable of taking prompt and effective action for the maintenance of peace and security. In such circumstances we would all like to feel that the council would be ready and able to take effective action promptly and not after a dispute or source of friction was fanned into a conflagration; that it would not wait until it is necessary to resort to force or until men, desperate from the frustration of waiting for a decision, might take whatever action they thought apt to serve their own interests.

That warning was applauded, but got very little beyond applause. The next year, when the succeeding meeting was held, speaking again for the Canadian delegation on September 18, 1947, I made, among other remarks, the following:

There is a growing feeling in my country, as in other countries, that the United Nations, because of the experience of the security council, is not showing itself equal to the discharge of its primary task of promoting international confidence and ensuring national security. The economic and social council is functioning fairly successfully. The specialist organizations are doing good work. But the security council, founded on what is called the unanimity of its permanent members, has done little to strengthen the hopes of those who saw in it the keystone of the structure of peace. It has done much to deepen the fears of those who felt that, with the veto, it could not operate effectively in an international atmosphere of fear and suspicion, where pride is often allowed to take precedence over peace, and power over reason.