



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 50/42 THE UNITED NATIONS: A PRACTICAL VIEW

An address delivered by Mr. R.G. Riddell, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, to a meeting of the United Nations Association and the Canadian Club, in Toronto on October 24, 1950.

It is a common interest in the United Nations which brings us here today and a common desire for its success and for the fulfilment of the great ideal which it embodies. But I am sure that in present circumstances we must do more than praise the United Nations and we must go further than merely reassert our belief in its principles. A fifth anniversary in the life of an organization is a good time to take stock. This is an occasion to ask ourselves, in the most practical terms, what the United Nations is worth and what it can do.

I am glad to be able to take part with you in this stock-taking, just because I am fresh from the conference rooms where the Fifth General Assembly of the United Nations is now in session. At Flushing and Lake Success, it is often hard to see in perspective what is happening. I can think of no more useful exercise for a member of a Delegation to the United Nations Assembly than the opportunity to talk it all over with interested and informed people who are watching our activities at a greater distance.

Certainly it is not easy to see the wood amongst the heavy undergrowth which springs up each autumn at Lake Success when the General Assembly meets. Nor is there much leisure during the Assembly itself to reflect upon the progress of the organization. A Delegate's life is by no means a restful one. It starts each morning at delegation headquarters with a full Delegation meeting at nine o'clock -- a meeting at which the Delegation as a whole tries to sort out its activities on the six main committees of the Assembly, and to foresee the day's agenda. This agenda may include subjects as practical on the one hand as relief for Korea and as abstruse and theoretical on the other as the effect upon multilateral treaties of reservations by signatory states. The Delegation must prepare itself for the day by attempting to see in advance the decisions which will have to be taken, the votes which must be cast, the subjects on which policy will have to be stated. It will have also to look ahead to decisions in the future about which it must seek instructions from the Government. When this meeting is over, the Delegation must transport itself twenty-five miles to the meeting place at Lake Success and there engage upon the business of the Assembly until meetings close at six o'clock. When the Delegates go back to their quarters in the evening, with the five official languages still ringing in their ears, there are reports to be prepared and memoranda to be written, speeches to be drafted in preparation for the next day's meeting.