



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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SYRIAN SITUATION

Statement by Mr. Wallace Nesbitt, Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, in the plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on October 30, 1957.

The Government and people of Canada have been watching with increasing concern the developments during the past few months in the Middle East and particularly the situation in and around Syria. Earlier this year we were encouraged to believe that we could look for an improvement in conditions in the area. We have been deeply gratified, as the Canadian Prime Minister indicated in the general debate, that the United Nations has had some measure of success as a calming influence in some parts of the Middle East. In these circumstances our concern about recent developments is given greater emphasis.

Like others in this Assembly Hall, the Canadian Delegation has followed with careful interest the course of the debate on the item submitted by the Government of Syria. In listening to the statements made by representatives of those states more directly concerned with the matter, we have been able to shape our opinions about what action, if any, the Assembly should take.

In the first place, we were not opposed to having the item raised in the Assembly. We shared the opinions of those delegations which have argued that the Assembly may discuss any questions related to the maintenance of international peace and security and we would not quarrel with the view that any member state, but particularly the smaller states, should be entitled to bring to the attention of the United Nations any cause of anxiety about its security and independence. Our assumption would be that the state concerned would be the best judge of where its best interest lay in a matter of this kind, but that in seeking assistance from the United Nations the interested government would act with responsibility and moderation. We have frequently expressed in this Assembly our belief that the United Nations will grow in strength and stature if we, as member governments, are prepared to heed the appeal of nations -- and this applies with perhaps greater force among the smaller nations--- who seek here to establish order in their relationships and on a basis of peace and justice.