

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

An address by Mr. W.E. Harris, M.P., Parliamentary Assistant to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Westmount Rotary Club, Montreal, April 14, 1948.

Sometime ago, I was asked by the Chairman of your International Service Committee to address you. The subject was to be "Three Years of International Co-operation", and I believe it was so announced. I hope you will excuse me if my remarks do not bear out the title, although the title can still remain. However, before proceeding I should thank you most sincerely for the opportunity of meeting the members of your Club and their guests. I should also extend to you the warmest felicitations from the Markdale Rotary Club. I am bound to admit, of course, that our activities are on a very small scale compared with yours, but I think that Rotary International is founded on the principles which every Christian person thinks should be practised as well as professed; that in different places and at different times opportunities will arise for our Clubs; that the measure of our good intentions is how we deal with the opportunities and not the number which may come our way. From what I have heard in the short time I have been here, it is clearly evident that you make full use of your opportunities to advance the principles on which we are founded.

I understand that this occasion marks the resumption of a programme devoted to International Affairs - a programme which you carried on before the war, but which has been interrupted for the past several years. It is regrettable that such should have been the case, but I think the interruption was well worthwhile in that we still retain the great privilege of meeting here tonight without fear, in fact, without second thought, for the purpose of saying what we please without regard to the consequences. May I, therefore, repeat that the time has not been lost and to commend you for your plan to initiate gatherings of this kind, and to compliment you on having the patronage of so many distinguished representatives of foreign governments and international organizations.

It was my intention to dwell somewhat on the work of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations because it did appear to me that they had met with greater success in the past three years than their more important cousins - the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. I suppose they have taken sure steps where the others have stumbled because they are technical bodies and technical problems seem more likely to be discussed objectively than political issues. Scientists and technicians at international conferences seem to be better than diplomats at getting along with one another, but this has not meant that scientists have not reflected in their deliberations, the political thought of their countries. But when I realized that the Specialized Agencies had been so successful, it seemed better to discuss the political issues as they are the ones which are causing the greater trouble. I do not claim for what I am about to say the dignity of Government policy, although I do not think it contradicts it. I am going to speak not as a Parliamentary Assistant, or even as a back-bencher.