

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA'S ELECTION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

A Statement by Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, Secretary of State for External Affairs, on the occasion of the election of Canada to the Security Council of the United Nations, October 1, 1947.

Canada's election to the Security Council of the United Nations confronts the Government and people of Canada with new and grave responsibilities. During the years 1948 and 1949, the Government will be faced, as never before, with the necessity of making decisions on the major questions affecting the peace and security of the world. Many of these questions will arise from situations having their origins far from our shores. At first glance these might not appear to affect directly the interests of the Canadian people. In so far, however, as these far away events are factors in world security, they are of first importance to the future of this country.

During our tenure of office on the Council we shall be obliged to play our part in trying to settle international disputes, many of which are complicated by differences between the Great Powers. One has only to read the front page of any newspaper today to realize the magnitude of the job to which we are about to put our hands.

Canada will be one of the eleven states on which will rest the main responsibility for overcoming the obstacles on the road to a just and lasting peace. We shall have to stand up and be counted before the eyes of a hopeful world.

A year ago the Canadian Government made known to its fellow Members of the United Nations the cardinal principle which it considered should determine the actions of a member of the Security Council. We maintained that each member should exercise its rights and responsibilities not in its own special national interests, but for the good of the United Nations as a whole, and the peoples of the world the United Nations represents. The States which yesterday elected Canada on a first ballot knew that this was our conception of the duty of a member of the most important executive organ of the United Nations. To the utmost of our ability and in full consciousness of the weaknesses of the machinery with which we will have to deal, Canada undertakes to live up to this principle and to try to justify this trust.

Under the terms of the Charter, the Security Council is organized so as to be able to function continuously. Each member is, therefore, to be represented at all times at the headquarters of the United Nations. This will involve the appointment by the Canadian Government of a permanent representative living in New York. The experience of other non-permanent members of the Council has shown that our representative will need the assistance of at least six experienced officers of the Department of External Affairs, together with an adequate clerical staff. At the same time, we shall have to strengthen the Division of my Department which deals with the problems of the United Nations. Reports from Canadian diplomatic missions abroad will become increasingly important and will have to be widened in scope to give us up-to-date information on which to base considered and independent judgments. All this will be an added burden on a Department of Government which is already carrying a heavy load.

It is now more important than ever that the people of Canada understand the serious obligations and responsibilities which this country accepted when it signed the Charter of the United Nations. Our election to the Security Council brings us face to face with the heaviest of these responsibilities.