



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 55/22 TENTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF
THE UNITED NATIONS

Statements made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and President of the seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made at the Tenth Anniversary meeting of the United Nations, San Francisco, June 24 and June 26, 1955.

Statement of June 24

I am the fifty-first speaker at this commemoration meeting. If my conceit reached as high as the Top of the Mark, I could not honestly hope to add anything new or profound to what has already been said about the United Nations. I may, however, be able to underline and reinforce some aspects of what should be the obvious!

The Abbé Sieyès, in his later days, was once asked what he had done during the French Revolution. "I survived" was his reply.

The United Nations has survived ten years of international tension and "cold war" - no mean achievement in itself. The world - as a Canadian journalist wrote, ironically, the other day - has also survived ten years of the U.N.! My journalist friend then went on to suggest that the observance of our Tenth Birthday in this lovely and hospitable city where the United Nations was born under such expert and co-operative care, should be a "nice mixture of thanksgiving and surprise". I agree.

We can be thankful not only that the United Nations has survived its first years, which were more difficult than in 1945 we thought would be the case, (and which if we have any sanity will not be repeated), but also because, during this time, and notwithstanding its set-backs, our world organization has become an indispensable agency for international co-operation. If this one did not exist we would soon have to build another one.

It is, however, as idle to deny that the United Nations has lost some credit during these ten years as it is to deny that our hopes were too high in 1945. But only the thoughtless or the ill-disposed could believe that it is approaching bankruptcy. Indeed, while we have certainly no reason for complacency, the credit of the United Nations is moving upwards again - and its value is more generally recognized. Otherwise the club would not have such a long waiting list; one which we ought to remove or at least reduce.

The ghosts of past memories which this Opera House evokes. are here to warn us against over-optimism; and against the danger of trying to build - or rebuild - an international structure of peace upon grandiose but shadowy hopes instead of on hard realities. No man is the poorer - though he may be the sadder - for being shorn of his illusions. We have lost some of ours, about U.N., but not, I hope and believe, our faith, our principles, and our ideals.