

*The Address—Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent*

It would have been a pretty strange position for us to take to have invited members of parliament to come down here without having taken our responsibility, and having them taunt us with being afraid to take the proper responsibility and of trying to get an indication from them as to what that decision should be. If that is the way hon. gentlemen on the other side, if and when they ever get the responsibility of government, intend to behave I think it will be a rather sorry spectacle for the Canadian people.

There has been some suggestion that Canada has been humiliated by Colonel Nasser. Canada has had no dealings whatsoever with Colonel Nasser. Canada has dealt with the United Nations and the United Nations in this instance have been represented by the secretary general and by another gentleman who is a very distinguished Canadian in whose patriotism as well as in whose wisdom this government has practically unlimited confidence. I refer to General Burns.

Originally there was this motion proposed which has been construed, and I think rightly so, as placing some blame on the Israelis, some blame on the French and some blame on the British for having taken the law into their own hands when what had to be dealt with was already before the security council of the United Nations. These gentlemen who utter these high-flown phrases seem to forget that the nations of the world signed the charter of the United Nations and thereby undertook to use peaceful means to settle possible disputes and not to resort to the use of force.

I have been scandalized more than once by the attitude of the larger powers, the big powers as we call them, who have all too frequently treated the charter of the United Nations as an instrument with which to regiment smaller nations and as an instrument which did not have to be considered when their own so-called vital interests were at stake. I have been told, with respect to the veto, that if the Russians had not insisted upon it the United States and the United Kingdom would have insisted upon it, because they could not allow this crowd of smaller nations to deal decisively with questions which concerned their vital interests.

**An hon. Member:** Why should they?

**Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East):** Because the members of the smaller nations are human beings just as are their people; because the era when the supermen of Europe could govern the whole world has and is coming pretty close to an end.

[Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East).]

**Mr. Ferguson:** Throwing Canada to the slaughterhouse.

**Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East):** Perhaps the hon. gentleman would do better to listen than—I will not attempt to qualify them—to make that kind of remark. I think it would be better for his own reputation if he did.

It has been said that Canada has been humiliated by the action of Colonel Nasser and has been made to submit to the requirements of Colonel Nasser. That is just one of those wild assertions for which there is absolutely no foundation in fact. The original resolution provided that the United Nations in its efforts to make peace in the world would not start their efforts to make peace by making war. It was going to introduce a police force to supervise the observance of the cessation of hostilities, but it was going to do that with the consent of the country in which those forces were going to operate. It was not going to fight its way into that country. That was the resolution which was adopted without any opposition, although with a certain number of abstentions.

At that time the secretary general of the United Nations gave us the chance to participate in this force, and gave it to those who were willing and anxious, as we have been willing and anxious since 1945, to have a United Nations force ready to deal with recalcitrants in the fulfilment of their obligations under the charter. The suggestion was made that each nation should supply something like a battalion or other self-contained unit.

We consider that every battalion in the Canadian forces would feel it an honour to be called upon to perform this duty, but there was one battalion which was next in line in the rotation of service in connection with the Canadian contingent to the NATO forces in Europe, and that was the Queen's Own. It seemed to us that all the other battalions would recognize that that battalion, having been groomed and being on the point of being called upon to replace another battalion in Europe, would naturally be the one which we would consider and which we would think of first to take on this new duty in pursuit of the objectives of the United Nations. That battalion happened to be the Queen's Own Rifles. It was suggested, I am told, although we were not present at the negotiations, that Colonel Nasser said that that would be regarded by the Egyptians as being a battalion of the Queen of England.

**An hon. Member:** What is wrong with that?

**Mr. Green:** What about the Queen of Canada?