

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Text of statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, broadcast over the CBC network on Human Rights Day, December 10, 1953.

On the pathway of human progress, certain great documents have served as mileposts. One was Britain's Magna Carta—which became the great Charter of personal and political liberty. It has guided the aspirations of men for freedom in many continents for seven hundred years. Another was the Declaration of Independence upon which rest the foundations of liberty in the United States, but whose influence has been universal.

Another document in this historic series was the United Nations Charter in which the nations agreed that one binding purpose of the world organization must be to promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms. To show the way to the fulfilment of that purpose the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly five years ago, on December 10, the day now known throughout the world as Human Rights Day. This Declaration sets a common standard of achievement toward which peoples and governments throughout the world can strive.

The road toward such achievement has not been easy. There have been disputes and disappointments in the discussions which have taken place concerning it at the United Nations. There have been differences and difficulties in our effort to translate into reality the high principles set forth in the Declaration. There have been disagreements and dissension over the best methods to be adopted and over the pace at which progress should be made.

Some countries, like my own, consider themselves fortunate in possessing traditions and being able to build on experience which simplifies the task of ensuring broad acceptance and support of the principles in the Declaration. But all countries face real difficulties in devising precise legal forms which will fit in with the existing pattern of their constitutional systems. All member countries of the United Nations have not been able to

agree upon the form of the international instrument which should codify human rights and be binding on all those signing it. There have been a multitude of suggestions, often cancelling each other out.

It is not surprising, however, that we have not found it easy to arrive at a formula which will provide even the necessary minimum of satisfaction for all. In this and in other problems in the United Nations, we are bringing together peoples with widely different legal, economic and social backgrounds; with varied philosophical and intellectual approaches; differing, even opposed ideologies.

Without elations, then, but certainly without despair, on this fifth anniversary of Human Rights Day, we should pause and assess our progress. It should concern us deeply that there are large areas of the world where essential human rights have been eliminated, where personal liberty, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion have been stamped out.

In other parts of the world, however, there has been real progress and we should be gratified that the very firmness and determination shown on this question in United Nations debates and elsewhere is a sign of the deep-rooted support these great principles have gained.

Let us resolve, therefore, to press forward on the long and difficult road leading to the objective we set for ourselves in the Charter in 1945, and reaffirmed in the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

There can, however, be no rights, without obligations; as there can be no freedom without law.

In the last analysis, therefore, the manner in which we discharge our obligations as citizens of our countries, and as members of the international community, will determine whether we are to have and to keep—or whether we deserve to have—the rights of free men.

JANUARY 1 CBC BROADCAST

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, broadcast on January 1 by the International Service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The year just past has seen some heartening achievements in the weary and seemingly endless struggle for world security. It has also seen some old problems remain unsolved and new ones arise which demand action.

During the year we have become more conscious than ever of the fact that many of the problems which we face are long-term ones, and that there is no quick or easy way to solve them. Great wisdom, great patience and great effort will be demanded of us, if we are to develop the strength and co-operation among the free democratic nations which is required if the right solutions are to be found and put into effect.

Prominent among the achievements of 1953, in the search for security, was the signature of an armistice agreement in Korea, which has brought—if not yet peace—at least an end to fighting.

The fact that aggression has been stopped in Korea by the collective action of the free world is in itself a major achievement of the United Nations; and especially of the United States, which has provided the leadership and by far the largest proportion of the United Nations forces involved. That the armistice was signed only after twenty-five months of weary and often exasperating negotiations, is also important as an illustration of the prin-