

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 50/48 A REPORT FROM LAKE SUCCESS

Statement by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations, delivered to the Windsor Chamber of Commerce, and the Windsor United Nations Association, on November 15, 1950.

It is on the whole an encouraging report that I am able to bring you tonight from the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. During the past two or three years, for reasons with which you are acquainted, the United Nations had fallen more and more into a position of ineffectiveness and weakness. Although it had a number of achievements to its credit, the irresponsible use of the veto by the Soviet Union in the Security Council had increasingly reduced to virtual impotence the powers of the organization to deal with threats to the peace. Since the central purpose of the United Nations was to preserve peace and security, this failure could not be balanced by successes in other fields of endeavour. Indeed it seemed that, unless the dispiriting course of events could be checked and reversed, the United Nations must, before very long, join the other hopeful initiatives for international co-operation which had been taken in the past and which had ended in disappointment and disillusionment.

Then came the attack on Korea; the crucial test of our world organization. Instead of succumbing to that test, the United Nations rallied in a remarkable way to confound the cynics and the pessimists who said that it could do nothing but talk; and pass resolutions of academic futility. The United Nations at that critical moment in June entered on a new and vigorous phase of its existence. The Security Council was hastily called and discharged its functions in the manner which had been intended when the Charter was drawn up. A United Nations Commander was appointed. Forces from a number of countries were supplied to assist United States troops who, with the forces of the Republic of Korea, had taken with courage and sacrifice the first onslaught of the invasion. And these United Nations forces were at length successful in driving the aggressors back over the 38th parallel and in breaking their strength in North Korea.

This recovery was as remarkable as it was heartening. But those who had watched it most closely and with most enthusiasm could not but be aware that the margin of safety had been perilously small. The United Nations, faced with this critical test presented by the attack on Korea, might easily have failed, and declined possibly permanently, into frustration and futility.