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No. 53/31

THE QUESTION OF MOROCCO

Text of a statement made on October 16, 1953
by the Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation,
Mr. Alcide Cote, M.P., in the First Committee
of the eighth session of the United Nations
General Assembly. (Agenda Item 157)

I intervened briefly to explain the attitude of the Canadian Delegation on the resolution before us. It may have been noted that we did not speak in the general debate. This was not due to any lack of interest in the Moroccan question or because we considered it to be an unimportant one. Our reasons for not speaking in the general debate were of a different order and stemmed from the fact that we did not feel we had anything substantial to add to what the Canadian Representative said on this and the related Tunisian question at the seventh session of the General Assembly.

Let me restate briefly the views we then expressed on the competence of the General Assembly to consider this matter and on the substance of the question.

On the question of competence we do not take the view expressed in the general debate by several delegations that any discussion of the Moroccan question is contrary to Article 2(7) of the Charter. Although we do not ourselves subscribe to this interpretation of the Charter, we have full respect for those who do. As the Canadian Representative made clear last year, we make a distinction between "competence to discuss" and "competence to intervene". Once a question has been included on our agenda we accept the Assembly's competence to discuss it, but we consider the right of discussion should not be abused. As has been forcefully pointed out by the Delegation of the United Kingdom in this debate, the distinction between discussion and intervention is perhaps a fine one, but it is one which we nevertheless maintain can in practice be usefully made. In the absence of any decision by the International Court of Justice we will use our best judgment in determining whether any resolution resulting from our discussions constitutes an intervention prohibited by Article 2(7) of the Charter.

As regards the substance of the matter we said last year that if the historical experience of the Canadian people has any relevance to this discussion, it points to the value of peaceful evolution towards self-government. The use of force breeds hatred and makes future collaboration difficult, if not impossible, regardless of the final outcome. Indeed, Canadian experience has always pointed to the usefulness, if not the necessity, of maintaining, in this interdependent world, economic, cultural and even political ties between the newly emerging state and its former protector. At the same time we recognize as a