



# Bulletin

Vol. 24, No. 42

October 15, 1969

## CONTENTS

Institutional Problems of the United Nations .....	1
Restoration Project in Old Montreal .....	3
Guthrie Theatrical Prizes .....	4
Nuclear Reactor to Taiwan .....	4
President of Niger Visits .....	5
Gift of Rare Plants to Museum .....	5

### INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The following passages are from a statement by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the United Nations General Assembly on September 29:

...As the United Nations approaches its twenty-fifth anniversary, it is faced with three imperatives: *first*, to avoid the scourge of global war and to contain and settle more limited conflicts; *second*, to speed the way to economic and social justice for the hundreds of millions of people who are now deprived of both; and *third*, to come to grips with the serious institutional problems facing the organization at this time. This morning I shall have something to say on each of these matters as they appear to the Canadian Government.

Of these imperatives the first two – the prevention of war and the struggle to raise the standard of living – are perhaps as old as mankind itself. The third – to strengthen and renew this organization – is new, and is peculiar to this time and this place. I choose, however, to deal with this question first, since Canada believes that the United Nations must fail to reach its goals if it cannot come to grips with its own problems. It is hard indeed to build something of value, something that will stand, if your tools are blunted and ill-designed for your purpose.

In addressing myself to this question, I should like it to be absolutely clear that the criticisms I have to make and the remedies I shall suggest come from an active and loyal member of the family of nations represented here. Canada has shown its confidence in this organization by its wholehearted participation in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. We could not conceive of a world in which the UN did not have a central and vital role to play.

### CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

The institutional problems facing this organization are difficult in themselves. They are compounded by the fact that, because of their intractability, there is something like a tacit conspiracy, in which we have all joined, to pretend they don't exist. The situation might be compared to the cumulative effect of pollution in a lake or the action of the sea on the foundations of Venice – failing vigorous corrective measures, a slow but certain process of destruction is going on all the time. If we do not act, there is a very real danger that the UN, instead of fulfilling its high purpose as a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the achievement of the objectives set out in the Charter, will become a sideshow on the international scene, its activities brushed aside as irrelevant.

### TOO MANY WORDS

There are three areas in which remedial action is imperative: *First*: The UN (including all its organs and associated Agencies) is drowning in a sea of words. Talk is of the essence at the UN, but to be useful it must be kept within reasonable bounds. As we all know, this is not being done. The number of conferences, meetings, and the paper they produce, have increased to the point that even those members with the largest resources have difficulty in providing competent representation and coping with the flood of paper. As the conference load increases, there has been a corresponding decrease in effectiveness. This had led governments to attach less importance to the UN activities and efforts. The credibility of the UN