

danger to the United Nations as it would "destroy all confidence" in the Security Council's ability to act "internationally", "efficiently" and "in time" in the event of an open breach of the peace. It was for this reason that Canada welcomed the United States proposal for the creation of an Interim Committee which would extend the usefulness of the General Assembly and "infuse new life and vigor into the whole organization". Furthermore, it would put the Assembly to "greater use for the solution of problems that are not solved elsewhere". It was not conceivable Mr. St. Laurent went on, that a member of the Security Council would "flout clearly expressed world opinion by obstinately preventing change and thus become responsible for prejudicing and possibly destroying the organization which is now man's greatest hope for the future". Mr. St. Laurent then said:

" Nations, in their search for peace and co-operation will not and cannot accept indefinitely as unaltered a Council which was set up to ensure their security, and which, so many feel, has become frozen in futility, and divided by dissension. If forced, they may seek greater safety in an association of democratic and peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for greater national security. Such associations, if consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter, can be formed within the United Nations. It is to be hoped that such a development will not be necessary. If it is unnecessary, it will be undesirable. If, however, it is made necessary, it will take place. Let us not forget that the provisions of the Charter are a floor under, rather than a ceiling over, the responsibilities of Member States. If some prefer to go even below that floor, others need not be prevented from moving upwards.

" Two, or more, apartments in the structure of peace are undoubtedly less desirable than one family of nations dwelling together in amity, undivided by curtains or even more substantial pieces of political furniture. They are, however, to be preferred to the alternative of wholly separate structures".

The larger significance of this statement, indicating the Canadian Government's willingness to participate in a regional security arrangement, has been examined in Chapter 3; it is noted here as an indication of the Government's desire, shared by other western governments, that if the United Nations were unable to fulfil its primary purpose and provide an effective system of international security, measures should be adopted within the framework of the Charter to enable such nations to provide for their security on a basis more intimately related to their needs.

8. In the same year, 1947, the Government was faced with the question of whether Canada should stand for election to the Security Council. Although on August 30, 1946, Mr. St. Laurent was reported in a memorandum from Mr. Wrong to Mr. Reid to have said that he was "opposed to our standing for the Security Council as he thought that we could do nothing to make it less impotent than it is now", there were questions of principle involved which the Government found difficult to ignore, despite its none-too-optimistic view of the United Nations achievements up to that date. A brief account of Canada's election to the Security Council may illustrate this point.