



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made in the House of Commons during the debate on the Speech from the throne, December 8, 1952.

...I have been attending the seventh assembly of the United Nations and though while doing so I have been engaged in international discussions, I have been conscious of the fact during those discussions that there is a very direct connection between what we have been talking about in New York at the United Nations and matters of more immediate domestic concern and, possibly, which have been under discussion in this House. We have been discussing international questions which bear on peace, welfare and good relations between states; mutual aid between states; and all those questions have a very direct effect on domestic policies and domestic interests in this country -even on such matters as trade and taxation. Indeed, ..., it has been said that foreign policy is merely domestic policy with its hat on.

This afternoon, therefore, I propose to keep that hat on and discuss for a short time, I hope, the work of the United Nations Assembly, and, possibly, the forthcoming NATO Council meeting in Paris....

The main question before the United Nations Assembly, the main challenge to the United Nations at this session, has been Korea. Almost at the beginning of our session it was agreed, and I think it was agreed unanimously if I recollect correctly, that that question should be given priority in our discussions. It was quite right that we should do that because fighting is going on in Korea and surely it is the first responsibility of the United Nations to bring that fighting to an end if that can be done on honourable and acceptable terms. In the discussion of this question of Korea much of the debate and much of our thoughts centered around the one remaining obstacle to the achievement of such an honourable armistice in Korea -the question of prisoners of war.

In the discussion of that particular question the Communist delegations have exploited to the full the situation which they claim, without adequate evidence to back it up, has existed in the prisoner-of-war camps and more particularly the Koje Island camp.

...This question of prisoners of war, we are told even by the Communists, is the only obstacle to the completion of armistice negotiations. It is the only question that remains unsettled. In respect of it and of Korea generally ... there were four resolutions submitted to