

My first Minister was Mike Pearson [Lester B. Pearson was known to his friends and colleagues as Mike]. Those were exciting times. NATO was just taking shape. In 1956 we were confronted almost at the same time with the Hungarian revolution, the crisis over the Suez Canal, the British and French intervention and the ensuing war between the Arabs and Israelis. Faced with the problem of how to provide a formula for calling a halt to the fighting in the Middle East and extracting the British and French from an untenable position, Mr. Pearson, working closely with Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the UN, came up with the concept of a peacekeeping force, the beginnings of an honourable tradition of service that has helped to offset the consequences of wars in many parts of the world. For his work Mr. Pearson was awarded the Nobel Prize.

from the hotel, I told Mr. Martin that the maître d' was a Canadian from Shediac. When we walked into the restaurant Mr. Martin said, "I understand you're a Canadian — who's the prime minister?" "Why, Mike Pearson, of course." "Who's the foreign minister?" "I haven't a clue — never heard of him." Paul was quiet for all of two minutes after that one.

During our 1977-78 term on the Security Council, our predominant effort was to achieve the adoption of a plan for the independence of Namibia. The five Western members of the Council, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, were the spark plug of the campaign and became known in the corridors of the UN as the "gang of five." In a conversation with the Chinese foreign minister one day, I mentioned this. His immediate response was, "Don't say gang of five, say gang of four plus one."

The Namibia negotiations involved the active participation of foreign ministers, and Don Jamieson devoted a great deal of time and effort to their success. The first of a series of resolutions to bring our plans into effect was due for consideration by the Council in July of 1978, when Canada was serving as president, and because there would be a number of foreign ministers participating, Mr. Jamieson was looking forward to presiding. Alas, it was not to be. Shortly before the meeting he got word that the Queen would be in Newfoundland on that day, so he went to Newfoundland to greet her and I had the honour of sitting in the chair.

Another occasion that will live long in my memory was when the Pope visited New York in 1979 and Flora MacDonald was presented to him by the UN's chief of protocol as my wife.

The record of the ministers and their accomplishments as political leaders will survive in history. But there have been a host of fellow Canadians of great ability and strong talents of leadership and personality whom I had the privilege of working with and who in their day played a significant and forceful role in the shaping of the UN and of its specialized agencies. Their name is legion — public servants from every department of the government, members of the armed forces, international civil servants and redoubtable volunteers with non-governmental organizations. Alas, their contributions, often made in the face of great obstacles, are recorded only in musty files and the memories of their colleagues.

A great Canadian diplomat, Hume Wrong, summed up their attitude in a speech he made at the final session of the League of Nations when it turned over its responsibilities to the newly founded United Nations. "Disillusionment, in its literal sense of the absence of illusions, is a good thing. It should mean that we see more clearly, not that we have lost hope."

It cannot be denied that some of the senior officials who have held power from time to time in Ottawa regarded the UN as nothing more than something to be tolerated, but I have never ceased being impressed by the fact that, almost without exception, every Canadian I encountered who had an active involvement with the organization believed in it and in his or her own way tried to make it better. I have no doubt that spirit persists today and will continue into the 21st century and beyond.