



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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RENEWED EFFORTS FOR WORLD PEACE

An address by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Paul Martin, delivered to the Osgoode Hall Legal and Literary Society, Toronto, April 9, 1953.

A Turning Point In U.N. History

Today, all eyes are on Korea! The prospect of agreement between the Communists and the United Nations Command on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners-of-war who want to go home has given the entire free world new reason to hope that our patient work of negotiation at the UN that extended over so many months was not in vain.

Last October, in speaking on behalf of Canada during the opening debate of the UN General Assembly, I used these words:

"I do believe that this session of the General Assembly could be a turning point in our affairs -- a turning point on the road towards establishing the United Nations and all it stands for on as solid and enduring a footing as the rocks on which these permanent building now stand."

In making this statement, I had in mind most particularly the situation in Korea. Through the ensuing months, the Canadian delegation, together with those of several other freedom-loving nations, worked continuously on the problem of finding a suitable formula for the solution of the impasse that had developed on the Korean armistice question. For a time we hoped that the resolution sponsored by the delegation of India and wholeheartedly backed by Canada, would provide a satisfactory answer. But as the months wore on, disappointment, frustration, and disillusionment began to replace our earlier hopes of success.

The proposal outlined in the Indian prisoner-of-war resolution had the overwhelming support of the entire free world but it was flatly refused last December by the Chinese and North Korean authorities. It was, therefore, with little optimism that we resumed our discussions in the UN this February.

The sudden readiness of the Chinese Communists to negotiate an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners, and their willingness to reopen the Korean truce talks, now suggest that this session may yet be the turning point in our affairs to which I referred in my opening statement last October.

Korea -- Collective Security In Action

If, following the resolution of the prisoner-of-war issue, it is possible to negotiate an honourable armistice, Korea will become a symbol of the success of collective security in action.

There is, of course, a good deal more to the settlement of the Korean situation than the disposition of approximately 145,000 prisoners-of-war of both sides who