



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of a Broadcast by Mr. L.B. Pearson,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Chairman
of the Canadian Delegation to the Fourth Session of the
United Nations General Assembly, over the Trans-Canada Network
of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation at 9.10 p.m. on September 25, 1949.

The fourth session of the General Assembly has opened in an atmosphere, if not of rosy optimism, at least of efficiency and realism. Within the first four days, the officers have been chosen, the agenda agreed upon, and the general debate is off to a good start. In previous years, these opening formalities have occupied many days. This time, however, there seems to be a commendable desire to get on with the job.

Much of the credit for this good beginning belongs to the new President: General Romulo of the Philippines. He is an effective chairman, friendly and good-natured, but determined to keep the Assembly on the move. His gavel poised for action, he gives his ruling or calls a vote at the slightest indication that a discussion is coming to an end. Speakers have already sensed the feeling of expedition he is trying to create, and co-operate with him by keeping their remarks short. One delegate told me yesterday that, for the first time in his long experience in international conferences, he had sat through three hours of committee meeting and never said a word!

The spirit of contention is not, of course, absent. It never is, unfortunately, down here. Certain items on the agenda were not included without vigorous protests from the Russians and their friends, who accused the rest of us of everything from breaking the Charter to interfering in the private affairs of sovereign states because we wanted to discuss questions like the civil war in Greece or religious persecution in Hungary. But their objections have been more briefly stated than formerly, and they are so familiar that no one has taken them seriously enough to argue about them at any great length. This does not mean, of course, that there will not be long and acrimonious debates before the Assembly is finished. The agenda includes a number of subjects on which there are sharp differences between the Russians and the rest of us - atomic energy, Korea, Italian colonies, and perhaps also China - and the Soviet delegates have given no sign whatever that their attitude on any one of these has become more co-operative since the last met.

The opening debate has already shown that delegates from the democratic countries are taking a sober and realistic view of problems before us and are looking for practical steps which we can take to solve them. Mr. Acheson, the United States Secretary of State, has already made a constructive and reasoned speech, reviewing the main issues before the Assembly and indicating the desire of his delegation to support workable proposals for dealing with them. He frequently used the words "the public interest of the World Community", suggesting by implication that it was the people of the world rather than their governments whom the delegates were representing. An equally thoughtful and constructive speech was made for India by its chief delegate, Sir Benegal Rau. India is directly concerned in one major issue