


STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

GOVERNMENT

CANADA

No. 49/41. Statement on the France-Canada Resolution on Atomic Energy, made on November 7, 1949, in the Ad Hoc Political Committee 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.

The Canadian Government has for some years been actively concerned with the problems of atomic energy. We have long been conscious of the terrible dangers in the possible use of this energy for destructive purposes; conscious too of the great promise to mankind which the development of this energy for peaceful purposes holds out.

As long ago as November 15, 1945, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada joined in a proposal that the United Nations should work out specific proposals to safeguard humanity from the dangers and provide humanity with the benefits which a positive development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes would give.

As you know, proposals which we think adequate for this good purpose have been worked out, and were approved last year by a large majority of the General Assembly. But in this matter, approval by a majority of states, however impressive, is not enough. If humanity is to be made secure from the dangers of atomic destruction, all nations must agree on measures which we know can be, and will be, implemented by all. To put the matter another way, if the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. do not agree on a plan for ensuring that there will not be an atomic arms race, there will be no such plan and there will be such a race, without any winner!

The position of my government on the United Nations plan for the control of atomic energy which was approved last year and the prohibition and elimination of atomic weapons is well known. In common with most of the members of the United Nations, we are prepared to accept that plan. We are convinced that it is a good plan. We certainly do not, however, claim omniscience on this subject, nor is our thinking concerning it rigid and inflexible. Indeed the problem of atomic energy is such that it seems to me that all of us should seek its solution with humility as well as with sincerity. If any new proposals are made or new approaches suggested that give promise of an effective and agreed solution for this problem, then my government will welcome them and examine them with all the care which they will deserve.

At the moment, however, as the President of the Assembly has stated, "the effort to solve this problem is stalled at dead centre". A political deadlock has developed between the U.S.S.R. and its associates on the one hand, and the majority of