



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 50/5

FOUR YEARS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Condensed text of an address by Mr. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, to the Rotary Club in Pembroke, Ontario, on February 4, 1950.

....Tonight my mind goes back over the past four years to ask this important question: "Has the United Nations fulfilled our high hopes for it?" The answer is that it has fallen short of what we expected -- but then we expected too much! It was too much to expect that in such a handful of years any organization could win back to peace and world co-operation minds that had been subject for long years to the ways of war and rivalry.

As we look back over the recent course of mankind's pilgrimage towards peace we should see the one essential fact -- not the difficulties, the setbacks, the obstacles but the distance covered. For I believe that progress has been made in the past four years. I suggest that we should ask ourselves this question: "If the United Nations had not been brought into existence, would the world have been better off today?" I am sure that the answer is "No". Inaction would have left the world so much the worse off.

Of one thing I am certain, and I think that you will agree with me: the existence of the United Nations and the strong public support that has developed for it has helped further the logic of world co-operation against the insensible but deeply ingrained instincts of dissension and war.

To build the ideal of the United Nations is much more than to build a fine skyscraper in New York to house its organization. This vast structure of a way of life for the world, is built not of stone nor of mortar but in the minds and hearts of men.

Let us look back over the past four years. Certainly, problems have come to the United Nations that it could not solve. Armed conflicts have continued that it has been unable to stop; other wars have begun that it could not prevent. However, despite all this, I believe that the world is better off today because we brought this organization into being to serve the world.

Let us look back at the main achievements of the United Nations over the past four years:

1. This organization has come safely through all the storms and stresses of its formative years..

.....2