

The United Nations

My last subject in this survey - and it may be one I should have mentioned first - is our relations with the organization which still remains, with all its weaknesses and its disappointments, our best hope for peace, the United Nations. I do not think I should close my statement without some reference to our world organization, the Assembly of which is to meet very shortly in Paris, and the Canadian Delegation to which it has already been appointed. In that Delegation we have continued what I think is the useful principle of all party representation. This forthcoming meeting of the Assembly may be a very significant one. There are a good many important subjects on the agenda, but even more important than the actual subjects on the agenda is, I think, the feeling in the minds of most delegations which will attend this meeting that the United Nations is now either at or coming close to the crossroads.

There are two main developments which lead me to say that. One is the division of the world which has now become hardened into competing and conflicting blocs, and which has been reflected at the last two Assemblies in every discussion there. If this is going to continue indefinitely, it certainly is going to undermine the usefulness of the Assembly as a universal organization. For that development we of the Western world are not of course primarily responsible, but whoever is responsible is doing his part in undermining the foundations of our world organization. We are in danger of that organization becoming nothing more or less than an instrument in the cold war. We have to be on guard against that, because if it does become that then we will have completely altered the ideals which we had for this organization when we signed the Charter, long years ago now, as it seems.

Another danger, and it seems to be an increasing one too, is that some members of the United Nations, and not always those who do the most to promote its principles, treat its resolutions almost with contempt. They certainly ignore them if they happen to be against their national policies, and if it becomes the accepted practice of this world organization that any resolution which is against the national interest of any member state can be ignored because of that fact, then it will not be very long before the United Nations will go the way of the League of Nations. We must be on guard against that development and do what we can to stop it.

On the more positive side, the United Nations has shown of course in the last year since the last Assembly what it can do in stemming aggression in Korea. The Prime Minister said in this House on April 29, 1948:

Our faith in the United Nations as an effective organization for peace and security has been pretty severely shaken.

However, he added:

What is unshaken is our determination to make of it or within it an effective organization for this purpose.

We have endeavoured to respond to this determination in Canada by supporting, as the Security Council becomes less effective, measures taken within the United Nations Assembly