

At the same time, we should not forget that in other fields the United Nations has accomplished very much. Here I think particularly of UNESCO, UNICEF, the International Labour Organization, and the fostering of co-operation between member states in many fields with excellent results. We can never insist too much on the fact that without the United Nations, even with its shortcomings, the world would be very much more in danger of breaking up.

The honourable Leader of the Government has said that he is satisfied that the Charter of the United Nations need not be changed. When I read the Speech from the Throne I wondered whether the idea expressed there would be in contradiction of his statement.

Hon. Mr. Martin: The reforms mentioned there have nothing to do with the charter.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: We read in the Speech from the Throne:

After a quarter of a century of radical changes in its functions and membership, the U.N. needs to be revitalized and strengthened. Canada is presenting its proposals for reform to the present session of the General Assembly.

If you touch the functions and membership then I think you touch the essence of the organization.

Hon. Mr. Martin: No, there will be no proposal for change in the charter.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: In any event, this will be clarified, I suppose, when we are told of the proposals for reform which Canada will make at the present session of the General Assembly.

In any event, there is no doubt that after a quarter of a century any organization may need to revise its functions, even its charter. There is nothing wrong with this—if there were, the United Nations organization would be the only body of its kind at the present time which does not need re-examination. I do not know of any situation which is not at present the subject of re-examination. Everything is being questioned today. What is more important is to promote the public support for the principle of the United Nations. Everything that we can do here and elsewhere in this direction is a step towards accomplishing a lot for the peace and the progress of the world. I repeat, even with its shortcomings, it is better to have the United Nations organization than nothing at all,

[Hon. Mr. Flynn.]

because nothing at all would mean courting disaster.

Hon. M. Grattan O'Leary: Honourable senators, I always think of the Leader of the Government when he speaks as a master of parliamentary plausibility. Since he has mentioned my name and has given the impression that I am somehow opposed to the United Nations, I must say that this is not so. I have not attacked, nor shall I attack now, the Charter of the United Nations. But the unexamined life is unfit to be lived and that applies to institutions as well as to individuals. I think that after 24 years we have a right, indeed a duty, to ask ourselves if the principles of the Charter of the United Nations are in fact being carried out as they should be carried out. I do not believe they are, and I know many responsible, knowledgeable people who share that view. I think it would be far better if on various occasions we examined and felt free to criticize the operations of the United Nations; that this would be more useful and better for the United Nations than the mere repetition of clichés that have gone on over the last 20 years.

Of course we believe in the principles, but how are they being applied? How are they applied with authority or with effectiveness in the case of Vietnam? How have they been applied in Rhodesia, where in my judgment, and in the judgment of many others much more competent to speak, the United Nations administration actually violated the principles of the United Nations charter.

How many people have listened to the words of U Thant about Vietnam? How many have listened to his words about Palestine and the Arab nations? Practically no one. These words are offered again and again. We have these clichés; we have those wonderful sentiments expressed again and again, and the world has ceased to listen.

These are the things we should be talking about, not giving the United Nations a blank cheque of faith. Of course we have faith in that organization, but I think a better word would be hope, hope verified by examination that the United Nations shall through its Secretary General and his administration carry out the charter of that body. I do not believe it is being carried out effectively at present, and that is all I meant. The charter, God bless it, but the administration of the charter, that is something else again.