

GOVERNMENT



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Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon.  
W.L. Mackenzie King, at the United Nations  
General Assembly, September 28, 1948

It affords me particular pleasure to say to the Government and people of France how deeply the Canadian delegation appreciates the choice of Paris as the place of meeting of the Third Assembly of the United Nations. This city, over many centuries, has been a radiant centre of political and cultural achievements. No country represented here is so remote from Paris, nor so distinct in tradition from France, that it has not been greatly influenced by movements of enlightenment and progress which have had their origin in this city and in this country. Of no country and of no people is this truer than of my own. One third of the people of Canada have ancestors who came from the shores of France. They still speak its language and share the traditions of French civilization.

As I listened to the eloquent and moving speech of the President of the French Republic at the opening of this Assembly, and as I recalled the great services which M. Vincent Auriol has rendered, and is rendering, to his country, I could not but reflect upon the continuing significance of the role of France among the nations. After all she has suffered and endured in two wars, France has again taken her place in the front rank of the world community. Canadians never doubted that France would rise again to the full stature of her glorious past.

What France records of man's ability to develop political freedom within the framework of organized society should remind us that, in the work of the Assembly, we are carrying forward a great tradition. It should strengthen our conviction that, through the instrument of the United Nations, we also, in our day, have an opportunity to develop political ideas, and forms of political organization of service not to one nation only, or to a few nations, but to mankind.

This Assembly of the United Nations affords an opportunity for judging to what extent the United Nations has thus far found it possible to further the great purposes to which it is dedicated. We have now an opportunity to measure the work done, and to survey work that remains to be done. This Assembly should be made the occasion for a real audit of achievement. It should equally be made the occasion for a searching analysis of failure, where such has occurred.

If we are true to ourselves, we will admit that there is not one among us who has not been discouraged by the difficulties which have beset the path of our new organization, and who today is not disturbed by doubts and uncertainties. Too many of us have assumed that the high aims and purposes of an organization which seeks the betterment of mankind throughout the world could not fail to have a universal appeal. We have not been sufficiently conscious of the realities of the world situation.

I for one believe the United Nations has attempted to accomplish far too much, in far too short a time. We have overlooked the fact