



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 54/41

Statement made on September 23, 1954 by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson.

First of all I want to congratulate you, Dr. Van Kleffens, and ourselves, on your election to the Presidency. As you yourself have said, you will not be able to exercise your office with the grace of your predecessor, but I feel certain you will follow her example in directing our meetings with efficient impartiality and a courteous firmness.

This is the ninth year in which we have come together, from all corners of the world, to discuss and try to solve international problems, in the hope, which is not often enough realized, that by doing so we may ease international tensions and promote human progress.

The United Nations, like other human institutions, is developing its own traditions, its own techniques. It has had its successes, and its failures. Perhaps a disproportionate amount of attention has been devoted to the latter, which are, indeed, not so much the failures of the United Nations as an institution, as of the peoples and governments which make up its membership.

This year many familiar faces are back again. That makes for continuity of representation which can be a source of strength to us. Also many of the same old subjects are back again, some for the third or fourth year in succession. While this can become a source of weakness to the organization, it is not necessarily so. The basic problems of international politics, arising out of political and economic insecurity, foreign domination and denial of human rights, of lust for power, of ignorance and greed, such problems have seldom been amenable to quick or easy solution.

It is therefore natural, indeed it is inevitable, that we should have a certain number of what I might call "hardy perennials" again on our agenda. But it is certainly, as I see it, not desirable to have too many of them, or have them kept there for the wrong reasons and with the wrong results.

To insist on discussing the same question seven times in seven years does not necessarily bring us seven times nearer the solution. It may take us farther away from that desirable result, and in so doing, lessen the repute and weaken the effectiveness of the United Nations. There is, I think, a danger in using this Assembly and its agenda year after year to apply pressures, without regard to circumstances, which may produce the reverse of the result which we seek;