



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE UNITED NATIONS - ITS STRUCTURE, ITS DEFECTS AND ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

An address by Mr. G. Ignatieff, Member of Canada's Delegation to the United Nations, New York, to the Quebec Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers, Montreal, May 21, 1948

It is a privilege to be able to talk to you today about the United Nations. The success of that organization depends, I am well aware, upon the widest public knowledge, understanding and support. This audience includes many members of the teaching profession who can be instrumental in furthering the cause of the United Nations.

During the past two years I have had the opportunity of serving in an official capacity as an advisor to various Canadian delegations to the United Nations: to the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Economic and Social Council, and I have, therefore, been engaged in the day-to-day operations of the organization. In the light of this experience, let me pose and try to answer four important questions about the United Nations which are in the minds of many of us today.

- (a) What was the United Nations set up to do, and how does it do its work? (the structure)
- (b) What are the defects of the organization?
- (c) What are its accomplishments?
- (d) Why should we support the United Nations?

The Charter of the United Nations will be three years old on June 26, 1948. This document, which was worked out with so much good-will and painstaking care at San Francisco, defines the rules of international conduct which must be observed if the peoples of the world are to achieve peace and security, the observance of fundamental human rights and improved standards of life. These are broadly the objectives of the Charter. The Charter also defines the international machinery required to enable these rules to be effectively applied.

More specifically, the principal purpose in the United Nations as set out in the Charter is "to maintain international peace and security". If you look at the Charter you will find that this purpose is proclaimed in the first Article. You will also find that in this Article emphasis is placed upon prevention, by collective action of all the members, of war and its causes. The prevailing idea in the Charter is to combine the efforts of the members of the United Nations in maintaining peace by removal of the causes of war, primarily by substituting pacific settlement or adjustment of international disputes for the arbitrament of war.