

3. Although Canadians, generally, held out great hopes for the success of the United Nations, the results of the San Francisco Conference, of the First Session of the General Assembly in 1946, and of the early operations of the main organs were not such as to justify the feeling that the United Nations would be able to fulfil its primary purpose without difficulty. The growing division between the Great Powers and the relative impotence of the Security Council as a result of the Soviet abuse of the veto, only served to bring out the faults and weaknesses of the Charter and give rise to many doubts. Public apprehension was echoed within the Department. Mr. Wrong's confidential account of the London meeting of the General Assembly in 1946, for example, was frankly pessimistic. The confidential introduction to the commentary prepared for the delegation to the second part of the First Session held in New York later that year noted that even at that early date the United Nations was "very much on trial". The same introduction, however, struck a note which was constantly to run through similar papers prepared for later sessions of the General Assembly to the effect that Canadian delegations should constantly bear in mind the importance of preventing any further weakening of the United Nations and that they should do what they could to strengthen its authority and prestige and not allow long-range issues to be obscured by considerations of immediate national advantage. This introduction concluded with the following words:

" The most that can be done at meetings of the United Nations is to try to make the machinery work as smoothly as possible without expecting quick results of seeking ideal solutions".

Little more could be hoped for since obviously no revision of the Charter of any consequence could be undertaken, at least for some time. For this reason the Department considered that it was important at the outset of the United Nations activities to secure acceptance of certain principles of conduct designed to enable delegations to derive a maximum benefit from the Charter such as the development of sound constitutional precedents in the interpretation of the Charter, the adoption of clear rules of procedure and practices to fill out the framework and the necessity of realizing that decisions made by any organ or body of the United Nations should only be taken when bearing in mind their long-term implications.

4. In his address in the general debate following the opening of the second part of the General Assembly in 1946, Mr. St. Laurent as Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, outlined some of the reasons for which Canada could not be very sanguine as to the future of the United Nations. The Minister began by referring to "the failure of the United Nations to make a more rapid progress" and of the public consciousness of its "shortcomings". He recognized that some of the accomplishments of the United Nations had been "impressive" but he thought it more important to take steps to remedy the shortcomings than to derive too great satisfaction from what had been accomplished. He noted in particular the failure of the Security Council and the Military Staff Committee to make substantial progress toward concluding the special agreements under Article 43. Not only was it necessary for the Security Council to be equipped and ready in fact to enforce proper decisions for the maintenance of world peace but it was also in the interests of all members that serious consideration should be given to the reduction of national armaments. He also deplored the impression which the Security Council had given to the world at large in not taking "positive action to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes". Canada recognized that while the time had not yet come to amend the Charter, the Assembly