

Excerpt from a Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs
in the House of Commons, January 29, 1954. House of Commons
Debates, pages 1588 - 1590:

I should now like to move across the world to the Far East and to say a few words about developments in Korea. Since I last spoke in the house on this subject an armistice agreement has been signed there which ended on acceptable terms more than three years of fighting by the United Nations in resisting the unprovoked aggression launched against the Republic of Korea. With that aggression repelled, the military purpose of this great collective resort to armed force has been accomplished but, of course, only at a cost to our own forces, and great cost to those of the United States and those of Korea which bore the brunt of the struggle. We remember that cost as we talk about Korea today.

This armistice marked the end of the first step toward a peaceful settlement in Korea. The next step has been to try to convert that armistice into a peace settlement through the convening of a conference. The United Nations Assembly, last summer and last autumn, long and carefully, considered how that conference could be brought about. As a result, as most hon. members know, when the General Assembly last summer closed at the end of August it had, by formal resolution, made provision for the United Nations side of the Korean political conference. These decisions did not meet in full our own wishes but they were those of the United Nations and we accepted them and respected them as much. Moreover, we thought that those decisions, even though they were not perfect from our point of view, were good enough to provide a basis for a Korean political conference if the other side wanted such a conference.

Then, as hon. members will recall, last autumn discussions began at Panmunjom with the Communist side in an effort to work out the details for this conference. Those discussions are theoretically still going on, although they have been suspended for the time being. As these discussions were taking place in December last they removed some of the pressure at the Assembly, which was meeting then from continuing its deliberation into January. As hon. members will recall, at that time a resolution was passed making provision for recall of the Assembly if a majority of the members so desired if the President of the Assembly, Madame Pandit, --who has been acting in that position with such skill and distinction--should decide that the time had come or should be asked by any member to recall the Assembly. Such a request has now been made by the Government of India. Our reply to that request has just been sent today to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for transmission to the President. This reply was made after a great deal of consideration and exchange of views between ourselves and the Indian Government, the British Government, the United States Government and other governments. Possibly I might put this reply on the record, Mr. Speaker. It is as follows:

Please inform the Secretary-General as soon as possible that the Canadian Government has given very sympathetic consideration to the request of the President of the General Assembly that the present session be reconvened on February 9. The Canadian Government appreciates the desire of the Government of India to report to the United Nations General Assembly on the discharge of its responsibilities as chairman and executive agent of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in respect of the prisoners-of-war placed in its custody under the provisions of sub-paragraph 51 (b) of the Korean armistice agreement, but considers that in present circumstances it would be inadvisable to reconvene the General Assembly for discussion of the general