

Mr. Hamelin, Mr. Laberge, Mr. Ferrari, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to thank the Philosophy Department of the University of Ottawa for inviting me to be here today. I also wish to thank the University of Ottawa for organizing this conference on "Kant, Peace and the United Nations," a particularly apt theme in this year of celebrations commemorating the creation of the UN.

It is indeed fitting that this conference devoted to Kant should receive the official sanction of the Canadian Committee for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations. The UN's anniversary offers us an opportunity to salute this visionary, who advanced the idea of world peace founded on international institutions and universal rules and principles.

It would be interesting to know to what extent Kant's essay *On Perpetual Peace* – which marks its 200th anniversary this year – influenced Woodrow Wilson when he proposed the League of Nations in 1918. Did Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill have Kant in mind 25 years later, as they discussed the need for a United Nations Organization?

Today, we know that Kant's ideas were not utopian, even though the UN as we know it does not correspond exactly to the federation of nations Kant had in mind.

However, the philosopher's imperative that international relations be subject to law and morality is the principle which underlies the very existence of the United Nations of our day. Kant's dictum that "politics must kneel before the law" has lost none of its relevance in 200 years.

In this year of the UN's 50th anniversary, I believe we have a duty one and all to reflect upon peace and the United Nations.

In Canada's case, I think this process of reflection should stem from our country's rich history of service to peace and the UN. This is a history of which we can be justly proud. I would like to speak briefly of a few Canadians who have distinguished themselves in the service of peace since the creation of the United Nations.

Canada in the Service of Peace

Peacekeeping operations are unquestionably the element of the UN's work which is most visible and receives the most prominent media coverage. This is ironic in a way, as the Charter of the United Nations makes no mention of peacekeeping.

It was however thanks to the determination and vision of a Canadian, my illustrious predecessor Lester B. Pearson, that the first peacekeeping force was set up in 1956, earning Pearson the Nobel Peace Prize. But while the name Lester Pearson and his