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THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Text of an address delivered by the
Right Honourable Louis S. St. Laurent,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
at a meeting of the Law Society of
Upper Canada, Toronto, October 31, 1947.

As an adopted son of five years' standing, I am most grateful for this opportunity of joining with you in celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Law Society of Upper Canada. Few Canadian institutions have flourished for a century and a half of our country's history. I am sure that all of us from yourself, Mr. Chairman, to the most recent member of the Society - the Prime Minister of Canada - are agreed with me that the record is one of which we may be justly proud, not so much because it is one of venerable age, but because of the great contribution the society has made to the steady development of our young nation over that century and a half.

No one can believe, however, that this occasion will serve merely to mark the anniversary of an Act of the Parliament of 1797.

Gatherings such as this afford us, as well as a welcome opportunity to meet many old friends, a fitting occasion to reaffirm our faith in our profession and in the rule of law to which it is devoted. We are sometimes subjected, 'tis true, to critical attacks which we are not slow to resist. Occasionally, however - though perhaps less frequently than we might wish - we receive credit beyond our just due. The following is an old story but I venture to use it as an illustration of what I mean.

A judge in one of the southern states of the Union had before him a man charged with non-support of his wife. Said the judge: "You have been neglecting your wife shamefully. I am going to let her have thirty dollars a month." "Thanks, Judge", replied the husband, "I'll give her a dollar or two, once in a while, myself!"

Mr. Chairman, the kind invitation which finds me before you today gave me latitude in the choice of a subject. There are, obviously, a great many matters which it would be profitable to discuss with such an eminent group of fellow-lawyers. However, if any sort of order is to be introduced into my brief remarks, some limitation of theme must be imposed. It has seemed to me that I might speak for a short time on the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular, on its juridical aspects.

A great deal of attention has been concentrated on the Charter in recent weeks. The subject is one in which I am sure all the members of this Society are interested, not only as representatives of the legal profession, but as Canadian citizens.

The Charter of the United Nations is, as all know, an international treaty in the nature of a constitution: a constitution conceived at Yalta, modelled at Dumbarton Oaks, and completed, amid high hopes,