



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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UNITED NATIONS DAY

Statement made by the Prime Minister,
Mr. L.S. St-Laurent, on United Nations
Day, October 24, 1954.

Nine years ago today, the Charter of the United Nations came into force. I happen to have a grandson who was born at the same time. When I was my grandson's age, the world was tranquil and there was little inkling of the damage and devastation that were to be inflicted on it in my own lifetime by two world wars. It was the grim experience of these disastrous conflicts, and the lessons we learned from them, that led to the establishment of the United Nations, pledged in the words of the Charter "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

The significance of today's anniversary impresses me most deeply when I think of it in relation to the future of this grandson's generation and those other "succeeding generations" mentioned in the preamble of the Charter. His future and the future of his generation is still uncertain, but it is more hopeful because the United Nations was born at the same time as he was. I am by no means without confidence that my grandchildren will have reason to be proud that their grandfather had some part in the creation of an institution which has allowed them to grow up in a relatively stable and peaceful world.

Nine years ago the prospects for peace were promising. From the ruins of total war, the United Nations was born in an atmosphere of high hopes and high ideals. Today there is some skepticism and disillusionment concerning the Organization's ability to fulfil its destiny. The divisions within our world seem to be more firmly entrenched than the universal good will required to overcome them. International morality has not kept pace with science and technology. Mankind is presented with the instruments for achievements greater than anything in history, but faces the danger that these very instruments may be the means of destroying civilization for all time.

This, I believe, is one of the most critical interludes in the history of mankind. If civilization is to survive and progress, it will be because the ideals and principles which inspired the Charter of the United Nations will triumph over the ruthless materialism which threatens the survival of the Organization. By our own efforts we must see to it that this very young experiment in world co-operation is sustained and preserved in