



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

CANADA

No. 48/53

THE CANADIAN REPLY TO SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR DISARMAMENT.

A speech by Hon. Lionel Chevrier, Acting Leader of the Canadian Delegation, given in the First Committee of the Third Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, in Paris, on October 11, 1948.

The course of this debate has made it clear how earnestly the nations desire real and effective disarmament. Disarmament is a universal objective. I submit that there is no peaceful State, however great or small it may be, that is not willing to disarm to the fullest extent consistent with its security. Certainly the people of Canada are wholeheartedly in favour of any effective plan which would make it possible for them and for other peaceful peoples to reduce the amounts that they must now spend on armaments and armed forces as a measure of security. The same is true in every country that is peacefully inclined and has no aggressive intentions. I repeat that disarmament is a universal objective. It is impossible to emphasize that fact too frequently.

Unfortunately, the Soviet delegation is doing everything in its power to create the impression that the Soviet Union and those States that follow the Soviet line with such remarkable fidelity are the only champions of disarmament. How often have we heard it said that only the U.S.S.R. and those associated with them are upholders of peace and believers in disarmament. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am sure it is unnecessary for me to state that Canada is a wholehearted and sincere believer in peace and is completely without aggressive designs on anyone. In the whole of its history, since self-government was secured in Canada a century ago, not one square foot of territory has been acquired in my country through war or as a result of war. Other delegations have spoken convincingly of their desire for peace and I have no doubt that still others will follow. The point was well put by the delegate of the United Kingdom the other day when he asked us to imagine Luxembourg as a menace to the safety of the Soviet Union. It cannot be stated too often or remembered too vividly that the Soviet Union, through every means at its disposal, is deliberately twisting facts in an effort to make the unthinking believe that only the Soviet Union favour peace and disarmament, while the rest of the world is in favour of war. As I said before, nothing could be further from the truth.

If we are to make progress in disarmament, as we all so earnestly desire, we can only do so upon a basis of confidence and goodwill. Does anyone think that mutual understanding, goodwill and co-operation are universal in the world today? To pose the question is to give the answer. But it is not enough to leave the matter there. Why has there been such a breakdown in international confidence and goodwill?

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