

GOVERNMENT
OF CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 47/14

CANADA, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND THE UNITED STATES

An address by Mr. Hume Wrong, Canadian
Ambassador in the United States,
Tarrytown, N.Y., September 15, 1947.

I owe my presence here tonight to my friend, His Honour the Mayor of Tarrytown, Mr. Sterling Fisher. I blame him, however, for concealing from me at previous meetings that his high reputation as a publicist and broadcaster was surpassed by the greater honour conferred on him by the citizens of this progressive and discriminating community in choosing him as mayor. I wonder whether he and the other village fathers still live up to the ancient and amiable custom described by Washington Irving well over a century ago, in explaining the origin of the name Tarrytown, in words which must, I am sure, be familiar to many of you. The name, he wrote, was said to have been given "by the good housewives of the adjacent country from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days."

I admire the imagination which has brought about the selection of the two Tarrytowns as a model community for the observance of United Nations Week, and the enthusiasm and energy with which the program has been planned and is being executed. Informed, critical, and vigilant support by the general public is essential if the United Nations is to get through these first dangerous years and to succeed in securing throughout the international community the observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter. It is specially necessary that the people of the democratic countries should retain their faith in the United Nations, and should not falter in that faith. Hence the importance of gatherings such as this and of the work of the Associations for the United Nations in many lands.

Support, I just said, must be informed, critical and vigilant. There is danger in expecting too much of the United Nations and equal danger in expecting too little. It is possible to kill by kindness as well as by neglect. As Emerson said, "Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess". If too much were expected, hopes would be disappointed and turn to bitterness; if too little, the United Nations, if it survived, might come to be only a forum for oratorical displays and an excuse for junkets.

When tomorrow the Assembly begins its session, do not, I urge you, be too depressed by reports of bickerings and disagreements, and too confused and bored by procedural arguments. Also do not be taken in by the flow of propaganda which has so often hitherto obscured the merits of the issues; but, on the other hand, do not magnify the importance of accomplishments the real value of which can only be assessed later. In short, let us all aim to be hopeful and at the same time to be informed, critical and vigilant.

It is unhappily true today that many important issues which should be handled by the United Nations, particularly by the Security Council, cannot be handled effectively because no decision can be reached. These matters, however, have to be settled in some way. They cannot await the change in the international climate for which we all hope. There is at times a tendency