



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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VIGILANCE - THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

An address by Hon. Brooke Claxton,
 Minister of National Defence, at the
 Annual Meeting of the United Nations
 Association of Canada, at Toronto on
 October 25, 1948.

It is a great privilege for me to speak at the Annual Meeting of the United Nations Association. I can imagine that you would have liked to have had on this occasion a man who has become known and respected throughout the world for his work for peace, our new Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable L.B. Pearson. It happens, however, that he is busy elsewhere today.

Tonight I propose to discuss with you The Problems of Power and of Peace in the United Nations. Combining the words "power" and "peace" reveals the basic dilemma which faces us. We desire peace wholeheartedly. We could wish for nothing better than the disappearance of all great armies, of atomic bombs and of nerve-racking rumours. But we are forced day by day to think more and more of our military security, of war strategy and of budgeting for the purchase of military equipment.

Imagine what it would be like if there were real confidence among nations, if atomic energy were internationally controlled, if a large measure of disarmament were achieved. How good it would be to plunge into the job of peaceful development, to devote the total energies of our workers, our scientists and our businessmen to production of the goods we need, to end restrictions on travel, to see prosperity grow and freedom reign.

But across this bright prospect falls the cold shadow of a possible world war. We are forced to expend in military training and manoeuvres the man-hours that might have gone into some new productive enterprise and to use steel for bombs and battleships instead of houses or farm machinery.

On United Nations Day 1948, after three years of effort by the United Nations, we must ask ourselves why the threat of war is still here, why preparations for war must occupy the attention of so many nations three short years after the conclusion of the last war.

I see here tonight many old friends who experienced the first war and worked to prevent a second because they had seen the first. They had learned what modern war does in the way of destruction of material and human values, in uprooting established habits of conduct and destroying deep-worn routes of trade. But the western democracies failed to give concerted leadership to the League of Nations. The United States refused to become embroiled in the affairs of Europe. Japan, Italy and Germany were given their chance to ride roughshod over the hopes of humanity.

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