

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CYPRUS

Statement in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, by Dr. R.A. McKay, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, on February 19, 1957.

I am reluctant, as I am sure are all of the friends and allies of the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey, to intervene in the debate on this unfortunate subject. But after hearing the speeches made by the distinguished representatives of those three countries in this Committee, and after long study of the problem, I feel it necessary to make a few points.

The first, which seems to me obvious, is that the problem of Cyprus is highly complex from the point of view of international law, geography, and ethnic, linguistic, religious and strategic considerations. It is not a question to which any one of us could give a quick and facile answer. Cyprus, in ancient, medieval and modern history, has proved a bone of contention. We must be cautious about suggesting solutions which might stir up further strife, even if this Committee really felt it had the competence to do so.

The second point which stands out in our examination of this question is the inescapable conclusion that the Cypriots would have best served their own good by accepting constitutional development in Cyprus along the lines offered by the United Kingdom Government. In particular, it does seem to us that the off-hand dismissal by the Greek Government of the proposals made by that eminent jurist, Lord Radcliffe, without any serious study, was not an act which could conceivably be described as intended to help towards a solution of the question.

I was sorry to hear some of the charges levelled at the United Kingdom Government by the distinguished Foreign Minister of Greece. We in Canada who know so well the history of the development of the British Empire into a Commonwealth