

CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

CANDIDATE FOR SECURITY COUNCIL: The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Louis St. Laurent, addressing the Ottawa branch of the United Nations Association in Canada, Sept. 12, announced that at the forthcoming session of the United Nations Assembly, Canada would be a candidate for membership on the Security Council.

Some comment about this possibility has already been made in Canada, Mr. St. Laurent proceeded, but the government has not previously made known its intentions in this respect formally and publicly. I think it appropriate that I should do so now in the presence of this group of Canadian citizens, and I know that this is once in my life, at least, when I can announce an election campaign and be confident of the good wishes of every person present. We have already informed other members of the United Nations of our candidacy for membership on the Security Council. We have not asked any state to pledge its vote to us, because it is not the policy of the Canadian Government either to seek or to give pledges of this nature. We have, however, asked that sympathetic consideration be given to our candidature and that our qualifications be judged on our record. I may say that the response has been most gratifying.

This decision in respect of the Security Council has been made only after the most careful consideration. We realize, in the first place, that if we are elected the people of Canada will be confronted with new and onerous responsibilities. We realize also that we shall have the weaknesses and difficulties from which the United Nations suffers brought home to us in an urgent and direct manner that will test to the utmost our confidence in that organization. I am sure that the members of this organization are sufficiently familiar with the activities of the United Nations to understand the heavy responsibilities which we are offering to assume. We shall have to increase our Delegation in New York, and this will be an added burden on a Department of Government which is already carrying a heavy load. We shall have, at the same time, to maintain at full strength the facilities in Ottawa and elsewhere through which we shall inform our Delegation in New York concerning the problems which are on the agenda of the Security Council. Most important of all, we shall be forced, as never before in Canada in times of peace, to make decisions on major questions of policy arising from situations which exist far from our shores and which some may feel do not directly affect us.

FAITH TESTED BY EXPERIENCE

Our faith in the organization will also be tested by the practical experience which we will have of the frailties of the United Nations. I know of no more frustrating experience, either for an individual or a nation,

than to be engaged in an enterprise which is not prospering. We should indeed be misrepresenting the situation if we did not make clear our realization that we are standing for membership on a body with a discouraging record. We must not delude either ourselves or anyone else about the fact that membership on the Security Council will embody greater risks and responsibilities and fewer rewards and honours than it seemed to offer two years ago when Canada withdrew its candidacy in the original elections, in order to enable Australia to be elected without further contest.

The Security Council was established in the hope that it would provide means to dissolve threats to the peace through that gradual process of negotiation and discussion which is at the heart of the democratic process. It was founded in the faith that there is no problem in human relations which it is beyond the power of human ingenuity and intelligence to solve. It was also established in the belief that the nations which constituted it would be able and ready to judge world problems, not only in the light of their own national interests but in terms of the welfare of the world community.

FALLS SHORT OF EXPECTATIONS

It is a great disappointment to us all that the organization has fallen so far short of realizing these expectations. The Security Council has become a forum in which the issues of world politics have been subjected to public debate. It has so far failed to provide a conference table at which reconciliation might be achieved through compromise. There has been little evidence of sincere desire to reach agreed solutions. All too frequently, on the other hand, there has been the continual re-statement in uncompromising terms of inflexible positions. The misuse of the veto, which we all so much regret, has been a disturbing symptom of the failure to reach agreed solutions on any of the major problems brought before the United Nations.

I would not like to suggest that, in seeking membership on the Security Council, we feel ourselves in a position to provide the remedy for these difficulties. The remedy can only lie in the attitude of the Permanent Members of the Council. There is no form of words, nor method of procedure which will be proof against the determination of any state to misuse its position as a Member of the Council. The Security Council is essentially a democratic political device. It is basic in democratic practice that no member of a democratic community shall so use his privileges that the system by which his community is governed is weakened or discredited. In a true democracy there is no end which justifies a means that brings into contempt the instrument of government. It is only by the practice of these restraints that the Security Council can

be redeemed.

We have, of course, our own ideas about the ways in which the operations of the United Nations could be improved and we shall make these views known, wherever and whenever it is possible, in our contacts with that organization. In this respect, I think our record is particularly good. From the very inception of the United Nations, Canadian Delegations have advocated methods of procedure which would simplify and expedite its work. We shall continue to make these views known and to press for the improvements in organization which we think would be beneficial. We have views, also, about constitutional problems such as the veto. We realize that this provision of the Charter was a necessary expedient for resolving, on a temporary basis at least, the basic problem of voting procedure in a world of unequal powers. We shall never be reconciled, however, to a permanent situation in which a distinction is made between five nations of the world which are defined as Great Powers and all other nations which, despite the great differences amongst them, are placed together in a less privileged position. The solution of this problem will not be easy, and I do not think that any simple constitutional amendment nor any mere reform in procedure will solve it. Our difficulties will be removed only by the establishment, over a period of time, of precedents and practices which will lead to a modification of the veto power. We are fully conscious, therefore, that if we are elected to the Security Council, our influence on that body will be limited by the superior voting powers which are enjoyed by some members of that body.

WHY CANADA WILLING TO SERVE

You may well ask, therefore, why the government, in the presence of these difficulties, has decided to make known its readiness to serve on the Security Council. We shall become involved directly with questions such as the Balkan dispute and the Indonesian problem which do not now come immediately before our attention. We shall be endeavouring to find solutions to problems which are complicated by the unresolved differences amongst the Great Powers and we shall be taking part in the activities of a body which the world knows to be far from perfect. Why should we state our willingness to serve?

To my mind there is only one answer to this question. In spite of its shortcomings, we in this country continue to believe that the best hope for mankind lies in the establishment of a world organization for the maintenance of peace. We ourselves in this country have built a nation which is as wide as the continent and which is based on the consent of many diversified groups. There is no reason to believe that our experience here and the experience of other peoples who have built political organizations over wide areas cannot be repeated amongst the nations. We believe that, particularly for a people such as our own which

wishes to maintain its freedom and to leave other people in the enjoyment of theirs, the greatest hope for our survival lies in the development of machinery for international cooperation.

If we wish to enjoy the benefits of such a development we must also accept its responsibilities. We must even be prepared to accept these responsibilities at a time when the going is hard and when the future is by no means certain. I do not think that the people of this country would tolerate any other attitude on the part of its representatives to the United Nations. I am certain that we carry the support of every thoughtful Canadian in our determination to make every effort towards the success of this new experiment in international organization. I have already made a statement to this general effect in Parliament during the Debate on the Estimates of the Department of External Affairs on July 4th last, and I should like to repeat now what I said at that time, because it seemed to meet with approval from all parts of the House:

"It had been hoped, and indeed it is still hoped, at least as far as I am concerned, that the United Nations can be the agency to counteract these dividing forces, that it can act as an organization of civilized states within which universal and friendly cooperation will become possible and should be realized. It is because it still thinks that this can be done that the Canadian Government feels that the growth and strengthening of the United Nations must be a real cornerstone of Canada's policy in foreign affairs. It would be folly to disparage the organization merely because it has not, in its short history, already accomplished all that we hoped for from it. The weaknesses which have been displayed make it all the more necessary that support for it be strong and steadfast with a view to removing those weaknesses. At the same time we must not complacently allow any one state or group of states to use the United Nations for their own selfish national or propagandist purposes. It must be a forum for the expression of the collective will of all peoples and not a sounding board for false and misleading propaganda".

I conclude, then, on a note of reserved optimism. We, in Canada, regard our membership in the United Nations not as a temporary expedient but as a permanent partnership. At the same time, we are conscious of the effort which must be made to offset the danger in which this partnership lies.

TREASURY BILLS YIELD .407 P.C.: On behalf of the Minister of Finance it is announced that Tenders have been accepted for the full amount of \$75,000,000 Dominion of Canada Treasury Bills due December 12th, 1947. The average discount price of the accepted bids was \$99.-89854 and the average yield was .407%.