

External Affairs  
Supplementary Paper

No. 53/46 DISARMAMENT

Text of a statement on disarmament recorded by the Permanent Representative of Canada at the United Nations and member of the Canadian Delegation to the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. D.M. Johnson, for the United Nations radio programme "On the Record", and broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System on November 14, 1953, and by the Trans-Canada network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on November 15, 1953.

I do not know whether you have thought very much about the fact that with the new weapons at his disposal man now has it within his power to destroy not only himself but, as Mr. Dulles reminded the General Assembly in his opening statement two months ago, "man also has the power to wipe life off the surface of this planet". However, it is only during the past week that the Assembly has reached the item directly concerned with this fact - namely, the disarmament item. I should like to tell you briefly how that debate has been going.

Canada, along with thirteen other countries who are or will be next year members of the Disarmament Commission, with the sole exception of the Soviet Union, sponsored a resolution on disarmament. It was, in our view, a reasonable resolution which we certainly did not intend to be provocative or controversial. Its chief purpose was to ask the members of the Disarmament Commission, and particularly the principal powers concerned, to make a further effort to break the deadlock which has prevented any agreement in this field since the United Nations first took up the subject in 1946. Since then Canada, because of our special interest in atomic energy matters, has been a permanent member first of the Atomic Energy Commission, and now of the Disarmament Commission. The other members are the members of the Security Council.

A new feature in our resolution this year was that we were able to adopt in modified form an Indian suggestion that the principal countries concerned - the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union and Canada - should, when the Disarmament Commission saw fit, hold private talks to see whether we could not make more headway than we have so far made in public. Our idea was that removed from the immediate pressure which accompanies negotiations carried on in a glare of publicity, we might explore a little more freely and informally the possible lines on which a compromise agreement could be built. For we all realize that in present circumstances it is absolutely essential that some new effort be made.