



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1947

An Address by Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Quebec, October 7, 1947.

I wish, first of all, to assure you that I take great pleasure in being here this evening and of having the opportunity of greeting you both as a member of the Canadian Government and as an almost lifelong resident of the City of Quebec.

As a member of the Government I wish to assure you that we are deeply appreciative of the services being rendered to the economy of the Canadian Nation by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the four hundred and fifty, or more, Boards of Trade and Local Chambers of Commerce which bring together in one great body the men and women of Canada who are most active in her industrial, financial and commercial enterprises.

It would, of course, be almost an impertinence for anyone to express thanks to the others for what they are doing in that regard. We are all equally interested in the result and as far as each one is concerned, his own affairs are so intimately linked up with the affairs of the whole Canadian economy that it is only natural and proper he should be doing everything he can to maintain and stabilize the rhythm of that economy.

And as a citizen of Quebec, it is a privilege to be here and to extend to each of you most cordial greetings and thus have some part in that process which is gradually bringing Canadians from one ocean to the other closer together and making them more conscious of the fact that they are all of one country and that each section has its part to play in the well-being of the whole.

When I was first invited to attend this dinner I was not sure that it would be possible for me to do so; it seemed I might have to be away attending the General Assembly of the United Nations. I therefore suggested to your President that he should invite someone else to be the principal speaker. He complied with my suggestion and my Colleague, Mr. Martin, is the one who had to burn the midnight oil on the preparation of the speech for this evening.

On the other hand, Mr. Ilsley is doing my work for me down at Lake Success and here I am getting all the breaks. I will be able to learn in a few minutes from Mr. Martin quite a lot about one of the principal activities of my Department during the last months and to do it much more easily than if I had to dig it out of the files and documents myself. Instead of having to do a lot of similar work to get material together for a speech of my own, your President assured me that you would be quite satisfied with something like half a speech and even allow that half to be made up of things still quite fresh in my mind as a result of my recent attendance at the meeting of the United Nations at Flushing and Lake Success.

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It requires no extensive research to enable one to come to the conclusion that things are not going well with the United Nations. The attitude of our Russian friends, though perhaps not surprising, has certainly been disappointing, one might almost say exasperating.

I have said that it was not surprising because it has been from the very first stubbornly consistent. At the International Conference, while the War was on, it appeared quite natural to Stalin that all the important decisions be made by himself, by Churchill and by Roosevelt. When Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt suggested a United Nations organization, Mr. Stalin agreed, but stipulated that the organization would have nothing to do with the peace terms to be imposed upon our former enemies and these terms would be determined by the foreign ministers of the big three, which might become the big four if France joined them. He also stipulated that the United Nations would only act through a Security Council and that no important decision in the Security Council could be made without the concurrence of his representatives i.e. that each of the big powers would have an absolute veto.

When the rest of us signed the United Nation Charter at San Francisco we had to accept these conditions and we did accept them after it had been stated by representatives of the big powers, in the presence of the Russian delegates, that no one of them would use his right of veto except in the interest of the United Nations as a whole. Since then, the Russian representatives have used it over twenty times and, as a consequence, they have made the Security Council practically unworkable as the main instrument of the United Nations to secure and maintain peace. That is apparently what they want and they are now waxing very indignant over what they call the efforts of the United States, the United Kingdom and the powers friendly to them to by pass the United Nations and get something accomplished in spite of their vetoes.

I say again that this is not surprising because we have long known that the attitude of the Russians is to insist that "no international question can be solved correctly and justly if an attempt is made to solve it without the Soviet Union, or against its interests". Now, it is perfectly clear that the Soviet Union wishes to see what it calls Capitalistic Regimes destroyed and Communistic Totalitarianism established everywhere.

It is also obvious that the physical destruction brought about by the war in Europe will result in the total collapse of European economies if some further substantial assistance is not forthcoming from the new world. The Russians feel that this collapse would facilitate the extension of their communistic regimes and they are, therefore, doing everything in their power to prevent the new world from extending any further assistance to Europe. That is one explanation of the vitriolic demagogy uttered by Mr. Vichinsky at Flushing Meadows a few days ago and it is one of the reasons why the Comintern has again raised its head on the European scene. There are communists in practically every country of continental Europe and in order to help them in their struggle for power and domination, it is felt useful to give them public encouragement. That should increase their self confidence and also their confidence in the prospects of success.

The line taken by Mr. Vichinsky at this assembly and echoed by the satellite slavic powers is by no means new. For months past, a Government controlled Press and Radio in the Soviet Union have been hammering out the theme that the United States is preparing to attack U.S.S.R. This propaganda has been carried on in an area fenced by the most powerful censorship and the most rigorous control of opinion which the world has ever known. It has been designed to create the stereotype of a gigantic and powerful capitalistic country bent upon destroying governments set up by the working classes and piling up atomic bombs for eventual use against Soviet Union at the most propitious time. The

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reactions aroused by Mr. Vichinsky's speech were at once relayed to Moscow and displayed in the Soviet Press. Is it not fair to assume that Mr. Vichinsky knowing that everything which can be regarded as news gets wide publicity in the papers of the North American continent, deliberately planned to thus secure some evidence for domestic consumption of the validity of the line which the Soviet Government has been pursuing for months past.

The second and perhaps even more important purpose of this campaign may very well have been to endeavour to frighten certain portions of public opinion on the North American continent about the possibility of United States intervention in Europe ultimately leading to war and thereby prevent acceptance by the public and by Congress of the Truman and Marshall plans for aid to Europe. Without such aid it is reasonable for Russians to expect that the regimes based upon private ownership and private enterprise will collapse and give way to regimentation by communistic bureaucrats and that Governments modeled on theirs will in fact be subservient to Moscow's influence and only too willing to implement that higher loyalty which Moscow seems able to inspire in those it has trained in its communistic institutions.

Now, all this is not merely a matter of ideology; it has become a very concrete problem for each one of us. We, in Canada, have an economy based upon the principle of multilateral trade and multilateral currency conversion. We buy from the United States commodities to the value of hundreds of millions of dollars more than we sell in that market and unless we can use the surpluses from our sales to other countries to pay for our United States purchases, we will have to cease making these purchases. We are, therefore, vitally concerned in the prompt restoration of European economies and in the removal of those troublesome threats to peace and stability which block the path to such restoration, and it was not merely words I was speaking when I said to the General Assembly the other day on behalf of the Canadian Delegation:

"The fact remains, however, that these problems must be solved and that procedures and practices which obstruct such solutions must be changed. This can be done by the voluntary abandonment of these practices; by agreed conventions or understandings which will regulate them; or, if necessary, by amendments to the Charter. We must hope that no member of the Security Council will flout clearly expressed world opinion by obstinately preventing change and thus become responsible for prejudicing, and possibly destroying, the Organization which is now man's greatest hope for the future.

Nations, in their search for peace and cooperation will not and cannot accept indefinitely and unaltered a Council which was set up to ensure their security, and which, so many feel, has become frozen in futility, and divided by dissension. If forced, they may seek greater safety in an association of democratic and peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for greater national security. Such associations, if consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter, can be formed within the United Nations. It is to be hoped that such a development will not be necessary. If it is unnecessary it will be undesirable. If, however, it is made necessary, it will take place. Let us not forget that the provisions of the Charter are a floor under, rather than a ceiling over, the responsibilities of member states. If some prefer to go even below that floor, others need not be prevented from moving upwards."

Since then, we have been elected to membership on the Security Council. Our conduct there will be along the lines of the above cited statement. We will go to the most extreme limits to make the United Nations work as a universal one world organization, and I still hope we

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can do it. We are the majority in numbers, we possess the greatest production capacity, we possess the strongest armaments and we have on our side the freedoms that seem so indispensable to the true nature of God made men. We are willing to devote all that to the welfare and uplifting of all men. But if theory crazed totalitarianism groups persist in their policies of frustration and futility we will not, for very much longer, allow them to prevent us from using our obvious advantages to improve the conditions of those who do wish to cooperate with us and thereby overcome the difficulties we ourselves are experiencing from the present disruption in the normal flow of trade and the normal exchanges of specialized services between nations and between their respective peoples.

To overcome those difficulties, Governments may have to resort to some measures of regimentation and direction of the economies of their peoples and if and when that is done the efficiency and real helpfulness of those measures will depend upon the manner in which they appeal to you and to the other informed members of our Canadian public.

You may be assured this whole problem is being given and will continue to be given the most careful consideration by the government and by those from whom it takes expert advice in that regard. We are not going to jump at hasty conclusions, but we are not going to stand idly by and allow situations to develop to the point where they would be apt to be irremediable.

We will count upon your whole hearted cooperation and I am sure that if our policies are wisely conceived and put forward in a truly constructive way, we will all be able to rise above considerations of ordinary partisan politics and push them forward with the same patriotic fervor and unselfish unanimity that characterized our national efforts during the strenuous days of the shooting war. Those days are over but we still have with us the profound dislocations which they brought about and those dislocations have got to be dealt with in the same unselfish spirit that gave us victory in the shooting war. It can be done. Let's, each one of us, make it our business individually and collectively, to see that it is done.

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