



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of a Broadcast by Mr. L.B. Pearson,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Chairman  
of the Canadian Delegation to the Fourth Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly, over the Trans-Canada Network  
of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation at 9.10 p.m. on September 25, 1949.

The fourth session of the General Assembly has opened in an atmosphere, if not of rosy optimism, at least of efficiency and realism. Within the first four days, the officers have been chosen, the agenda agreed upon, and the general debate is off to a good start. In previous years, these opening formalities have occupied many days. This time, however, there seems to be a commendable desire to get on with the job.

Much of the credit for this good beginning belongs to the new President: General Romulo of the Philippines. He is an effective chairman, friendly and good-natured, but determined to keep the Assembly on the move. His gavel poised for action, he gives his ruling or calls a vote at the slightest indication that a discussion is coming to an end. Speakers have already sensed the feeling of expedition he is trying to create, and co-operate with him by keeping their remarks short. One delegate told me yesterday that, for the first time in his long experience in international conferences, he had sat through three hours of committee meeting and never said a word!

The spirit of contention is not, of course, absent. It never is, unfortunately, down here. Certain items on the agenda were not included without vigorous protests from the Russians and their friends, who accused the rest of us of everything from breaking the Charter to interfering in the private affairs of sovereign states because we wanted to discuss questions like the civil war in Greece or religious persecution in Hungary. But their objections have been more briefly stated than formerly, and they are so familiar that no one has taken them seriously enough to argue about them at any great length. This does not mean, of course, that there will not be long and acrimonious debates before the Assembly is finished. The agenda includes a number of subjects on which there are sharp differences between the Russians and the rest of us - atomic energy, Korea, Italian colonies, and perhaps also China - and the Soviet delegates have given no sign whatever that their attitude on any one of these has become more co-operative since the last met.

The opening debate has already shown that delegates from the democratic countries are taking a sober and realistic view of problems before us and are looking for practical steps which we can take to solve them. Mr. Acheson, the United States Secretary of State, has already made a constructive and reasoned speech, reviewing the main issues before the Assembly and indicating the desire of his delegation to support workable proposals for dealing with them. He frequently used the words "the public interest of the World Community", suggesting by implication that it was the people of the world rather than their governments whom the delegates were representing. An equally thoughtful and constructive speech was made for India by its chief delegate, Sir Benegal Rau. India is directly concerned in one major issue

before the United Nations - Kashmir - and has interested itself closely in another, Indonesia. On both topics the Indian delegate was moderate and conciliatory, indicating that his country is fully prepared to co-operate in the procedures of settlement, which have been started in each case.

Friday was, of course, a dramatic day at Flushing Meadow. In the morning President Truman's statement about the atomic explosion in Russia reached the delegates and in the afternoon Mr. Vishinsky addressed them.

The knowledge that there has been an atomic explosion in Soviet Russia should not surprise us or alter our policies in any way. Nor should it alarm us any more than we should be already alarmed by the very existence of the bomb itself. The progress of scientific knowledge, which is part of the inheritance of all mankind, and can never be the secret monopoly of any one community, has now reached the stage where many terrible weapons of mass destruction can be made. It may be that in the not far-distant future any one of a dozen states will have the power to threaten the survival of mankind. We know also, however, that scientific progress, particularly in the field of atomic energy, gives to mankind the possibility of great and peaceful progress.

Friday's news, therefore, merely underlines and reinforces the conclusion that atomic energy must be brought under international control in such a way that we can be absolutely sure that no bombs are being made and will not be made by anyone; and that this great new source of power is being developed for constructive purposes alone. The necessity for this is now, not greater, but as great as ever. If this is not done, the responsibility must not be due to any failure on the part of the free democracies. But there must be contributions by others as well.

In his address in the afternoon on Friday, Mr. Vishinsky made no reference to the President's statement, and neither he nor any of his colleagues gave any indication what they thought about the news of an atomic explosion in the U.S.S.R. His speech gave no indication of any change whatever in Soviet policy. It was briefer than usual - a half hour rather than an hour-and-a-half - but as abusive as ever. It contained a direct personal attack on the Chinese representative, denunciation of the Marshall Plan, an accusation that Britain and the United States are preparing for war, a prophecy - almost a hope - of economic collapse in the West, and some old Soviet propaganda proposals about disarmament and peace, put forward in slightly revised form. There was nothing new in it - not even the terms of abuse were new. We can only hope that this does not mean that, in this Assembly as previously, anything we accomplish will be in spite of the Russians rather than with their help.

The Political Committee of which I have the honour and responsibility to be chairman - has a short agenda but a heavy one. Five items - Greece, Palestine, Indonesia, Italian colonies, and the report of the Security Council - have so far been assigned to it. The major political responsibilities with which the United Nations is charged at the moment are embodied in these items, and the issues are urgent and difficult ones. I think the Assembly, or the great majority of its members, is prepared to approach these questions in a realistic mood, to avoid as much as possible debate for propaganda purposes and to search for workable solutions. I hope so, for the lives of many millions of people may be affected by our decisions here.

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