

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL UNITY

An address by Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton, Ontario, March 15, 1948.

First of all I wish to thank you for the invitation to attend this dinner and to assure you that it gave me much pleasure to be able to accept it.

The annual dinner of the Hamilton Junior Chamber of Commerce is becoming recognized as a function of first water importance in the industrial and commercial life of this part of Canada and even by our whip in the House of Commons. He gives you a pretty black look when you suggest to him that you are going to be away at a time when division is apt to be called, but though he swallows hard he does not say very much when you are able to add that the reason for your absence is an occasion such as this. He realizes, as we all do, that it is indeed fortunate for Canada that her young business men are taking a very keen and intelligent interest in the public affairs of the nation and recognize how dependent on each other we have all become and how closely the individual interests of each one of us are bound up with the common interests of the whole body politic.

It is always a pleasure for me to come to Hamilton and this time I feel doubly privileged in being here with my Colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce. To each one of you he is one who knows and appreciates healthy industrial development and to be with him when you are showing him the way you are driving ahead here in Hamilton and the sound foundations upon which you are establishing and expanding so many of the basic industries essential to the needs of this Country, both for our own requirements and for the maintenance of our proper place in international trade, has made me feel almost like an insider myself.

During the last few years it has been my privilege to meet and to speak to a good many audiences in a great many parts of Canada. It has also been my privilege to meet and listen to a great many delegations representing different sections of our Canadian people: farmers, miners, forest operators, manufacturers, bankers, distributors, common carriers on land and sea, labor organizations, co-operative enterprises, professional associations, welfare associations, veterans associations, and others and I have been having confirmed more and more deeply all the time my conviction that the people of this country are on the way to become one integrated, united Canadian nation in spite of the heterogeneous elements of which it is made up and the wide diversity of natural resources of the vast land masses and great water bodies which constitute our half of this North American continent.

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To make the progress that has been realized in that direction has not been an easy task for our forefathers and for ourselves.

Many difficulties have had to be overcome: difficulties within ourselves as human beings resulting from inherited prejudices and temperament, and difficulties in our surroundings arising out of the geography and topography of our country.

They were very real difficulties. I am not going to expand upon them here but just to remind ourselves of how serious they were, it is well to remember that the two main strains of our population are descended from two proud races which have been century-old rivals and enemies in Europe and whose enmity and rivalry had not been confined to Europe but had crossed the ocean and besmirched the first 15 decades of white man's sway in America.

We of French descent were the issue of those who had been vanquished on the fields of battle and who had then been ceded, lock, stock and barrel, to the Government of our traditional enemies.

Those enemies did not speak our language, they knew nothing of our customs and our laws, they considered that our religion was an abominable superstition, prescribed in their home-land as dangerous to the security of the State and capable of impact only on most primitive and untutored minds.

On the other side of the picture we were just as bitter about you and only a little over 100 years ago, when Lord Durham came over here to investigate and report upon the grievances which had resulted in the uprisings of 1837, he found not only violent dissatisfaction with the existing form of government, but two races warring in the bosom of a single state.

Now, not only was it necessary for the people of your race and mine to get rid of those prejudices and to accept each other on a footing of absolute equality, but that mutual acceptance had to be so complete, so natural and so frank as to leave no doubt on either side as to each other's absolute security.

Lord Durham felt that the French-speaking group was so small that it was doomed to lose its identity, its language, its tradition and its special way of life. But there were many who felt that that could not happen and it did not happen.

Both groups had the same aspirations for a form of government which left them the responsibilities of administering their own affairs and when just 100 years ago this month, they secured responsible government and Lord Selkirk, on instruction from the home-office, undertook to administer the affairs of the country according to the advice of Ministers responsible for every item of such advice. To the elected representatives of the people, we have since that time plainly set out to arrange our affairs in the manner best adapted to meet our needs and satisfy our aspirations as a people, and we ourselves, knew them to be.

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Of course, we soon found that we could not get along with one single Parliament having responsibility for all the local needs and aspirations of each separate section of our community. That would have required, at the time, a measure of mutual co-operation and understanding which was beyond the capacity of the living generation. Your fathers and mine, the Fathers of Confederation, knew and appreciated the complexities of the problem, and they devised a system which they felt would work and which, for over 80 years now, has worked in a fairly satisfactory manner. It has worked because the Fathers of Confederation were realists and because those who have followed in their footsteps have also done their best to be equally realistic.

Our political unity was the achievement of our respective leaders. It laid the ground-work for our national unity and though that national unity, which depends upon the inner feeling and outward conduct of each individual, has necessarily been of slower growth, it has, from one great common undertaking to another, expanded in breadth and deepened in intensity.

Common dangers shared together and overcome by common efforts have nourished and strengthened it in all the great national crises we have had to face. Similarly, in every day life, the way we have divided and distributed the tasks required to supply us with the commodities necessary for our individual needs and comforts have also provided a valuable contribution to that end. I doubt if there is any individual in any part of Canada who does not, whether he is conscious of it or not, depend to some degree for the things he uses and consumes to satisfy his normal individual requirements, on something produced right here in Hamilton; and I am equally sure that you, Hamiltonians, would be deprived of many things which you use and enjoy if you were cut off from any substantial part of Canada as a normal source of your supplies.

Politically we have become autonomous and independent, but that only means that we have come to depend on each other and to have sufficient confidence in each other to feel that we will all co-operate fairly towards those ends which will be of benefit to us all. That is what has made us conscious of our nationhood and that is what has made other states recognize us as a full-fledged adult member of the family of nations. It has also enabled us to overcome our geographical difficulties and in spite of the great differences in our land masses and in our bodies of water from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to establish and develop one integrated Canadian economy which is thriving and expanding and to which the industries of Hamilton are making such an important contribution, but upon which the industries of Hamilton have in turn to rely as a natural compensating consequence.

Now, I am not going to say much about international affairs, although, for the last year and more, I have spent most of my time reading despatches about what is happening abroad. It would be no news for you to say that those despatches do not reveal a pretty picture. We are all aware of the onimous declarations made during the last few days and weeks by Mr. Marshall, Mr. Bevin and others and

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We have all been shocked by the tragic and symptomatic events which had just taken place in Czechoslovakia. We cannot be undisturbed by such declarations and happenings because it must now be accepted as a fact that practically everything which happens in the international sphere is of interest, often of direct and immediate interest, to Canada. Canada's boundaries are no longer merely geographical. They extend far beyond her physical frontiers. They run, in fact, through the hearts of free man everywhere. On our side of the line are all those in every country who work and fight to preserve the freedom and dignity of individuals against the unbridled impact of totalitarian power and brutal might. There can be no neutrality in this conflict, which is as spiritual as it is political.

Even before the end of the last war, this inevitable interdependence of the nations upon each other brought together at San Francisco all those who were fighting on our side against the Axis powers in an effort to save succeeding generations from the scourge which twice in our own lifetime had brought untold sorrow to mankind.

We reaffirmed our faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person and we resolved to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another and to unite our strength to maintain international security and promote the economic and social advancement of all our peoples.

In the Charter we signed, we all undertook to respect the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other and to refrain in our international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent for the purposes of the United Nations.

We created this great international organization and attempted to provide it with an effective set-up to insure the realization of our high purposes.

Now, we in Canada still have faith in that organization and we are doing our best to make it fully effective.

But so far it has not been fully effective.

It was to take over and maintain peace after peace had been restored to the world, but the making of the peace was to remain the responsibility of those who were making, and who had made, the most effective contribution to the prosecution of the war. The fighting came to an end with the unconditional surrender of our enemies, but the great powers who thus retained special responsibilities and who were given special functions under the Charter have not yet been able to carry into the peace the co-operation which made it possible for them and for us to win the war.

Under the provisions of the Charter, no major decision could be taken without the concurrence of the Five great powers or, in other words, any one of the Five great powers had the right to prevent effective action by the use of the veto. We had been told that this power of veto would be sparingly used and only exercised when the power resorting to it honestly felt that it was in the interest of the whole

organization to prevent a certain course of action. Now, one of the great powers has consistently been using its veto to prevent constructive action of any kind from being adopted. It is a state in which totalitarian communism prevails and it has, by its veto, attempted to prevent constructive action on our part and at the same time has sponsored and supported subversive revolutionary communism in many other countries.

I shall not attempt to make anything like a complete survey of what has been going on, but I will point out two or three of the salient features of this terrible situation:

There has been, first of all, the failure to reach any agreement about the German peace settlement. It must be obvious that without some agreement on the solution, political and economic, of the problem presented by 80 million Germans located in the very heart of Europe, there can be no assurance either of economic stability or political security in any part of Europe. Up to the present, there has been no such agreement and there seems to be little immediate hope for an overall settlement.

The policy of Russia seems to be to insist on action entirely and exclusively in her own interest or, if that is not agreed to, on inaction in the hope that the dislocations of economy of Germany and the drain of the resources of the U.K. and the U.S.A. and even France, which these dislocations make inevitable, will so weaken them as eventually to force a decision on her own terms.

Naturally, it is a matter of concern for the U.S.S.R. as it is for the other states, that the industrial potential of Western Germany and the strength of the German people shall not again, some day, be directed against any one of them.

It is possible to recognize the force of some of the Soviet claims without agreeing to the establishment of a powerful central government in Germany, susceptible to communistic influence or to a 10 billion dollar account for reparations on current German production; or giving the U.S.S.R. a voice in the control of the Rhur and the Rhineland unless her attitude in regard to Eastern Germany radically changes.

The result of the present stalemate is the continued division of Germany, which threatens to bring about her total collapse, unless proper steps are taken at once to prevent it. Yet, as long as the German economy lies stagnant, the occupying powers have to make vast expenditures to prevent actual starvation and the Western European countries, like Holland and Belgium, who normally derive substantial benefits from trade with Germany are handicapped in their own recovery.

There is in all this, a chain of vicious consequences which is, of course, exploited by the Communist parties for purposes which have now unfortunately become too familiar to the rest of us.

Distress and starvation and even despair are stirred by the Communists, who flourish on these things, into political disorder and ideological strife. Starvation becomes

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weapon of political warfare. Misery becomes a political platform.

In fact, Communism has, in Europe, extended its control under Soviet leadership and direction over such countries as Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and now Czechoslovakia.

It is only in Greece, of these Eastern European States, that the advance of communism has been checked and that seems to be because Greece has been recognized by both the British and American governments as a keypoint in this struggle against aggressive communism.

There have also been difficulties and delays in respect of the Japanese peace settlement and those difficulties and delays are also resulting in a serious drain upon the economies of the rest of the world.

Of course there are other clouds as well on the international horizon. I mentioned, a few moments ago, Indonesia, the dispute between Indonesia and Pakistan over Kashmir - Palestine, the setting up of a national government in Korea. Not all of these problems are the result of the same ideological warfare; but they are all affected by it and, to a certain degree, overshadowed by it.

On the other hand, there are, however, signs of promising and effective democratic counter-action.

This democratic counter-action has shown itself under three forms which have been given different names, but which are perhaps, after all, only different aspects of the same general plan. They are:

- (1) The European recovery program and the move towards European economic unity;
- (2) The consolidation of Western Germany - and
- (3) Plans for what is called "Western Union".

You will remember that in his Harvard speech, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Marshall, suggested that the European countries should get together and formulate a plan for the economic recovery of Europe. The U.K. and France held a preliminary meeting at Paris in mid-June last and drafted the outline for a conference which opened in Paris on July 12th. The Soviet Union refused to attend and exerted sufficient pressure on her satellites to create an almost solid Eastern block against the proposal.

This Conference set up an Executive Committee through which a report was submitted to the U.S. Secretary of State on September 22nd last. The U.S. Government examined the report and accepted it as reasonable basis to formulate proposals for aid to Europe. It was estimated that the participating countries would require, to balance their payments with the Western Hemisphere, from April 1st, 1948, to June 30th, 1952, something of the order of 20 billion dollars and, as you know, there is now pending before Congress an appropriation bill which would provide something of the order of 5 billion

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dollars for the first fifteen months, about half of which could be used for purchases in other Western Hemisphere countries, "off-shore purchases".

The implementation of the plan does not depend, however, only on assistance from this hemisphere. In the long run, Europe must stand on its own feet and that requires re-arrangement of tariff and other barriers to trade between them. Moves are, therefore, under way for a greater degree of European economic unity.

The first result of this unity may bring about some dislocations in Canadian trade with Europe. But I am sure we will all do all we can to keep those dislocations to a minimum, not forgetting that in the long run, Canada will benefit by any European consolidation of this kind.

As a second step, it was necessary to move toward the consolidation of Western Germany. Originally, all four occupying powers took measures regarded largely as of a transitory nature, on the assumption that a German peace treaty would not be long delayed.

But the failure of the Foreign Ministers' meeting in London last November and December, demonstrated that this was no longer a reasonable assumption. The powers occupying the Western zone have, therefore, had to consider the pressing needs for administrative and economic reforms in Western Germany of a more lasting character and the United Kingdom has announced a constitution for Bizonia, or the two zones they control, and are proceeding to take with Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg, the steps necessary to rebuilt self-government, stimulate production and restore trade in that important area.

This gives reason to hope that an end will be made to the enervating uncertainty and continuous drain which has been such an obstacle to the process of general recovery.

The other very important step which was announced by Mr. Bevin in his speech of the 22nd of January last, was the plan for what has been called the Western Union, the terms of which have now been agreed to and which, we are informed, will be signed by the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux countries, the day after to-morrow. This is no mere military alliance directed against a possible aggressor from the East. It seeks to mobilize the moral as well as the military resources of the Western European countries and to contain or restrain Soviet expansion, not by a Maginot line, but by building up in these liberal, democratic and Christian states, a dynamic counter-attraction to the degrading tenets of totalitarian and materialistic communism.

Such a union is not excluded by the terms of the United Nations Charter and would be in complete accord with the purposes of the Charter. It is, of course, not easy to realize among countries so firmly attached to their individual sovereignty, their traditions, their cultures and their ways of living; but it has been successfully started and there is room for hope that it will extend. And it may not be only Western Europe which will be forced into a spiritual, cultural, economic and political union to offset the union of the totalitarian states under the aggressive leadership of Russia.

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Before the last war, the Nazi aggressor picked off his victims one by one and was stopped only by the united forces of the whole free world. May we not hope that these peoples of the free world can unite to prevent another world war as they did not win the last one?

Our Prime Minister, some weeks ago, had this to say about totalitarian communism:

"... Communism is no less a tyranny than Nazism. It aims at world conquest. It hopes to effect its purpose by force ... So long as Communism remains as a menace to the free world, it is vital to the defence of freedom to maintain a preponderance of military strength on the side of freedom, and to secure that degree of unity among the nations which will ensure that they cannot be defeated and destroyed one by one."

No one wishes to see the United Nations break up nor even to force the Soviet groups to secede from the United Nations. But without sacrificing the universality of the United Nations, or supplanting it, it is possible for the free nations to form their own union for collective self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter

This union could be created within the United Nations by those free states which are willing to accept greater obligations than those contained in the Charter in return for greater national security than the United Nations is now providing for its members.

The trend towards the formation of such self-defensive unions is not a confession of despair, but rather a message of hope. It does not mean that we look upon a third world war as inevitable, but rather that we have decided that the best way of preventing such a war is to confront the forces of Communist expansionism with an overwhelming preponderance of moral, economic and military force on the side of freedom.

It can be done and it should be effective and prepare the restoration of that confidence and security so necessary to make worthwhile and properly fruitful the time and energies we are devoting to those other international conferences and agencies which are dealing with human rights and social progress, and world health and world trade, and freedom of information and self-government, and proper elections at the other spots of these troubled, but terribly momentous, times. We have achieved mutual confidence and domestic security over great difficulties in our own land.

There should still be hope that men of good will can achieve the same results in the wider field of international co-operation by constantly reminding themselves that what is best for all - and there can be no question that peace and security are best for all - will also be better for each than anything which armed conflict could possibly win for him.