



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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FOUR YEARS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Condensed text of an address by Mr. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, to the Rotary Club in Pembroke, Ontario, on February 4, 1950.

....Tonight my mind goes back over the past four years to ask this important question: "Has the United Nations fulfilled our high hopes for it?" The answer is that it has fallen short of what we expected -- but then we expected too much! It was too much to expect that in such a handful of years any organization could win back to peace and world co-operation minds that had been subject for long years to the ways of war and rivalry.

As we look back over the recent course of mankind's pilgrimage towards peace we should see the one essential fact -- not the difficulties, the setbacks, the obstacles but the distance covered. For I believe that progress has been made in the past four years. I suggest that we should ask ourselves this question: "If the United Nations had not been brought into existence, would the world have been better off today?" I am sure that the answer is "No". Inaction would have left the world so much the worse off.

Of one thing I am certain, and I think that you will agree with me: the existence of the United Nations and the strong public support that has developed for it has helped further the logic of world co-operation against the insensible but deeply ingrained instincts of dissension and war.

To build the ideal of the United Nations is much more than to build a fine skyscraper in New York to house its organization. This vast structure of a way of life for the world, is built not of stone nor of mortar but in the minds and hearts of men.

Let us look back over the past four years. Certainly, problems have come to the United Nations that it could not solve. Armed conflicts have continued that it has been unable to stop; other wars have begun that it could not prevent. However, despite all this, I believe that the world is better off today because we brought this organization into being to serve the world.

Let us look back at the main achievements of the United Nations over the past four years:

1. This organization has come safely through all the storms and stresses of its formative years..

2. It has done much to sell the basic idea of peace to the world's peoples. Even nations which seem to be antagonistic have not dared publicly to abandon it.
3. Increasingly, it has become the focus for the people's faith in peaceful action. Increasingly, it has made possible the mobilization of mankind's will to peace.
4. It has created world agencies that have made definite contributions to co-operation in many fields -- finance, health, food, trade, economic rehabilitation, the relief and rehabilitation of refugees, the restoration of war-torn nations and the rebuilding of their cultural life.
5. It has made progress in solving many complex problems. It has not stopped all wars, but who can say what wars were possible unless it had taken action.
6. In four years it has encouraged more progress towards the creation of a sense of world citizenship and realization of the interdependence of nations than we have ever witnessed in a comparable period in world history.

From the beginning, Canada's stand has been consistent. As a strong believer in world peace and in world co-operation we gave every support to the formation of the United Nations. We have participated fully and generously in the work of the General Assembly and the various other bodies. We can be proud of the part that we have played.

We have not been blind to the shortcomings of this organization. Where necessary to ensure that - in those parts of the world where our influence can best make itself felt - peace will prevail and co-operation will be continuous, we have supplemented the United Nations with the North Atlantic Pact.

It is by milestones such as the North Atlantic Pact that history measures progress. This treaty is designed to allow all who work within its orbit to live in peace. The bond of fellowship for the nations of the North Atlantic is the pledge of free men that they will not permit their democratic freedoms to be tampered with. It must not be thought that this Treaty represents an abandonment by Canada of the United Nations idea. Actually, it tends to strengthen the United Nations.

I should like to repeat a thought I used here four years ago. We must not expect miracles. We must not imagine that the framework of society can be altered in a day or a month or a year. This will require years of sweat and of study -- from each one of us, not only in this country but in every country, it will demand unceasing allegiance to the principles of good will and faith.

The further development of atomic weapons has made the need for world understanding and co-operation -- great as it was in 1946 -- now greater than ever, so that we can find some way to make war prisoner on this planet. Because our need is greater, so must our effort be greater -- to see that to the extent that it is within our power the United Nations will succeed.

/In this ...

In this atomic age no part of this world is war-proof. Every nation must do what it can to protect itself against war, not so much by pacts and pledges, but by acts of co-operative friendship with the other nations of the world. No organization can more effectively further these efforts than the United Nations, founded as it is on these principles:

- that nations are inter-dependent.
- that power and responsibility should walk hand in hand
- that nations should co-operate socially, economically and politically.
- that above all transient considerations stand human rights and human dignity with their foundations in morality.
- that all nations should have access to freedom and equality.

Unless such valiant attempts had been made to widen the empire of these principles, no one looking back knows what twists and turns history might have taken in recent years. But I am confident that the United Nations has succeeded in lessening the quantum of conflict, and that it has made progress, however slow, towards removing the causes of conflict.

The United Nations has really an impressive list of accomplishments to its credit, especially in those fields that do not concern political questions so much as humanitarian problems. As one who has long been a supporter of world co-operative effort and a participant in many of the United Nations Councils, let me reaffirm my belief that events will justify the pride I feel in the contribution that the United Nations has made, is making and will surely make in the future.

Old rivalries and mankind's out-worn but not discarded habit of seeking in the ashes and ruins of war the answer to the problems of nations -- these have rekindled conflict. But despite all shortcomings, despite evidences of bad faith on the part of certain members, who might even want to endanger its future, the United Nations has laid out a path for the world's peoples along which law and not force is the rule of the road. The struggle against fear and against insecurity is one that will not die down in our time. We can only hope that because of our efforts and because of Canada's untiring contribution, the world will be nearer a solution when our time ends.

But to do our part we must stand up and speak for the ideals in which we believe and let frank and open talk clarify the confusion that often is deliberately created in the world councils. For example, from my recent experiences, let me recall some of the points that, speaking on behalf of Canada in the United Nations in New York on November 15, I found it necessary to make. I categorized Mr. Vishinsky's latest peace pact proposal for what it was -- a propaganda manoeuvre for the Communist cause. I think that I expressed Canadian sentiments when I emphasized that we did not want any more signatures -- we wanted settlements.

On this occasion, I told the Russian representative that the real problem today is not possible preparations for a new war, but "the fear and insecurity which lie like ice on the hearts of men everywhere". I went on to say that Mr. Vishinsky and his nation could do more than any other to remove these fears since they had done more than any other to create them. I asked point-blank this question: Have the Communists given over their

historic intention of waging war upon the rest of the world? I asked Mr. Vishinsky whether he believed, as Lenin did, that it is necessary for a Communist "to use any ruse, cunning, unlawful method, evasion, concealment of the truth."

I should like here to repeat some of the closing sections of this speech as it outlines what I feel to be the centre of the problem of co-operation between the free world and the world that is chained to Communism:-

"Now for the first time in history there is the possibility that a true world community may develop. From the most Western position of the Soviet army in Europe, westward across the Atlantic and across the Pacific to the Eastern boundaries of Siberia, there is a vast and complex free society in which the moral and ethical values of religion play freely upon the daily operations of government, in which spiritual values are cherished rather than denied and cynically reviled, in which the free play of one idea upon another, of one political philosophy upon another, of one religious concept upon another, is the basis of progress and happiness. It is only in this free environment that the individual can possibly attain a relationship with his fellow-citizens which makes him truly peaceful. This is the kind of progress towards peace that we must encourage and in which we must have faith.

"Cannot we remove these Iron Curtains? Cannot we abandon these barriers which seek to divide the people of the Soviet Union from the rest of us?

Cannot we recognize that the basic reality of international politics, as of village affairs, is the individual man and woman?....

It is the beginning of sanity and wisdom to realize that the individual man and woman is never the personification of categories, economic or otherwise. The individual is nothing less than the image of God. To the extent that this principle is recognized, we will be on the path to human brotherhood and the achievement of lasting peace."

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