

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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## CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

An address by the Right Hon. Louis S. St-Laurent,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the  
Canadian Club of Toronto, November 3, 1947.

There are two reasons for my presence here today, one is that I do not get the opportunity of coming to Toronto very often but each time I do come, I am greeted with such obvious friendliness that it makes my visits very pleasant indeed.

The second is that I have always looked upon luncheon meetings of the Canadian Clubs as functions which are both interesting and stimulating because they bring us together to give our thoughts and attention, for a few moments out of our busy lives, to matters with which we are more concerned as citizens or members of our community groups than strictly as individuals.

Of course in saying that, I am referring to meetings one can attend without any other concern than that of sitting back comfortably and listening to what somebody else has to say. Of course too, when I got your invitation, Mr. President, I knew I could come here only at the cost of having to make a speech myself, but nevertheless I accepted at once and decided that I would take advantage of the occasion to say something about the activities of the Department of External Affairs.

I make no apology for selecting such a topic because the impact of things which happen outside of Canada upon our Canadian economy and our domestic policies has become so great and so direct that External Affairs are in a very true sense a part and an aspect of our own Canadian affairs. Some of you will remember that the Prime Minister made a statement to that effect here in Toronto when he attended the re-opening of your great Exhibition in August last. He said:

"Whether we like it or not, Canada's opportunities and responsibilities have ceased to be mainly national. They have become largely international. National trade has become increasingly a part of international trade, national progress a part of world progress, national peace and security, a part of the security and peace of the world."

The growth in this country of a sense of political responsibility on an international scale has been an inevitable consequence of international events. These events have, time and again, made it necessary for us to decide on major questions of participation in international organizations both in peace and war, whether we would be in, or whether we would try to remain out.

Experience has shown that, when the world is at war, we cannot remain out and the part we have played in bringing to a victorious conclusion the two terrible world wars of our own generation has been an important and a costly one. That fact has no doubt had much to do with our decision to be present in peacetime international organizations.

This is what Mr. Ilsley said over the air the other evening, as the explanation of Canada's interest in the United Nations:

"The United Nations, with all its imperfections, offers the best hope the world has for the preservation of peace. If the United Nations can only keep the world out of war every Canadian should be devoutly thankful.

"Canada's sacrifices in two world wars have been enormous and Canada's capacity for preventing war by her own separate efforts is just about nil. There may be something to be said for the position of one of the Great Powers which decides to rely on its own strength or on an alliance with other powers to maintain the peace of the world. But there is nothing to be said for the capacity of a small country like Canada, by its own separate efforts or by contracting power alliances, to keep the world out of war.

"So we must do everything we can to make the United Nations succeed. Every political party in Canada agrees that this must be done. So does every newspaper, so does every thoughtful Canadian. It is very easy to scoff at the United Nations, to point to its cost, its talkativeness, its disagreements, its shortcomings. But we really have no alternative but to support it with all our might."

We really have no reason to be surprised, though we may be disappointed, over what has been going on in this field of the United Nations' activities - the fact, for instance, that majorities do not seem to be able to make their views prevail, and the like. I say we need not be surprised because we are, all of us who have become members of the Organization, somewhat responsible for that condition. It is just a part of the aftermath of the war years or the carrying over into the years of peace of the procedures which prevailed with everybody's consent during war.

During the war, the Allies had to act quickly and they had to act concertedly and, in order to get concerted and rapid action, discussions and decisions had to be left to very few people. They were in fact left to the leaders of the Big Four, the United Kingdom, the United States, the U.S.S.R. and China, with a provision for the adjunction of France, if and when France again became mistress of her own destinies.

The rest of us were kept advised of the discussions that were being held and the decisions that were being made and, of course, we in Canada were in a rather favoured position because of the intimate personal relationship between our own Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the President of the United States. Each time Mr. Churchill visited Washington, it so happened that Mr. King was also in Washington and when the two major conferences were held in Quebec in 1944 and 1945, Mr. King and the Canadian Government were the official hosts of the conferees at the Citadel and at the Chateau Frontenac in the city of Quebec.

But that kind of participation did not have much effect on Mr. Stalin. It must have appeared to him that everything which concerned the Western Allies was in the hands of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt; that Mr. Chiang Kai-Shek or his representative, spoke for the East and that everyone was and should be content, as well after war as while it was at its worst, to leave the fate of the world in the hands of himself and these three other great national leaders.

We must not forget that the totalitarian concept of democracy by no means implies government of the people by the people, though it does pretend to be government of the people for the people, or, perhaps more accurately, for the State in which the people are merged to the extent that all individuality disappears and a person is of importance only as one grain of sand is important among the millions that are required for any substantial concrete structure.

It so happened then that when, following upon the publication of the Atlantic Charter and the great moral uplift it gave the fighting Allied Democracies, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill proposed to Mr. Stalin that there be created, after the war, an organization of the United Nations to bring a new order into the world, Mr. Stalin evidently had grave misgivings about the wisdom of associating the representatives of smaller nations in the determination of international problems. He stipulated, as an indispensable condition, that all problems arising out of the war and the terms of the peace to be imposed upon the vanquished enemies would be settled by the Foreign Ministers of the Big Four with whom France might become associated, or by such of them as were specially concerned as to any particular enemy and that this World Organization would act only through a Security Council of which the Big Powers would be Permanent members, and which would have primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security after it had, in its own opinion, become organized and provided with sufficient armed forces to begin to exercise that responsibility. Until that came about, the Big Four, with France, if she chose to be associated with them, would take such joint action on behalf of the Organization as they themselves might consider necessary for this maintenance of international peace and security.

Of course any such action would have to be the result of unanimous decisions of the Big Powers, and Mr. Stalin further stipulated that even after the Security Council took over, it would make no decision, except on procedural matters, without the unanimous consent of these Great Powers.

These stipulations were incorporated in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and we were all invited to San Francisco to consider them and to give final form to a charter for a World Organization based upon them.

There are many who believe that, even with all those restrictions, Mr. Stalin would not have agreed to any World Organization at all, had it not been that he did place some limited degree of confidence in the peaceful intentions for the future of the American people, under the leadership of Mr. Roosevelt. But just before the time fixed for the San Francisco meeting, Mr. Roosevelt died and it may well be that with his passing there passed also such little confidence as Mr. Stalin may have had in the good faith of his Western wartime allies.

In any event, it soon became apparent at San Francisco that our Russian friends were very worried lest the Organization be set up in such a way as would enable it to be used at any time and in any manner contrary to Russian interests.

Notwithstanding the apparent mistrust, we all felt at San Francisco that it was worth while making once again the attempt to set up a World Organization in the hope that it might make international wars as archaic and inhibited as became, long ago, those private wars which the great and mighty within States used to wage against each other to settle their private disputes.

We therefore all agreed to the terms of the Charter, though it did contain those controlling provisions in favour of the Great Powers, which I have already referred to.

Of course, we signed the Charter and recommended it to our respective Parliaments, only after we had been assured that this exorbitant veto power accorded to each of the Big Five was not apt to be used except when the user honestly felt that it was really in the best interest of international peace and security to do so.

On the other hand, we already had some indication that, in the view of the Russian rulers, no international problem could be properly settled without their concurrence nor against what they might feel to be national interests of the U.S.S.R. We did not know, however, to what extent they would feel that the national interests of the U.S.S.R. were different from the general interests of all humanity in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since San Francisco, however, the Russian representatives have used the veto twenty times and have made it quite clear that they consider it to be essential to the national interests of the Soviet Union that what they call the "imperialistic policies" of the United States, and the United Kingdom, and all the other members of the United Nations with the exception of their own satellites be systematically thwarted and frustrated.

This attitude is becoming more clearly defined and more aggressively asserted every day. I think we may take it that the declaration issued by the recent conference of European Communist Parties fairly states the Russian attitude. You will remember that this declaration sets out that, although during the war the powers allied against the Axis marched together and created one camp, even during the war there existed a difference in that camp, both with regard to war aims and to the tasks of the post-war reconstruction of the world.

The declaration asserted that the Soviet Union for the democratic countries considered the fundamental aims of war to be the creation and strengthening of democratic regimes in Europe and the liquidation of fascism, whilst the United States and, in agreement with them, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth countries had as their aim in war the elimination of Germany and Japan as competitors in world markets and the strengthening of their own dominant positions.

The declaration went on to say that opposing political lines were formed; on the one hand, the policy of the U.S.S.R. and the democratic countries aiming at the destruction of imperialism and the strengthening of democracy and, on the other hand, the policy of the United States and Britain aimed at the strengthening of imperialism and the stifling of democracy. It stated that the struggle between these two opposing camps shows that capitalism is now losing its grip and that socialism and democracy are gaining strength.

It asserted that for this reason, the imperialistic camp and its leading force, the United States, are displaying a particularly aggressive activity and that this activity is being developed simultaneously in many directions, the Truman-Marshall plan being only one component part, the European section, of a general plan of world-expansionist policy which is being carried on everywhere. This plan is supposed to call for the economic and political enslavement of Europe by United States imperialism to be followed by that of China, Indonesia and the South American countries.

The declaration even asserted that the aggressors of the last war, the capitalist magnates of Germany and Japan, are being prepared by the United States for a new role as a weapon of its own imperialistic policy in Europe and Asia. All this is said to be concealed behind a "liberal pacific mask calculated to deceive and catch people inexperienced in politics."

The declaration goes on to state that while the communist and other parties remain firm in their positions, manfully stand guard for democracy, national sovereignty, freedom and independence of their countries, no plans for the enslavement of Europe and Asia can be realized. Communists are told to bear in mind that between the desire of these Imperialists to unleash a new war, and the possibility of organizing such a war, there is a vast distance.

This may sound quite fantastic to you and to me as applied to the United States, to the United Kingdom and to ourselves, but it is put forward seriously to foster the development of communist ideology in our own countries and to support it in the countries where it is already that of the people in control of the instruments of government.

You and I know that no one in North America, and we hope that no one anywhere else, wants to unleash any more wars. We know that the instruments of mass destruction already in existence, or capable of being produced, and probably apt to become accessible to any armies or groups of armies that might be seeking military supremacy, are so terrible that their use might very well bring about the destruction of our civilization rather than give victory to any contender.

We know that this ranting about democracy under totalitarian regimes, in secret police ridden states, this high-pitched concern about national sovereignty threatened by United States imperialism, in the form of food for starving peoples and supplies indispensable to the restoration of the war devastated countries, are the really dangerous "liberal pacific masks calculated to deceive and catch people inexperienced in politics", and the only really dangerous ones. We are not envious of the brand of democracy that is said to prevail in these totalitarian secret police ridden states, and we do not feel too down-trodden under the kind of slavery that wicked capitalism has fastened upon the people of the United States of America or upon those whose standards of living are of a somewhat comparable level. Moreover, we think that our Soviet friends are making a mistake in their efforts to prevent the New World from extending further aid for the restoration of the economies of the war devastated regions of Europe and Asia, so that they also may get communist regimes.

They may believe and they may have reason to believe, that their economic system and their form of government are to be preferred to anything we have on this side of the Atlantic. But we have not yet to be convinced that their systems would suit us better than do our own, and until such time as there is no iron curtain between us, and all individuals are free to go and come in their country as we would like to see them go and come in ours and make comparisons from personal unfettered observations, we are apt to remain unconvinced. And unless and until we choose of our free and uncoerced wills to change our system, we do not wish to have theirs imposed upon us by force nor do we wish to see it imposed by force on any of our like-minded allies.

We are so naive as to take seriously the principles stated in the Charter that all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, and that the Organization shall ensure that states which are not members of the United Nations shall act in accordance with these principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.

As an example of what I mean, we consider that when the territorial integrity and political independence of a state like Greece is threatened by rebellious forces said to be receiving encouragement and support from the communist governments of adjoining states, that is

a matter which should be regarded as a threat to the maintenance of peace and security; and, when effective action to deal with it was blocked by the veto of the Russian representative in the Security Council, we considered it was proper to endeavour to find means under the Charter to have it effectively dealt with by the General Assembly.

As you know, when this matter was first brought before the Security Council, a committee of enquiry was appointed to investigate the facts and after doing so, this committee by a majority finding of eight to two, reported that on the basis of the facts as it had found them, it was its conclusion that Yugoslavia and to a lesser extent, Albania and Bulgaria, had supported the guerilla warfare in Greece. Now when it was thereupon proposed in the Security Council to take measures to prevent the continuation of such conduct, the Russian representative blocked them on the ground that such action would be "contrary to the sovereignty of the states concerned".

When the matter was afterwards brought before the General Assembly, the Canadian Delegation and most of the other nations felt that under appropriate sections of the Charter, it was the duty of the Assembly to enquire into the matter and to recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of the situation.

It was no doubt this example which suggested to the United States delegation to propose, as Mr. Marshall did in his first speech at the General Assembly of 1947, that a continuing committee of the Assembly might sit between sessions in order that greater use might be made of the powers of the Assembly whenever the Security Council failed to act. This proposal is still under consideration and Canada is giving it full support.

It is doing so because Canada has taken the position that the abuse of the veto power might well destroy the United Nations because it destroys all confidence in the ability of the Security Council to act effectively and to act in time. When I stated that position on behalf of the Canadian Delegation before the General Assembly, I added that our peoples could not be expected to accept indefinitely and without alteration voting procedures and practices which in the name of unanimity underlined disunity and which in the quest for agreement on action more often than not resulted only in inaction. I also added that nations in their search for peace and co-operation might, if they were forced to do so, attempt to achieve their goal otherwise than through a council frozen in futility and divided by dissensions. The solution adopted for the Greek border difficulty and the establishment of a continuing committee of the Assembly may be one such way and may also serve to convince our Russian friends that the Charter can be made to work even over and in spite of their objections.

Should they come to that conclusion - and they must if they stay in - and I think they will - they are apt to modify their attitude in the Security Council. Coming to the conclusion that decisions can be made and implemented without their concurrence, they may prefer to have the controversies discussed and dealt with in the Security Council where they are one of five permanent members and one of the total membership of eleven, rather than see them go to a committee of the Assembly where they are only one of fifty-seven members.

It is with such hopes for improvements that the Department of External Affairs faces its task of providing Canadian representation on the Security Council to which we were elected by an overwhelming majority three weeks ago.

Our duties on that Council, though more onerous than hitherto will not be entirely new. Canadian representatives have been associated with some of its most important work for the last fifteen months or more. You will remember that there was constituted about a year and a half ago

an Atomic Energy Commission charged with devising ways and means of making atomic energy available for peaceful purposes and preventing its use and the use of all other engines of mass destruction as weapons of war.

This Commission is composed of the members of the Security Council and Canada, when we are not a member of that Council. Now that we have become a member of the Council, it is as such that our representatives will continue to act on the Atomic Energy Commission and the work of that Commission is closely connected with the work the Security Council will have to accomplish to implement the resolution adopted last December by the General Assembly, looking to the general regulation and reduction of all national armaments.

All these are also matters upon which there are diverging views between the representatives of the Western democracies and those of the U.S.S.R. and the other countries where Communistic regimes have been installed.

The U.S.S.R. and its satellites want the atomic bomb outlawed at once, and all those in existence done away with and destroyed. The Western democracies agree that atomic energy, as a weapon of war, should be outlawed and all atomic weapons done away with and destroyed, but they want that to be done as part of, and in compliance with, an agreement whereby an International Commission will be established with sufficient autonomous powers to see to it that atomic energy can be used for peaceful purposes, and for peaceful purposes only, and that there can be no evasion by any nation which would threaten the safety of the nations which do comply with the regulations of the International Commission. The vesting of such powers in the International Commission is objected to by the U.S.S.R. again on the ground that it would be an abridgment of national sovereignty.

Well, there are many on our side who prefer that to exposing their national sovereignty to the dangers of any one-sided disarmament scheme or one based upon "scraps of paper" without efficient inspections and control.

General McNaughton has been Canada's representative from the start on this Atomic Energy Commission and I can assure you from reports I have received from many sources that he, and the small staff assisting him in this work, have carried on in a manner which justifies the reputation we enjoy among many nations of taking an objective international view of our duties and responsibilities, and of favouring those policies, and only those policies, which are good for Canada to the degree and in the manner in which they are good for all other nations concerned.

It is in this same spirit that we will approach our duties and our responsibilities as a member of the Security Council and I suggest there is no reason to fear that we will not in that Council maintain our reputation for fair international objectivity in the views we will express and the proposals we will support.

In a speech which I made in Ottawa on the 12th of September, and in which I announced that we had informed other members of the United Nations of our candidacy for membership on the Security Council, I stated that in doing so we realized that if elected we would be confronted with new and onerous responsibilities, we would become involved directly with such questions as the Greek border dispute, the Indonesia problem and the like, and that in spite of these difficulties, we were stating our willingness to serve because we still believed that the best hope for mankind lay in outlawing war and in the establishment of a World Organization for the maintenance of peace.

We, in this country, have built a nation which is as wide as the continent and which is based on the consent of many diversified groups. Is it unreasonable to hope that our own experience, and the experience of other peoples who have built political organizations over wide areas, can be repeated amongst the nations? What we want in this country, is to maintain our own freedom and to leave other people in the enjoyment of theirs. We know our neighbours to the South of us pretty well and, in spite of all these wild charges of imperialism brought against them, we are convinced that they also wish to maintain their freedom and, like ourselves, wish to leave other people in the full enjoyment of theirs.

We feel, however, that isolation is no longer possible even if it could be regarded as desirable, and that the greatest hope for our own survival, and for the survival of other national units of free people, lies in the development of efficient machinery for international co-operation, such machinery as will make sure that certain principles are recognized as binding in the international field, and that any violation of these principles will be repressed and punished as surely and as relentlessly as law-breaking is repressed and punished within a state.

I do not think Canadians can be looked upon as a nation of "joiners", but convinced as we are that the development of international organizations under a broad scale is of the greatest importance both to the vital interests of Canada and to the building of an enduring peace, we have played a full part in the growing structure of international organizations.

Our free gifts and mutual aid appropriations during the war ran into billions. We were from the beginning an active member of UNRRA and we contributed one hundred and fifty-four million dollars to its relief operations, and when after two years these came to an end, we made available a further twenty million dollars worth of supplies for continuing relief in a number of the devastated countries.

In the field of economic reconstruction, we took part in the formation of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Parliament has approved a total Canadian subscription of six hundred and twenty-five million dollars for these organizations that were designed to facilitate the restoration of international trade, by assisting devastated and needy nations to get into a position of having surplus products to exchange.

In addition to that Canada has, since the end of the war, provided a total of seven hundred and fifty million dollars for export credits to continental European countries and China, and of twelve hundred and fifty million dollars to the United Kingdom.

Canada was also among the original members of the Food and Agriculture Organization, of the World Health Organization, and of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. We have played an important part in the preparatory conferences of the International Trade Organization and in the organizations set up to deal with international communications of every description. At the same time we have increased Canada's representation abroad to the point where we now exchange diplomatic representatives with many of the countries of the Americas and of Europe and with several of those of Asia, of Africa and of the South Pacific.

There have been suggestions that all this is costly in time and in effort and in money, and no doubt that is true. But when we remind ourselves that two wars have cost us, in addition to the loss of human lives and the human sufferings which are beyond computation, many



many billions of dollars in actual expenditure, so many in fact that the annual expenditures for our Department of External Affairs can hardly be more than one per cent of the annual interest on those billions, we do get, I think, a better appreciation of proportions. It is a fact, you know, that the actual cost of our External Affairs services would be to our war expenditures in the proportion of less than the cost of a peacetime three cent postage stamp to one hundred dollars worth of ammunition.

Of course that is no justification for any unnecessary expenditures, but if the expenditures are carefully watched, and I trust you will believe that they are, the total amount thereof need not of itself give us very serious concern.

In the broadcast by Mr. Ilsley to which I have already referred, and in which he said we really have no alternative other than to support those international organizations with all our might, he added:

"I can understand that there may be many in Canada who would much prefer it if we did not have to get mixed up in a difficult question like the prevention of armed clashes on the borders of Greece or what should be done about Palestine, but the time has gone by when people of Canada can remain indifferent to these actual or potential disputes abroad, for it is just these disputes which may lead to war, with all its suffering, heartaches and loss of life.

"So we are here and we are doing the best we can to assist in the solution of world problems. Whether these problems can be solved, even partially, depends, it seems to me, on whether the terrible tension which has developed between the East and the West can be lessened."

He has since made another broadcast and he expresses so well views which I share that I am going to close my speech by reading you a paragraph from that one too. This is how it goes:

"If we can lend our assistance to breaking deadlocks, or effecting compromises which do not sacrifice essential principles, if we can give expression to that which we strongly feel needs expression, if we can do any of these things, we do it, striving in this way to contribute to the success of the organization.

"We hope in time to build up a tradition at these international gatherings which will take its place among our most honorable Canadian traditions and strengthen our pride, the right kind of pride, in the country to which we belong."