

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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RENEWED EFFORTS FOR WORLD PEACE

An address by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Paul Martin, delivered to the Osgoode Hall Legal and Literary Society, Toronto, April 9, 1953.

A Turning Point In U.N. History

Today, all eyes are on Korea! The prospect of agreement between the Communists and the United Nations Command on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners-of-war who want to go home has given the entire free world new reason to hope that our patient work of negotiation at the UN that extended over so many months was not in vain.

Last October, in speaking on behalf of Canada during the opening debate of the UN General Assembly, I used these words:

"I do believe that this session of the General Assembly could be a turning point in our affairs -- a turning point on the road towards establishing the United Nations and all it stands for on as solid and enduring a footing as the rocks on which these permanent building now stand."

In making this statement, I had in mind most particularly the situation in Korea. Through the ensuing months, the Canadian delegation, together with those of several other freedom-loving nations, worked continuously on the problem of finding a suitable formula for the solution of the impasse that had developed on the Korean armistice question. For a time we hoped that the resolution sponsored by the delegation of India and wholeheartedly backed by Canada, would provide a satisfactory answer. But as the months wore on, disappointment, frustration, and disillusionment began to replace our earlier hopes of success.

The proposal outlined in the Indian prisoner-of-war resolution had the overwhelming support of the entire free world but it was flatly refused last December by the Chinese and North Korean authorities. It was, therefore, with little optimism that we resumed our discussions in the UN this February.

The sudden readiness of the Chinese Communists to negotiate an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners, and their willingness to reopen the Korean truce talks, now suggest that this session may yet be the turning point in our affairs to which I referred in my opening statement last October.

Korea -- Collective Security In Action

If, following the resolution of the prisoner-of-war issue, it is possible to negotiate an honourable armistice, Korea will become a symbol of the success of collective security in action.

There is, of course, a good deal more to the settlement of the Korean situation than the disposition of approximately 145,000 prisoners-of-war of both sides who

have been detained long and weary months while lengthy negotiations concerning their fate have continued. If a cease-fire is achieved, there will remain the difficult task of finding solutions to the complex political questions affecting the future of this peninsula and the surrounding area. These wider issues will be discussed at the political conference provided for in the draft armistice agreement.

With an armistice, too, the task of repairing the ravages of war will become an urgent necessity. This, however, is an endeavour which cannot wait for an armistice and has indeed already begun. The United Nations Korean Relief Agency is already co-operating with the Korean Government, and the United Nations Civil Assistance Command is helping to soften the impact of war on the Korean people and the Korean economy. That Agency is now preparing to play an even more extensive role in the rehabilitation of Korea itself.

A plan involving the expenditure of some \$250 millions was prepared and the Canadian Government agreed to assume its fair share of responsibility by substantial pledges to this programme -- pledges which have already been honoured. It is most imperative that nothing should be permitted to delay or impede this urgent and necessary task of relief and rehabilitation in Korea.

Communism's Peace Offensive

The apparent change of heart of the Chinese Communists on the Korean question is but one example of the recent shift in emphasis in the foreign policy of the Communist world. Since the death of Stalin, Communist peace overtures to the West have come with almost bewildering rapidity. To mention only three:

- Following a series of incidents, Russia's commander in Germany, General Chuikov, has now offered to discuss the question of ensuring greater safety in the air over Germany.
- At the UN Mr. Vyshinsky seems to have had a change of heart about Western disarmament suggestions.
- Moscow has announced the exoneration and release of the group of fifteen doctors who were falsely arrested for an alleged plot against the lives of Soviet leaders.

These are specific offers on concrete issues and go a good deal beyond the pious protestations, to which we have become accustomed, that Russia wants to live in peace. If events prove that these proposals have been made in good faith, the free nations can look forward to an easing in the tensions that have held the world in the icy grip of the cold war. Unfortunately, however, on the past record there is little evidence to suggest that we can look for any basic alteration in the ultimate master plan of the Kremlin, whoever its tenant may be.

Whatever their motives may be -- and several interesting possibilities suggest themselves -- the Russians seem only to

have decided that the time is opportune from their standpoint for an abatement in the cold war.

While the Western world is right in accepting at face value all genuine peace moves on the part of the Soviet, we must, at all costs, maintain our own unity and we must in no way lessen our preparedness. The world has witnessed peace manoeuvres before. We shall not shake off for generations to come the grim memory of Hitler's promise of "peace in our time", broken a scant twelve months later by the outbreak of the most destructive war in human history.

World Peace -- A Challenging Quest

It is a depressing thought to recall that in this century, Canadian forces have been at war for one year in every four.

Although the twentieth century stands out clearly as the greatest period of material progress, inventiveness and new discovery in the history of mankind, we have yet to learn the most fundamental secret of human life. In the short space of fifty years, men have learned to fly, they have won victory over disease and ill-health, they have harnessed the unbelievable power of atomic energy. This, too, will be remembered as the century of social progress, for, in enlightened countries, more has been done than ever before to provide a measure of social justice to all. But the supreme discovery has always eluded us -- the secret of how men can live together in peace and harmony.

Now this may seem an ignominious failure in the face of some of the miraculous accomplishments of the human mind. And yet, when one considers the complexity of even one human personality; when one considers the difficulties private individuals encounter in living side by side with one another; when one considers the simple fact that we have to have so many lawyers in this world, it becomes immediately evident why nations, composed of millions of individual human beings, are not always able to work out their differences in a sensible and mature manner.

If we want peace in the world, we will have to work for it -- and intelligent, patient, painstaking work it must be. Never was there a time when the challenge to human initiative was greater than at present. Peace is not a state which can be achieved simply, but something that we must keep on achieving. Peace, like war itself, is not static, but a dynamic, ever-changing condition requiring constant vigilance and continuing effort.

Four Steps To World Stability

The paramount issue we are facing today is the issue of peace or destruction. In spite of the enormity of the task they have set themselves, the free nations are steadfastly working together towards the realization of this great objective. Present efforts are following four distinct lines, each important in itself, each a necessary complement to the other three:

1. Military preparedness,
2. Aid to backward nations,

3. Continued social progress,
4. Diplomatic negotiation.

Let me say a word about each.

Military Preparedness:

One of the depressing realities of this atomic age is the fact that a prerequisite for peace is preparation for war. Today, Canada is spending more than 45 per cent of its budget on national defence -- including mutual aid and military assistance for the NATO countries amounting to \$354 millions. For example, we are now in the midst of building up a 12-squadron jet fighter force in Europe, of which nine squadrons are actually there or on the way, and the remainder under training in Canada.

The growing strength of the free world is an effective deterrent to aggression. We must continue to maintain that strength. A cease-fire in Korea, or any other temporary easing in world tension, is not sufficient to warrant any slackening in our defence preparations. The free nations must be constantly on their guard lest Communism's "New Look" should disarm us or lull us into a false sense of security.

Aid to Backward Nations:

Even as we strengthen our military defences we must also look beyond our own frontiers. Today throughout this world there are great masses of people who live in areas whose economic and social development lag centuries behind that of nations like Canada. By their very weight of numbers, these people will have a powerful effect on the course of human affairs in the years to come.

In the under-developed areas of the world, there are many fertile fields for our ideas and our ideals. But they are fields that may long lie fallow unless the more favoured nations are prepared to help bring them to harvest. Much of the poverty in these regions springs not from a lack of resources but from a lack of the technical knowledge and ability that would enable the peoples of those countries to develop their own resources for their own benefit. Through the sharing of technical knowledge, which has brought such striking advances to the Western world, other regions of the earth can themselves develop along the same path and towards the same goal.

Already Canada and like-minded nations have shown their determination to help free the world from want by the establishment within the United Nations of the Food and Agriculture Organization -- to mention only one of its many Specialized Agencies -- and by our participation in humanitarian projects like the UN Technical Assistance Programme and the Commonwealth Colombo Plan. In all that we do to bring food, technical aid and other forms of assistance to the less fortunate nations, we are strengthening the foundations for world peace. We must not forget that we are not only helping our neighbours -- we are helping ourselves; for no nation can remain healthy and prosperous in a diseased and bankrupt world.

Continued Social Advance

But our defence programme is more than a matter of armaments, alliances, or aid. Our first line of defence must be built right in our own society by working out a social order that commands the respect of our own and other peoples. If Communism finds its opportunity in human misery, democracy finds its justification in a prosperous, humane and neighbourly society.

In democracies like Canada, we have learned how to satisfy man's material needs while respecting human rights and aspirations and revering those spiritual and ethical values that give a nation moral strength. Our way of life is based on the sincere conviction that machines are never as important as men; that we must invest with just as much courage in the producer as we do in production; and that our first concern must be the individual and not the state. To keep true to this concept of individual worth and to maintain our steady social advance is an essential part of our defence against war and our investment in peace.

Diplomatic Negotiations

While strengthening our military defences, providing aid to those in less-favoured parts of the world, and maintaining our own social progress, we must continue our efforts at the United Nations and in other world forums to talk over our differences in a mature and intelligent manner. This means not only doing something to preserve peace when the danger of a major breakdown in human relations confronts us, but a continuing attack on all the tiny roots and sources, the aggravations and misunderstandings that lead to war.

We must discuss; we must compromise; we must arbitrate; we must adjudicate. We must establish special organizations to deal with special problems. We must maintain a watchful eye at all times on the sources from which conflict might grow. Action, energy and effort must be directed constantly at all the minor irritants that can infect the world body politic. If war is to be eliminated by getting at its roots, we have to think of far more than the actual prevention of physical strife. We have to think of far more than the reduction of armaments. We have to think of far more than the control of atomic energy.

In short, we have to think of all the possible sources of those irritations and disagreements that can grow into the fatal cancer of war. We are only beginning to realize how wide a field we have to cover. The field is almost the full range of human activity. These pressing problems -- whether they be in the social, political or economic fields -- will call for the very best that trained minds and dedicated hearts can give. Beyond material considerations, there are wider moral and spiritual problems such as the right of men to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

The UN -- Our Best Hope For Peace

Today, the free world has pinned its hopes on peace. Over the stormy course of these years, the United Nations is carrying the banner of humanity. There can be no doubt about the urgency of the need for solution of the problems

that harass the world. Unless they can be decided, the nations now divided by argument could be torn to pieces by armed conflict. In this, the supreme test of this century, we must not, dare not fail.

What we earnestly seek and steadfastly hope to accomplish is not a mere static peace, not an uneasy intermission between violent rounds of limited or localized aggression, but a universal and lasting peace in which all mankind can share. With the support of free men and women everywhere, the United Nations has joined battle against ignorance, prejudice and fear in the hope that the peoples of this world may look forward to a future without war.

I am convinced that, if ordinary men and women the world around, are prepared to address themselves to the task of finding peace on earth, civilization may yet rise above those primitive instincts that through so many ages have so often characterized human behaviour, and that, in the end, the rule of law and the eternal moral values which we respect will prevail.

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