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FIVE YEARS OF FULFILMENT

An address by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Paul Martin, to commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, delivered before the United Zionist Council of Ottawa, April 19, 1953.

...One of the great strengths of Canada is our national unity. We are a country of many diverse elements, each contributing in its own unique way to the richness of our national life. Our nation is a tapestry in which, finely woven, we glimpse the memories and traditions of many peoples -- peoples who speak different languages, who worship at different alters, who engage in various vocations -- but who all honour their mutual kinship as Canadians.

In Canada we make no cry against minority groups. We have no place for racial and religious discrimination of any kind. Here we take a man for what he is -- whether he be Protestant, or Jew, or Catholic. We are all Canadians, equal under the law, regardless of what our origins, traditions or cultures may be. In my public life, nothing has been of more lasting satisfaction than to have had the honour of putting into legislation, the Canadian Citizenship Act, this broad delineation of our citizenship.

I am sure that all Canadians felt the same pride that I did when in Canada's Parliament last Monday, my colleague, the Minister of Labour, introduced a Bill to provide equality of employment opportunity without discrimination on account of race, national origin, colour or religion. In so doing, Mr. Gregg paid high tribute to my good friend and former fellow-townsmen, David Croll, M.P., who for so many years has fought racial and religious discrimination in all its forms.

In Mr. Croll's own words: "intolerance and discrimination are the two sides of the coin of infamy which has been current far too long". It was particularly appropriate that, in urging respect for these fundamental human rights, Mr. Croll should conclude his remarks by quoting a great Canadian churchman, Cardinal McGuigan.

Tomorrow the State of Israel will celebrate its fifth anniversary. For the courageous men and women who are rebuilding the newest republic on the Mediterranean, the past five years have been difficult but rewarding. But these years of hardship and austerity have also been years of remarkable growth and development.

After marking time for centuries, Israel is once more on the march -- socially, politically, economically. Since April, 1948, more than 800,000 Jews from all parts of the world have made the long pilgrimage home to the land that was promised to Abraham. Across the land of Moab where Moses, faithful servant of his Lord, came to die, his people today are, at last, finding a place of refuge.

The past five years have witnessed one of the most thrilling homecomings in human history. Israel has taken into its bosom the homeless people whose only possessions, in many cases, have been their stubborn faith and hope in adversity. The great Exodus of Biblical times is recalled as 100,000 displaced persons have come out of Germany, Austria and Italy; 40,000 from the prison camps of Cyprus; 50,000 from the Arab Kingdom of Yemen; another 120,000 from Iraq; and, during a brief lifting of the iron curtain, more than 100,000 from Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The return of the Jews to their promised land must bring poignant memories of past glory. A sophisticated world has too easily forgotten the ancient greatness of Israel -- in civilization, in industry, in art, in literature -- long before Athens' Golden Age, when Rome was a word without meaning, and Britain's glory was still 3,000 years away.

It must be a strange yet encouraging sight for the home-comers to see this ancient land of holy places now dotted with tents, aluminum huts, hydro-power installations, new chemical factories and the severely functional buildings of modern industrial plants. But will all the trappings of the twentieth century, the Israelis are ever-mindful of their ancient tradition. Homecoming is the promise and fulfilment of ancient prophecy. To quote the final words of the autobiography, "Trial and Error", of the late great President of Israel, Dr. Chaim Weizmann:

"Then God will look down benignly on His children who after a long wandering have come to serve Him, with a psalm on their lips and a spade in their hands, reviving their old country and making it a centre of human civilization."

What a magnificent vision for the new Israel -- what a challenge to its people to struggle against all the human and physical difficulties to bring about a new era in Jewish history in which the hopes and longings of many ages can be fulfilled.

During the past five years, in which Israel has enjoyed independence, it has gone a long way towards establishing for itself a place of stature among the nations.

In human terms, through the adoption of the Law of the Return, Israel has saved the lives and the hopes of hundreds of thousands who would otherwise have known only despair. In economic terms, its people are far from being discouraged and they have managed, with the loyal support of co-religionists elsewhere in the world, to proceed with the basic development of their newly-regained homeland. The difficulties have been great -- imports heavily overbalance exports; inflation and high prices prevail; food is scarce and agricultural expansion not yet in proportion to need; and industrial production, while moving ahead steadily, has not been able to keep pace with population growth.

Israel is seeking to become economically self-supporting by extending agriculture, exploiting its natural resources and developing its basic industries. This means restoring life to desert lands by irrigation projects; it means developing hydro-electric power; it means building

roads and railways and constructing new ports; it means, too, building schools, hospitals and housing developments. It means a raising of the entire level of life of the whole country.

The problem for Israel is to rediscover and resurrect the natural wealth of an ancient land. By using the new techniques that have been discovered to overcome the obstacles of nature, the people of Israel are attempting to show the world how a determined people can return home and, like the Nabataeans of an earlier period, turn a desolate wilderness into a prosperous and productive land.

During this difficult period of resettlement, a magnificent job has been done by the Jewish Agency in helping the Government with the orientation and rehabilitation of the new citizens of Israel. My good friend, Joseph Bradette, M.P., who has recently returned from Israel, tells me that Canadians have contributed most generously to the support of this splendid work.

The people of Canada, through their government, made an important contribution to the negotiations leading to the establishment of the State of Israel. In 1947, our delegation took a leading part in the deliberations of the United Nations when the question of the partition of Palestine was under consideration. When, as a consequence of United Nations action, Israel declared its independence and set up a provisional government, Canada was among those nations which later recognized its full sovereignty and supported its admission to membership in the United Nations.

When the question of Palestine was first submitted to the United Nations six years ago, most mandated territories throughout the world had been or were being transformed into independent nations or trust territories under United Nations auspices. About Palestine, however, there were very serious differences in viewpoint as to what its destiny should be. For this reason, the United Kingdom, as the mandatory power, placed the whole question of Palestine's future in the hands of the United Nations for decision.

This was such a complex problem that the General Assembly of the UN held a special session in April 1947, to prepare the way for a fuller consideration of the subject during the regular session of the Assembly that Fall. Our distinguished Secretary-of-State for External Affairs, the Honourable Lester B. Pearson, who was then Under-Secretary and Canada's delegate to the UN, was elected Chairman of the Political Committee to which this question was referred. The success of the Committee in reaching an early agreement on this highly controversial problem reflects the ability and impartiality of Mr. Pearson's work as chairman.

The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which was established the following month, included in its membership Mr. Justice Ivan C. Rand of the Supreme Court of Canada. Everyone who is familiar with the work of UNSCOP agrees that Mr. Justice Rand's influence was largely instrumental in enabling the Committee to submit to the General Assembly that Fall a comprehensive report on this question. Mr. Justice Rand was also a co-author and a strong supporter of the proposal for partition of Palestine within a framework of economic union which was finally adopted by the General Assembly in November 1947, and paved the way for the establishment of Israel.

When fighting on a relatively large scale broke out in southern Palestine, Canada also took an active part in the efforts of the Security Council to contain the fighting. In company with France and Belgium, our delegation took the initiative in introducing the resolution which formed the basis for the successful armistice negotiations concluded with the aid of the acting mediator and his staff between Israel and four of its Arab neighbours -- Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

At the present time, under the United Nations Technical Assistance Plan, Canada is contributing to the industrial, agricultural and political development of Israel. For example, Dr. O.E. Ault, a senior Canadian civil servant, has recently returned to Ottawa from a three-month mission during which he advised government officials in Israel on the development of recruiting and training programmes for the public service.

Canada has admiration for the imagination, ingenuity, resourcefulness and persistence that have been displayed by the people of Israel during the past five years. Under the dynamic leadership of their Prime Minister, Mr. David Ben-Gurion, the people of Israel have faced up courageously to their challenging problems and responsibilities. I am confident that over the next five years, Israel will continue to make its distinctive contribution to the spiritual and material progress of the great community of nations.

As a young state, Israel has an unique opportunity to plan its development in an orderly and ordered manner. It need not create the problems of traffic congestion, town planning, slum clearance and so on that are the unwelcome heritage of older countries. It can begin at the beginning to plan things right in the first place.

And in its planning, the most important aspect of all will be that which is done on the human level. Internationally, Israel's main concern revolves around its relations with the Arab world, in particular its immediate neighbours, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. At the United Nations I have had frequent talks with Mr. Sharett, the Foreign Minister of Israel, about this vexing problem. I think it is correct to state that it is his belief and that of his Government that no permanent security or stability will be possible until Arabs and Israelis together are able somehow to work out a formula for the amicable settlement of their various points of disagreement.

In the wider sphere of international relations, the nations of the Western world are confident that Israel will continue to take its stand on the side of democracy and freedom. After the terrible persecutions their people have recently suffered at the hands of the Soviet powers, and with two and a half million sons and daughters still shut off from all contact with the outside world, there is little chance that Israel will ever be taken in by the hollow promises and empty dreams of Communism's pagan philosophy.

And in its own domestic life, as in its national and international relations, Israel will surely set an example for all the world of tolerance and respect for the rights of others. Would it not be a tragic and ironic thing if, after all the centuries of suffering, of inhuman and unreasoning persecution, the children of Israel, who have

now been delivered out of the house of bondage, should themselves forget the moral of man's inhumanity to man: that those who attempt to destroy others, destroy themselves.

In the annals of nations, there are times when dramatic, unprecedented efforts are made to accomplish in a short space of time something that would normally take scores or hundreds of years. The attempt to establish Israel on a sound economic, social and political basis is one of these great experiments. As such, it is not only of interest to the members of the Jewish race -- bound by their hearts to the Holy Land -- it is of concern to all mankind. Men and women of good-will, the world over, are hoping and praying that Israel once again has come into its heritage.



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