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A CONSTRUCTIVE UN SESSION

Statement by Mr. Heath Macquarrie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, in the House of Commons on January 24, 1963.

...I have had the honour of representing Canada at four General Assemblies of the United Nations. This past session, just concluded, struck me as one of the most constructive of these important international gatherings. It seemed that there was a diminution of tension, and lessening of power politics which sometimes makes difficult the day-to-day progress which is such an important part of an organization which endeavours to make progress on so many fronts.

I believe that in Canada the strain of cynicism is disappearing. We have had people, publicists and others, who believed the United Nations was more a talk shop, that nothing was accomplished, that there was a great disparity in power among the members, that there was not sufficient realism in its construction. I believe the accomplishments of the United Nations in recent years, and they have been enumerated by preceding speakers, have convinced Canadians and others that this great body is in truth the hope of the world as the idealists always said it was. The past session has seen the coming to fruition of a number of projects which had seemed to be discouraging.

One thing which caused great rejoicing, I think, was the confirmation of the Secretary-General in his office. This great Asian statesman has done a splendid job in one of the most sensitive and difficult posts which the world could convey upon any mortal man. Canada said, from the very beginning, that we were strongly in favour of U Thant's confirmation as Secretary-General. The Minister has referred to the success of the Congo operation and Canada's role in the Advisory Committee of the United Nations.

An Unforgettable Moment

I was in the United Nations at the time the confrontation between Mr. Zorin and Mr. Stevenson, an unforgettable moment of great tension. As has been pointed out, and something which should

not be forgotten, the spokesmen for these great super-powers, with their tremendous power in comparison to the other members of the United Nations, took that dispute to the very forum of world opinion, the Security Council. As they faced one another, every seat in the Security Council chamber was filled with members from the General Assembly. It was an unforgettable moment. The role of the Acting Secretary-General, as he then was, was highly creditable and crowned with much success.

We are pleased too, that, under the inspiration of former President Mongi Slim, the United Nations is moving forward in the direction of improving its procedures and manner of work. A very impressive committee has been set up for which I think lovers of the United Nations may entertain certain high hopes.

The United Nations, which began with some 50 members, has now 110. The area of the world unrepresented in the UN is shrinking daily. Its complexion is changing. Membership of the committees and other bodies is altering and it is necessary in the interests of efficiency to have some improvements in techniques. Indeed it is almost necessary to have an extension to the very physical facilities. These, which once seemed to be so ample, now often appear to be overcrowded.

A Humbling Experience

...We, in the context of this debate, are of course interested in the performance of the Canadian Delegation at the United Nations. I was very proud of the way the Canadian Delegation performed. There is something extremely humbling to be at an international organization and note on every hand the high respect in which Canadians are held. I think it is humbling because it is quite a challenge to measure up to the tremendous responsibilities constantly put upon Canadians, especially in the UN context. We are a charter member of the UN. I suppose, if one looked back over the whole history of resolutions, Canadians have been co-sponsors or sponsors of more resolutions than any other country.

The Canadian point of view is constantly sought. We have served on all sorts of peace-making missions and I think it could be said that this very day Canadian personnel are performing peace-keeping operations all over the world. It is something which should cause us pride. At the same time it should cause us some humility because it is a heavy challenge....

The World Food Programme became fully operational on January 1 of this year. As is known, Canada has taken an active part in the establishment and development of this Programme, beginning with the Prime Minister's proposal to the United Nations General Assembly in September 1960.

This Programme will provide assistance by means of foodstuffs in three major fields. It will meet emergency food needs and emergencies arising from chronic malnutrition. It will give assistance in pre-school areas and implement pilot projects, using food as an aid to economic and social development.

Canada and the WFP

Since the idea for a World Food Programme was launched, events have moved swiftly. In the last few months a pledging conference has been held at which approximately \$88 million in commodities, cash and services were pledged. Canada's pledge totalled \$5 million in commodities and cash. An Intergovernmental Committee, of which Canada is a member, has now been established and has prepared a work programme. This, I may say, putting it very simply, is one of the concrete moves in the direction of a better world.

Canada also played a major role in the very serious question of radiation. We would be ill-advised to become so sophisticated that we lost our concern and indeed our fear of what is happening to the atmosphere. Canada moved, and was supported magnificently by the other members of the General Assembly, to set up a world organization for the dissemination of information on the harmful effects of radiation and to galvanize world opinion regarding those harmful effects.

...Canada's initiative in the Second Committee dealing with international economic relations, and in the conference on world trade development, was a most impressive and most successful one, and great credit is due to Senator Blois, who was our representative there, a worthy Maritimer who naturally did a most excellent job. There were many, many days when differences were quite acute as to when the conference should be held, how it would be held and who should be involved, but these serious differences have been ironed out and it is now set that the meeting will be held not later than 1964.

The Canadian hope is that, after careful preparation, the conference will achieve positive proposals for the expansion of trade, particularly by the developing countries, and, on December 20, Canada was elected a member of the Preparatory Committee, which will begin its meetings in January. Once again, this country, which some would have us believe is ill regarded in the international community, was chosen to take part in the planning of this important job.

International Court on UN Finances

Another problem which has been facing the United Nations for some time and is becoming increasingly acute is the very mundane problem of finances and how to keep the organization solvent. In this field, through the Fifth Committee, the Canadian Delegation was extremely active and I am glad to say extremely successful.

We called for an appeal to the International Court in respect to the question of members' obligations regarding the very costly peace-keeping operations in which the United Nations is now engaged. Canadian acceptance of the Court's decision was naturally forthcoming, and, through our efforts in the Fifth Committee, steps have been taken which look very hopeful in respect to establishing a sound basis for the financial operations of the United Nations. In connection therewith, there comes into our minds what looks to be the happy solution of the vexatious Congo problem.

The United Nations General Assembly has seven committees operating for a period of three months and so ... it would be quite a simple thing for one to carry on for a long time discussing briefly but a very few of these important avenues of goodwill and important overtures to a better and more peaceful world....

It is recalled that a strong statement, which drew tremendous attention not only in Canada but elsewhere, was made by the Prime Minister in September 1960, and I would point out it was made in the presence of Mr. Khrushchov himself. Since that time, the present Government has dealt with that very important problem with consistency and persistency and has spoken out very strongly on a subject which should have been spoken on with greater strength long, long ago. It is just a little bit difficult to take when one hears the Soviet Union constantly denounce the United Kingdom and France on their colonial records; but last year, before the General Assembly, Canada suggested that the light of public opinion be thrown on the dark areas of tyranny within the Soviet Union. That was a strong statement of which Canadians may be very proud....

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