

Canada and The United Nations

By W. L. MORTON

THE recent conference of the United Nations in London furnished the world with a remarkable spectacle of power politics conducted in the arena of international organization. It was a dangerous experiment, for it might wreck the organization. Yet it was, perhaps, a necessary experiment, for if the great powers had not threshed out their difference in the Security Council of the United Nations, they would have done so outside it. The millenium has not yet arrived, and the relations of states are still matters of state interests and state power. To settle these realistic affairs outside the organs of the United Nations, however, would be to deprive them of all force and vitality. This, in essence, was what happened, for many and diverse interests, to the League of Nations. The important decisions were taken outside it, between foreign offices.

Thus there is justification for the feeling that the United Nations has made a good start. It *may* be an organization within which power politics can be carried on or, in other words, an organization capable of limiting and moderating the play of power politics.

If so, this is of first rate importance to Canada, and to all the lesser powers. Canada claims the status, in the well known phrase of Mr. Lionel Gelber, of "a Britannic power of middle rank." This means that Canada, as a middle power, cannot play power politics as a great power does. Yet, at the same time, Canada has extensive and even world wide interests, commercial, financial and strategic, even as a great power, such as the United States or the Soviet Union has.

It follows that Canada, like all the lesser powers, but perhaps to an exceptional degree, must be deeply concerned with the organization and operation

of the United Nations. To a quite extraordinary degree military supremacy has passed to the great industrial powers. The range of modern weapons and the ruthless quality of present day warfare make it unlikely that any small power can in the future enjoy neutrality, or even immunity, in a major war, except by chance or under the protection of a great power. This is the interest of the lesser nations in the success of the United Nations. But the warfare of to-day is so destructive as to raise the question of whether economic recovery may always be possible. Recovery, in any event, is almost certain to lead to measures of state direction and control, perhaps to the point of autarchy. This is bound to be detrimental to that free flow of commerce in the world, on which Canada with its great export industries, now both primary and secondary, is peculiarly dependent.

Canada's Interest In U. N. O.

To state this case for Canada's interest and participation in the United Nations seems platitudinous now. The case is, it would seem, accepted everywhere by everyone in Canada as proven, yet though the argument is old, its general acceptance is new. During the inter-war years, the dominant spirit of Canadian external policy was isolationist. It is true that this country remained a member of the League of Nations; that the League, however, was ever considered by the men who shaped policy more than a convenient aid to the assertion of Dominion status would be difficult to prove. It was one of the means by which Canadian nationalism was established, but that Canadian nationalism should in turn support the League was the creed of relatively few Canadians.

Hitler, Munich and the late war changed all that. Those events made clear to Canadians that though a North

American nation, we are also a Britannic one; that therefore one cannot merely sit in the security of our continent and do a good business in a war none of our making; that a war-impooverished world is not good for business; that the security of North America is a highly relative matter, to be achieved only with the aid of friends and allies, as many as possible.

Nowhere was this change of attitude more marked than in Government of Canada and in the Department of External Affairs. This change was made possible because it was accompanied by a deep change in Canadian public opinion. The Canadian isolationist was discredited; the nationalist was converted; the imperialist was satisfied in that Canadian policy was joint and parallel with that of the United Kingdom. Even in Quebec the natural and inevitable stronghold of isolation, the events of the war wrought great and, it may be, lasting changes. Whether this unity of public opinion behind a policy of active and positive policy of participation in the United Nations will last in peace time remains to be seen.

However that may be, it did strengthen the Government in its elaboration of Canadian policy in the post-war world. It is possible without partisanship to remark on how able, realistic and soundly thought out this developing policy was, for it was substantially endorsed by the Governments chief critics, the Progressive Conservative and the C.C.F. parties. It was a policy of forwarding by every means open to Canada the foundation of a world organization to keep the peace. Such an organization, it was held, should couple power with responsibility but at the same time, by what was termed the functional idea, should recognize the varying capacities of different nations. Thus the great powers could make the chief contribution to world security, and be made responsible for doing so. Canada's contribution to security would be relatively minor, but in other fields, such as the World Food Council, could be very great. In these, it was argued, its

representation should be correspondingly weighty.

Accordingly Canadians, both government and the public, watched with keen interest and hope the formulation at the Moscow Conference of 1943 of the call for an organization of all peace-loving nations to maintain the peace of the world. When at Dumbarton Oaks in 1944 the attempt was made to draft a workable scheme of world organization, Canadians were among its keenest and most sympathetic critics.

Criticism

For there was criticism, wholly determined as the Canadian government and people were to support any reasonable proposal for international organization. By and large this criticism was directed against the emphasis placed on security and the predominant role given to the great powers and the Security Council by the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. Especially was the proposal agreed upon by the United States, Soviet Russia and Great Britain at the Yalta Conference, to give the great power members of the Council a "veto" power, brought under attack. In general the Canadian opposition was not to giving the great powers special responsibilities to match their special position among the nations. That they should be so impowered was in accord with the principle of matching power and responsibility. But it was also in accord with that principle that degrees of power and influence among the lesser powers should also be recognized. For this reason, fortified by the conviction that Canada had made a great and significant contribution to the war effort of the United Nations, it was widely felt that the General Assembly, and the Social Economic Council should be strengthened and given more conspicuous places in the United Nations organization.

Many Canadians also felt that the whole tone of the proposals was too grimly realistic and that the document lacked any expression of that informing

purpose by which alone great enterprises may be successfully launched. In particular, the so-called veto power of the great power members of the Security Council, though in itself but a recognition of the fact that there is no way to bind a great power except moral suasion or a full-scale, was thought to be undesirably vague, and such as it might in practice thwart the purposes of the Security Council and indeed of the United Nations organization as a whole.

At San Francisco

The multi-party Canadian delegation to the San Francisco conference, therefore—it was a delegation which seems to have been singularly harmonious—went to the conference resolved, on the one hand, to support the adoption of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals as the basis for a constitution of the United Nations but, on the other, to press for certain amendments to bring the proposals into line with the Canadian concept of how such an organization might best be established, and, particularly, so as to give Canada as a middle power the weight and influence which its contribution to the war effort and its recent development entitled it.

In addressing the second plenary meeting of the Conference Prime Minister King outlined the attitude of Canada in these words.

We shall not be guided by consideration of national pride or prestige and shall not seek to have changes made (in the proposals) for reasons such as these. We recognize the principle that power and responsibility must go hand in hand and that international security depends primarily upon the maintenance of an overwhelming preponderance of power on the side of peace. Power, however, is not exclusively concentrated in the hands of any four or five states, and the Conference should not act on the assumption that it is. Such a position would not only be contrary to the facts as they have been demonstrated in the past five years, but it would also be dangerous to the cause of security itself, for it would foster in many smaller countries the development of a new type of isolationism, a feeling

that the task of preserving the peace could be left exclusively to great powers. Such a habit of thought would make it difficult for the smaller powers to make their contribution. Experience has shown that the contribution of smaller powers is not a negligible one, either to the preserving of peace or to its restoration when peace has been disturbed.¹

In keeping with this stand the Canadian delegation supported the enhancement of the powers of the General Assembly and the Social and Economic Council—very extensively in the latter instance—brought about at San Francisco. At the same time it also supported the one general limitation there imposed on the General Assembly: that it should not of its own initiative be able to make recommendations on a matter relating to international peace and security which was being dealt with by the Security Council. On the same general ground it was particularly active in insisting, with the other lesser powers, on the imposition of limitations on the veto power of the permanent or great powers members of the Security Council. The insistence resulted, of course, in exempting procedural matters from the veto of the permanent members, a considerable limitation, though it remains to be seen what will be accepted as procedural matters. The great gain, at least, is that any applicant to the Security Council is almost sure of a hearing, as the receiving of complaints is a procedural matter.

Similarly, the Canadian delegation put forward as an amendment a proposal that any member of the United Nations, not a member of the Security Council should, when called upon by the Council to assist in enforcing a decision of the Council, be represented on the Council. After much discussion this proposal was adopted and appears as article 44 in the United Nations Charter. It is really an embodiment of the old principle that there shall be no taxation without representation. The Canadian representative on the committee dealing with

1. Report on the United Nations Conference (Ottawa, 1945) pp. 11-12.

the enforcement provisions of the charter also seconded an Australian amendment by which the obligation to enter into special military agreements to enforce peace was clarified, and this amendment too was adopted.

The Canadian attempt to provide a flexible procedure for amending the charter did not, however, prevail against the determination of the great powers to retain the right to veto amendments.

Results

All in all, the Canadian effort was first and foremost to aid in the establishment of an United Nations' organization; second, to make it as humane, liberal and flexible an organization as possible; third, to make it an organization in which Canada could effectively work for peace. The Canadian delegation worked in a spirit of moderation and compromise to achieve these ends, and had a great measure of success, because, on the whole, it gave expression and leadership to the desires of many of the lesser and on occasion of some of the great powers. It was achievement at once gratifying and promising.

The ratification of the charter by Parliament was such as to lead one to believe that in this country the turnover from isolation to whole-hearted participation in the work of maintaining international peace and co-operation is, for the moment at least, complete. Canadian support of the United Nations is assured; it rests on interest and conviction.

It is too soon to speak of Canada's part in the United Nations. It will be a considerable one. Canadians may feel disappointment that Canada failed of election to the Security Council and that a Canadian was not made Secretary-General. Either or both would have been gratifying to our national pride and satisfying to the country's determination to support the United Nations. That things turned out as they did, need not matter. Canada may for some time suffer in the United Nations from the suspicion that it is a ward of the United States. But much remains for this country to do in the United Nations, where by serving its own best interests, it may also serve the cause of peace and international co-operation.

Agricultural Subsidy and Price Policies

By W. M. DRUMMOND

I

AT the outbreak of war in 1939 farm product prices were low when compared with other prices and particularly when compared with the prices of things which farmers had to buy. In making this comparison all prices are considered in relation to the 1926 base.

During the first two years of the war there was a tendency for this unfavorable price relationship to become still more unfavorable. During this period

the demand for non-agricultural goods and services was more pronounced than that for farm products as a class. The result was that, in the general gradual price rise which took place, the prices of farm products rose less than the prices of non-farm goods and goods in general. However, between the middle of 1941 and the inauguration of the ceiling policy in the late fall of that year, an increasing scarcity of certain farm products caused their prices to rise fairly sharply. Indeed the rapid rise in the prices of these products was partly responsible for the date chosen for the start of the ceiling policy.

EDITOR'S NOTE: W. M. Drummond is Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph.