

TRANSLATION OF ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE, VINCENT AURIOL, TO THE GOVERNORS OF THE BANK AND FUND, SEPTEMBER 6, 1950

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the touching words which you have just spoken of my country. They will go more deeply to the hearts of my countrymen because they have been spoken by the eminent representative of a great country which has been long bound to us by strong intellectual and spiritual ties.

I thank you also for the generous and kind words which you have addressed to me personally, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, for having decided to hold your fifth Annual Meeting in Paris.

We are deeply sensitive of the great honor which you have done to us and to our National Bank, of which we hope it is worthy, and it is for me personally a very great joy to welcome delegates from 48 nations, members of your two Institutions, and the Finance Ministers here assembled, and to forward to those people whom they represent the most cordial message of France.

I deplore the absence of some countries who, though they are signatory to the Bretton Woods Agreements, have not felt they should participate in your work. I hope they will soon come and sit in their still empty seats. Because it is only through a trusting cooperation between all people, in all fields, that men may be assured of prosperity and peace.

It was this very belief which brought the Allies to meet in Bretton Woods in July 1944, while still fighting together on all fronts, in order to set the foundations of financial and economic cooperation between people.

The severe lessons learned after the first World War, and the results of the 1920 Brussels Conference on the necessity for international cooperation (of which so little account was unfortunately taken), convinced them that only a very close solidarity, similar to that on the battlefields, could make possible the reconstruction of a devastated Europe and the economic recovery of an upset world. I personally welcomed with great joy this great enterprise, for I had written in 1942 in a clandestine book the following words, reproducing the ideas which I had defended in 1923 soon after the first World War in front of the French Parliament: "In order to implement international economic cooperation, the creation of a National Credit Institute is necessary. This Institute will grant credits to member countries for their physical and economic reconstruction, for their industrial equipment, for the first imports required by a great number of countries. Moreover, tying together the economic and financial sides, it will act as an economic incentive and coordinator, will make compensations between countries possible, and will direct capital to the necessary investments. It will have to control monetary stability, an indispensable element of economic stability, define parities and the conditions of financial and economic equilibrium required of each country for the granting of credits. . . . To associate openly and freely all nations to a common task of economic cooperation and discipline, in order to protect them against any crisis, and to develop their standard of living; this does not mean a decrease of their national sovereignty, but it is rather a means to enable them to bring to the utmost, on their own territories, all initiatives, all national efforts, for the prosperity of their own people, linked to the prosperity and the achievements of all."

I shall not speak different words to you today, Gentlemen. The missions that your two Institutions fulfill are those which seem to me to meet best the wishes and requirements of the various nations.

Today, however, in this uncertain and unfortunately divided world, those who wish to remain faithful to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and to institutions such as yours, must watch more carefully than ever. Many causes, and foremost our concern for collective security provided for by the Charter for the defence, the sole defence of the nations' independence, might compromise the stability which you are trying to achieve for our common good.

Human progress and world security can only be achieved in a sound and stable economy. One must be most careful not to destroy any national economy, to hinder international trade, nor to alter any currency.

Peace can only be assured through the wellbeing of each man, self-respect for all, and independence for each nation, and if the worst off are convinced that by means of common prosperity, of which all will have an equitable share, they will enjoy a free and decent life.

Misery, injustice and desperation are the best allies of violence. A lack of balance in exchanges, a lack of stability in the currency of a country or additional charges which are beyond its possibilities would, by causing social unrest and economic crises, ruin all the efforts which have been made towards security and a better life.

Inflation, hidden behind an appearance of abundance and easy living brings misery and injustice and is, in fact, the enemy of peace and quiet at home and of peace and quiet abroad, that is to say, of Peace. It is only through the solidarity of all nations and with the help of mutual aid based on justice and on each nation's resources and also through an international coordination of the three main elements of production: raw materials, capital, labor, that we shall be able to achieve at the same time, since they go together, prosperity, security and Peace.

In fact, Gentlemen, your task has grown recently and is now concerned with those important problems which are the cause of much worry in the world. You will need competence, audacity and courage. You have those virtues. And it is with the certainty that you will use them to the best advantage in the interest of humanity that I declare the Fifth General Assembly of the World Bank and of the International Monetary Fund open.