

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

NO. 51/10 THE UNIVERSITIES AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING  
IN THE FREE WORLD

An address by the Prime Minister, Mr. L.S. St. Laurent,  
at a special Convocation at the University of Western  
Ontario, London, on March 7, 1951.

....This Convocation is being held on Founders' Day of this University. Founders' Day might be an appropriate occasion to look back to the beginnings of the institution; to consider its development and growth over the years; to assess its worth and value for the community of which it is a part; and, most important, to look to the part which it can play in the future of our great country. But as most of you are far more familiar with the history of Western than I am, I do not think it would be wise for me to attempt that task.

There is, however, one aspect of the history of Western University - its more recent history - of which I feel I should make special reference. I refer to the Summer School which Western holds each year at Trois-Pistoles in my native Province of Quebec. I think it deserves special attention because it is a first rate example of what I conceive to be one of any University's principal roles - that of promoting better understanding and closer co-operation between the different social groups that make up a nation.

At Trois-Pistoles English-speaking Canadians have the opportunity of living with people who speak another language and whose religion, customs and traditions are different from their own.

There they learn to speak the French language. Their lives are enriched by living amongst a people of a different culture and they absorb and in turn they dispense a deeper understanding of that partnership of two historic races which is the foundation of our national life.

That partnership really began with the union of the two Canadas one hundred and ten years ago. At first it was an uneasy union - somewhat of the shot-gun type - but I believe most Canadians have come to value it today as a genuine partnership which does enrich us all. The Summer School down on the Lower St. Lawrence has helped to create that better understanding and thereby to foster more happy relations. In doing so, it is strengthening the partnership and keeping our nation's foundations strong.

It is about this role of the University - the University as an interpreter and a mediator - that I wish to speak today. The need to increase understanding and co-operation amongst the peoples of the world, to interpret