

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 54/14 MR. ST. LAURENT'S ADDRESS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

An Address by the Prime Minister of Canada  
to Members of the Parliament of India,  
February 23, 1954

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Council of States,

Members of the House of the People:

I am grateful to the Speaker of the House of the People for his warm welcome. His words reflect the friendliness which has surrounded me since my arrival in India two days ago. By this I have been deeply touched.

For many years I have wanted to visit India. I wished to repay the visit with which your Prime Minister honoured us in 1949. Moreover, I wanted to see for myself something of your great country, and to demonstrate by my coming here how conscious we are in Canada of its importance in world affairs. I have also come to convey the warm and friendly feelings of the people of Canada toward the people of India. I appreciate the privilege you are extending to me in allowing me to make my first public address in India to you, the elected members of the national Parliament of more free men and free women than any other Parliament in the world. I bring you good wishes from the members of the Canadian Parliament, which was in session when I left Ottawa. Through you I send warm greetings to the three hundred and sixty-five million people of India from the fifteen million people of Canada.

Few events of recent years have so caught the imagination of Canadians as the emergence of India and other countries of South and Southeast Asia as free nations with democratic parliamentary institutions much like our own. We had watched with special interest your struggle for independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, whose inspiration has spread far beyond the bounds of this country and indeed of Asia. And we were glad that the struggle ended, to use Mr. Nehru's words, "graciously, gracefully and with a minimum of bitterness." As such it marked not the end of India's relations with the United Kingdom but the beginning of a new understanding based on equality, friendship and mutual high regard.

In the years which have followed we have watched your successive achievements in welding India into a single political entity, in framing and adopting a national constitution; and in conducting a general election on a scale which amazed those of us who have had some experience with elections in our own countries. Finally, we have followed with admiration your efforts to improve the economic conditions of your people