



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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LESSONS OF AN OLD CONFLICT

An Address by the Prime Minister
of Canada, Mr. L.B. Pearson, at
the Commemorating of the 150th
Anniversary of the Battle of
Stoney Creek, Ontario, June 8, 1963

The 150th anniversary of the Battle of Stoney Creek is a moving occasion for us all. As a Canadian citizen and as the Prime Minister of Canada, I am honoured to take part in the commemoration.

We know that this Battle - a small and confused engagement - was nevertheless a decisive turning point in the War of 1812-1814. I am not going to take your time repeating today that chapter of our history. As a boy, I learned all about it. We "beat" the Americans and Laura Secord became a heroine.

Today, however, it is more appropriate for us to think not about that far-away war but about the results which flowed from it. Canada was successfully defended and our national future assured. A great part of the success lay in the fact that, when we had had our war, relations between Canada and the United States were transformed.

A Radical Change

The peace made in 1814 acknowledged neither victor nor vanquished. Militarily and territorially, the two parties - the United States and Britain - reverted to the status quo ante. But this was an occasion when standing still in form meant great progress in spirit; it meant a radical change in the spirit of the relation between the two countries.

It meant that, at last, Great Britain accepted all the implications and the consequences of the American Revolution. She became willing to deal with the United States on the basis of true equality. And the United States, for its part, accepted the separate existence of Canada. Implicitly, the Americans recognized that, while we in Canada were not going to join them, we might move towards self-government and independence, through a process of evolution.