

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 52/24

CANADA AND WESTERN SECURITY

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, at Quebec City, June 8, 1952.

I should like to congratulate the Institute on nearly a quarter century of service to Canada in the field of public education in international affairs, a field more important now than ever before. When the Institute was founded Canada was venturing on its first cautious steps on the international stage. In the years that have intervened, Canada has advanced to a more influential role in the drama of world affairs. In part this has been the accident of circumstances: the phenomenal internal expansion that has occurred in our country. This, with the changed pattern of world politics would have brought about a more active role for us in any case. But it was public opinion that made this certain in a democratically-governed society. No government can go far in advance of, or stay far behind, public opinion. If Canada, in discharging this new role, has been able to exercise an effective and useful influence in world affairs, it has been due in large measure to the education of public opinion to the importance of matters which previously had caused it little concern.

In this development the Canadian Institute of International Affairs has done yeoman service. Your research studies have added greatly to the public knowledge of Canada's external relations. I can assure you that they are well-thumbed volumes in the Department of External Affairs, as I am sure they are in our universities. We often learn from the experts what our policy has been as well as what it should be. Your speaker-programmes have contributed in an important way to the development of informed opinion in various centres from coast to coast. Let me add, at the risk of being misunderstood, that I strongly approve of your practice of closed meetings. I am sure that it adds to their value when those present can speak their minds without hope of being quoted, or fear of being misquoted. Study meetings such as you have been holding here the past few days are, I think, particularly helpful. There is nothing like continuous discussion of a problem from various points of view to clear or to empty one's mind on it, and to help separate the consequential from the inconsequential. So in all its varied activities, may the Institute continue to grow and flourish in service to our country.

The main topic discussed here has been the North Atlantic community. You will expect me, therefore, to say something on this subject. Before doing so I should like, however, to say a word or two about our wider associations through the United Nations. For one thing, if I don't, it will be suggested that I should.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to belittle the United Nations, and even to consider it as a complete failure. This defeatist attitude results, I think, from an unduly pessimistic interpretation of developments in and out of the United Nations, and is, in my view, unwarranted. The United Nations remains of very great importance as the only universal centre for international co-operation in a wide variety of fields of international concern. In this interdependent day and age, if our United Nations did not exist, we should have to try to create another one. But, paradoxically,