

VERNMENT



CANADA

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 51/19 CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, delivered to the Kiwanis Club at Ottawa, on April 27, 1951.

Over the years, I have often been asked to talk on the subject to which Kiwanis Clubs are paying special attention this week, Canadian-American relations; on the lessons to be drawn from that good relationship, and the ways to keep it an exemplary one. It is a subject which has, of course, a greater interest to and importance for Canada than, for obvious reasons, it has for our neighbour. But this disparity in interest and importance is diminishing as Canada's stature in the world grows, and as this is increasingly realized by our neighbour and by other countries.

This development will, I feel sure, be accompanied by an increasing knowledge of Canada, something which Kiwanis is doing so much to promote. If you could read some of the letters I have received lately, commenting on the press reports and the press interpretation of a speech I made in Toronto recently, you would realize that there is much still to be done in this process of neighbourly education. Many of them were full of such phrases as "you English!". "What is your socialist government in England doing?". It was assumed, apparently, that I must have naturally spoken as an Englishman!

It is perhaps not surprising that some of my correspondents have shown such uncertainty about Canada's constitutional position when so little about Canada is taught in schools in the United States. I have been reading recently the results of an enquiry conducted a year or so ago under the auspices of the Canada-United States Committee on Education. The purpose of this enquiry was to discover how much American high school students knew about Canada and how much Canadian students knew about the United States. I will say no more about the results of the enquiry in Canada than to report that in the words of those conducting the tests "Canadian students know considerably more about the States than the United States students know about Canada." Their knowledge, I should add was not always matched by their understanding.

The students being tested in the United States were in their last year at high school in two cities, one near the Canadian border and one in a western state. I have read typical comments by these students in the United States with interest, with amusement and, at times, with something approaching consternation. Some students made no bones about their ignorance. "Due to my lack of information about Canada, I can express no definite ideas", one wrote. Others, however,