

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## REVIEW OF WORLD AFFAIRS

Statement of the Right Honourable Louis S. St. Laurent,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs, in the House  
of Commons on April 29, 1948.

I am glad indeed to have, after several unexpected but inevitable delays, this opportunity to give the House a short review of world affairs as we see them in my department. This review will, of course, be neither exhaustive nor final. Naturally enough, in one statement it is not possible to refer to all the important questions that face us. If some of these questions must be omitted from this review, it is not because I do not appreciate their importance. There will, I hope, be other occasions during the session when these omissions can be repaired.

It is now, I believe, an accepted fact that practically everything of importance that happens in the international sphere is of interest to Canada--often of direct and immediate interest. For us there is no escape, even if we wish to seek one, in isolation or indifference. Recent events have brought home to all of us the increasing threat to our democratic national existence of the rising tide of totalitarian communism. We know that Canada's boundaries against such a threat extend far beyond her physical frontiers. We know also that a line is being drawn which runs through the hearts of free men everywhere, and that on our side of that line are all those in every country who work and fight to preserve the freedom and dignity of the individual against reactionary dictatorship, whether communist or fascist. We know that there can be no neutrality in this conflict, which is as spiritual as it is political.

In the realm of economic and social welfare as well, it is clear as it never was before that we cannot live unto ourselves alone. Opinions may differ--I suppose they do differ--as to whether the economic and trade policies of this government are wise; but there will, I am sure, be no quarrel with the statement that they are now decisively influenced by events far beyond our borders.

Canadian representatives recently discussing the future of Indonesia at Lake Success, the future of international trade at Havana, or the future of a free press at Geneva, all bear witness to the fact that this country is now inevitably and inextricably involved in the full current of international events. The day has long since passed when we did not have to bother about the policies of other countries far away. When the activities of those other countries determine the prosperity, indeed the very existence of our own country, it is merely elementary prudence and common sense to concern ourselves with them.

The Canadian Department of External Affairs, both at home and abroad, exists for that very purpose. It represents a necessary and, I think, useful development, in the progress of this country from colonial status to national maturity. Its expansion--and it has not been allowed to grow carelessly and extravagantly reflects the magnitude and complexity of the relations between nations in this interdependent age and the increasing importance of these relations for Canada. In her participation in international affairs Canada will, I hope, act with resolution, with responsibility, and also with restraint. We should not evade our