

No. 54/21

CANADA, PARTNER FOR FREEDOM

Speech by the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. A.D.P. Heeney, at Town Hall, Los Angeles, March 23, 1954.

Let me say at once that I am glad of this opportunity of speaking at Town Hall. Not that I'm particularly fond of making speeches - although I find that this business of being an Ambassador involves quite a lot of public talk. No, I'm glad, first, of course, because I know it's an honour to be invited to speak in a forum in which so many distinguished people have spoken before me. And, second, because it gives me a quite legitimate occasion to talk on a subject which I find pretty exciting, namely, my own country - Canada.

We Canadians - even those of us who've never had a chance to see for ourselves - know something of this State, and in particular of this fabulous county and city of Los Angeles. We have watched with fascination, from up north of the border, the rapid growth of your population, and the dramatic expansion of your business and industry, and the voracious energy with which your citizens have launched into the multitude of activities for which Southern California is celebrated across the world. Even those of us who have not had the luck to see for ourselves have justly the pretty expert testimony. For Californians have justly the reputation of being great travellers. Indeed, I meet quite a few of them in Washington nowadays! Many penetrate annually into Canada, for business or for pleasure. And, another thing, there are, I believe something around 200,000 persons of Canadian origin in Southern California - and they write home! So, even if I've only been in Los Angeles a few hours - and for the first time - it's hard for me to feel a complete stranger, and, already, you've made me feel very much at home today at Town Hall.

No wonder so many speeches have been made about California - and Los Angeles. It's a tempting, stimulating subject. But so, Mr. Chairman, is Canada, and, after all, it is about Canada - your neighbour and ally - that you expect me to speak. And so I shall.

Canada, these days particularly, is a pretty exciting country. What most Americans - even Californians perhaps - used to think of as an immense irregular mass of cold geography sprawling northward to the Pole, and coloured pink in the school atlases - this vast country, your neighbour, has now become your not inconsiderable ally in an atomic world.

I am not going to say much about the great physical changes which have taken place in Canada these past fifteen years. The temptation is great, for the prospect is thrilling - to a Canadian at any rate. But I find that in these matters of the economics and industry and finance of the modern Canada, Americans are often as well informed as Canadians - sometimes better. Let me say, then, no more than this of our material development. We have