



CANADA

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 67/40 AN ERA OF CHANGE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH AND NATO

Speech by the Right Honourable L.B. Pearson,  
Prime Minister of Canada, at the Mansion House  
Luncheon, London, England, November 27, 1967.

. . . I've already expressed my feelings, my Lord Mayor, at becoming a Freeman of this great city and joining the roll of illustrious men and women, some of whom you have mentioned. I think of London as the heart of Britain, just as I have always thought of Britain itself as a repository of steadiness and good sense in a world where these qualities are, more than ever, needed.

Nor do I forget that Britain remains the centre of our Commonwealth of Nations. This association of free states is going through difficult times. But no international arrangement or system offers a more hopeful example of the kind of flexibility and adaptability that is required internationally to meet the challenges and the demands of today's sweeping changes and new conditions.

Both Britain and Canada can take pride in the development of the new Commonwealth out of the old Empire and the earlier Commonwealth -- a development which, as you know, has now reached the point where we have an association of, I believe, 27 member states from every part of the world, varying greatly in size, in power and in wealth - different creeds, different forms of government, different ways of life. But the Commonwealth, with all its frustrations but with all its promise too, has established a bridge between these different cultures, these different races, at a time when there aren't many bridges of this kind left in the world. Some parts of the bridge seem at the moment to be rather shaky, but that means that we should not scrap the bridge but that we should strengthen it and thereby increase its value to ourselves and to the world.

While the Commonwealth is now of special importance because there is racial and geographical variety, its heart and its soul remain here in London. Without the vision and leadership of Britain, the Commonwealth could not have evolved from Empire in the way it did. Without the goodwill and support of Britain, and the older members of the Commonwealth, including my own country, the Commonwealth will not survive. If it should fail, let the failure not be through any fault of understanding, patience or effort on our part.

Britain's role in the transition of Empire into Commonwealth is only one reason why as a Canadian I'm proud of our British heritage, and, as I have