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HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN
PARTNERSHIP?

Statement by the Secretary of State for External
Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, broadcast on the

"Town Meeting of the Air" programme New York,
March 3, 1953.

The Town Hall meetings held across Canada and the United States in an earlier and more tranquil day were the cradles of our democracy. Freedom of discussion and debate, the honest exchange of conflicting ideas and argument, - these things which we cherish were born of such meetings.

The democratic community has now vastly increased in size and complexity; the importance of freedom of thought and discussion is for this reason greater than ever before. Therefore, I welcome the chance to give this brief word of introduction before your Town Meeting of the Air begins tonight. This meeting links the peoples of our two countries in a huge assembly. Only a handful will see the speakers face to face, and not all of us will have the opportunity of firing questions at them. But many hundreds of thousands will be listening in and the topic you have chosen, "How can we strengthen the Canadian-American partnership?", is one which is worthy, I think, of their interest and one to which no one should be indifferent.

No two countries are more closely concerned with each other's affairs than Canada and its great friend and neighbour, the United States.

In some parts of the world where smaller countries lie next to more powerful neighbours, the dominant keynote is fear and subordination. In North America, it is friendship and confidence founded on a free partnership. Proximity which arises from the facts of politics and geography can often breed fear. In the case of our two peoples it has bred deep and abiding mutual respect. Proximity does not mean, for us, the imposed leadership of the despot or the enforced obedience of the reluctant satellite, it means in our case a partnership based on consultation and co-operation and includes the right to agree or to disagree.

This tradition of the good neighbour derives not merely from the fact that we are joint occupants of a common continent endowed with great material resources and developed by the industry and spirit of Canadians and Americans. Nor is it due only to the fact that we know - and act upon the knowledge - that our defence knows no national boundaries, that it lies in collective measures shared with our neighbours and our friends and in the pledges we have made - and which we are honouring - as members of the United Nations.

The sources of this tradition lie deeper. They are found in the faith which illuminates our search for the welfare and security of our own peoples, and of others as well. Respect for freedom, and for the rights of individual men and women, are the principal and lasting assets in this Canadian-American