

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
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CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL SITUATION  
AND POINT OF VIEW

Text of an address by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, opening the Town Hall Forum "Canada - Nation on the March", on March 3, 1953, in New York City.

It is always a pleasure for me to visit Town Hall. Its very name evokes nostalgic memories of an earlier and more tranquil day when across Canada and the United States Town Hall meetings were in a very real sense the cradles of democracy. Freedom of discussion and debate, the honest exchange of conflicting ideas and argument - these things which we cherish were born of such meetings.

Since those days the democratic community has immeasurably increased in size and complexity. This is one reason why the importance of freedom of thought and discussion is greater than ever before. Therefore I welcome the change of helping to initiate this series of talks on Canada, which has been planned (like so many other projects in which our two countries are concerned) as a co-operative venture on the part of public spirited men from both sides of the border.

I speak to you today as the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs and not, I hasten to add, as President of the United Nations General Assembly. As a Canadian may I say that I think you have chosen a good and timely subject, if a somewhat all-embracing one. No two countries are more closely concerned with each other's affairs than Canada and the United States. Our people should know and learn all they can about each other, both in this Town Hall, and outside it.

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 and fruitful association. Proximity arising from the facts of politics and geography can often breed mistrust. In the case of our two peoples, it has bred deep and mutual respect. Proximity does not for us mean the imposed leadership of the master or the enforced obedience of the reluctant satellite. It means a partnership, based on consultation and cooperation, and it includes the right to agree - or to disagree.

This tradition of the good neighbour derives not merely from the fact that we are the joint occupants of a 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 on the knowledge - that our defence recognizes 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 our good neighbourhood lie deeper. They are found in the faith which illuminates our search for the security and the welfare of our own peoples, and of others as well; in respect for freedom, and for the rights and dignity of individual men and women.