



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 53/47 CO-OPERATION AND UNITY IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD

Text of a speech delivered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, at the Annual Dinner of the English-Speaking Union of the United States, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, November 23, 1953.

It is difficult, on an occasion like this, to speak of the virtues of English speaking unity without using, and at times abusing, those somewhat thread-bare words and platitudes which are the defences of the diplomat against indiscretions, and, at times, his substitute for thought. I do not want to exchange a cliché for a cutlass, but I could wish that I were able to say something arresting and stimulating on a subject which is as important as any we are likely to face in the dangerous days ahead; the necessity of English speaking co-operation and understanding; of unity.

A Canadian, moreover, is in a somewhat special position, both of difficulty and of opportunity, in speaking on this subject.

We are a North American nation, but we are also proud to be a member of a Commonwealth of Nations which includes all the other non-American English speaking countries - and some others, including three in Asia. In this dual role, Canadians are supposed to have special qualifications, and a special incentive, for assisting the lion and the eagle to live peacefully together - an achievement which is neither biologically nor politically easy. Our value in this respect may be over-stressed, but there is, I think, something to it. More than once, I know from experience, a Canadian has been able to advocate a British position in Washington without dire consequences because he did it in an American accent, while his support in London of an American position has been listened to more attentively because the advocate may have had his trans-Atlantic words softened by an Oxford education, and, in any event, is a subject of the Queen. Someone, indeed, has cynically observed that we Canadians are so busy being British in Washington and American in London that we often forget to be Canadians. It is a danger, I admit, but I do not think we have succumbed to it. If we were tempted to, the facts of our history, and the pattern of our population, would come to the rescue. Our national existence is based on two founding races, only one of which is British, and the other isn't American! Furthermore, we are developing into a strong awareness of our own separate identity, as we stand confidently now on our own feet, moving toward a great national destiny but anxious, in the process, to keep in step with our friends.