



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 51/25      THE PARTNERSHIP TO UPHOLD FREEDOM

Commencement Address by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, delivered at Northwestern University, at Evanston, Ill., on June 11, 1951.

What I am going to talk to you about is something which is ... urgent for all of us in both countries to be thinking about. That something is the partnership in which we and a group of other free nations are jointly engaged for the purpose of upholding freedom in the world.

A hundred years ago, at the time this University was founded, the United States was entering upon one of the most difficult periods in the history of this country. For something over half a century your forebears had maintained, within this nation, an uneasy balance between two very different conceptions of human society, one insisting on human equality and the other tolerating human slavery. By 1851 it was becoming clear to most Americans both in the North and the South that this uneasy balance could not be maintained indefinitely. Unless a way of life based on either freedom or slavery was accepted as the rule throughout the whole nation, it was apparent the nation itself would not survive.

During the first decade of the history of Northwestern University it was the supreme aim of American statesmanship to find a peaceful solution to that problem of national survival. Unhappily a peaceful solution was not found.

The American people had to wage a terrible civil war to maintain their unity as a nation. Whether greater statesmanship could have settled that issue without war is now an academic question and I am not going to try to answer it. But I am sure almost no one would quarrel with the assertion that slavery was bound to be abandoned sooner or later and that if slavery could have been extinguished without war, it would have been a great gain for the United States and a great gain for the human race.

The human race today faces a situation which in some respects is similar to the one this nation faced a century ago. The existence of this nation, like other free nations, is in danger; and the danger is one we are trying to overcome without a great war.

But the problem is no longer an exclusively American problem. On one side is Communist imperialism striving for the total enslavement of the whole world; on the other is a partnership of the free nations striving to maintain the freedom we believe to be the very essence of civilized life. At present there is an uneasy balance between the two. Of course, such a balance cannot be maintained indefinitely.