



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
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No. 55/11 THE AMERICANS - HOW WELL DO WE REALLY KNOW THEM?

An address by the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. A.D.P. Heeney, to the Women's Canadian Club, Montreal, February 7, 1955.

In the ordinary course it is part of my business to do a good deal of talking - to American audiences - and naturally, for the most part, I talk about Canada and the Canadians. Today, I am going to take advantage of the opportunity you have given me of coming home to reverse my normal role and make a few observations about the United States, and the Americans.

This, of course, has been a favourite game for foreigners from very early days. The shelves of libraries in all free countries are crowded with a great mass of comment old and new upon the political and social institutions of the United States and the life and habits of its citizens. These range in quality from the wisdom of de Toqueville and Bryce and their modern successors to the foolishness of many others - who are better nameless. And the game still goes on - and at increased pace - and in all languages. So in lectures, newspapers, and magazines, over the air, and in still more books, the American psyche is subjected to analysis and comment.

We Canadians have always taken a pretty active part in this game of "observing" the Americans. And I have the impression that recently it has again become even more popular in this country as it has in others. This, I believe, is as it should be. In this year 1955 it is of great importance that other nations - and particularly Canada - should interest themselves in the people upon whom the future so greatly depends.

In the eighteen months since I went to the United States, I have naturally been preoccupied in contemplating - though that is a rather misleadingly tranquil expression - that immense country, its institutions and its inhabitants. Indeed, in one way or another, this is the subject which compels nearly all my waking thoughts.

Edmund Burke said nearly two hundred years ago that one could not indict a whole people - and the American people at that! By the same token, one cannot without massive qualification, endorse all the institutions and policies of a nation or praise all the