



CANADA

# CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 18 No. 36

September 4, 1963.

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## CANADA: A TRULY BILINGUAL COUNTRY

Addressing the Annual general meeting of the Canadian French-Language Newspapers' Association at La Malbaie, Quebec, on August 17, Prime Minister L.B. Pearson observed that Canada's weekly press performed a service of the greatest importance "in circulating news and information and also in moulding opinion at the primary levels of human activity, that is, at the family level, at the municipal level, and within regional limits". A "distinctive contribution" of the French-language weekly papers, Mr. Pearson said, was the "safe-guarding and development (of) French culture in North America".

This was the main topic of Mr. Pearson's speech, which follows in part:

"... Canada is rich and privileged in more than one way; particularly because she is the heir and depository of two great cultures....

"I believe it is important to accentuate this fact; the recognition that Canada is a truly bilingual country with two basic cultures, to which many others have been added to our great advantage.

### ENCROACHMENT OF U.S. CULTURE

"Canadian unity is now in another difficult period. These difficulties have common causes. For some years, Canadians have been more than ever conscious of the encroachment of American culture. They feel that they are gradually losing control of their economy. On the other hand, they realize that their standard of living, which they do not want to see lowered depends in a very large measure on the export of our products to the United States and the

import of American capital. This is the reason why they realize that political independence cannot in itself be very effective in changing an economic situation which has become inseparable from prosperity.

"This situation inevitably gives rise to frustration. A very few English-speaking Canadians regret and look to the past. A few others are tempted to stop resisting and become Americans. However, the great majority have decided to react positively to the American encroachment, to accentuate their identity as Canadians and to get closer to their French-speaking fellow Canadians.

### NOT FLIGHT BUT RESISTANCE

"In short, the solution to the problem is not flight but resistance. When it is impossible to prevent this encroachment, one has to attempt to assimilate and control it. In meeting this problem, and others concerned with maintaining our identity, we must first rebuild our political and economic society in terms of the problems and needs of the contemporary world. It means that both the founding races must meet together more often and become better acquainted. I am convinced that such closer relations will be mutually profitable. I also think that the common sources and similar nature of so many of the problems of English-speaking Canada and French-speaking Canada will give us a chance to get closer and to understand each other better. Basically, we have the same problems, and, to find the right solutions, we need each other. In this field, at least we are inseparable.

(Over)