



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 54/21

YOUR NORTHERN NEIGHBOUR

Address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Mr. L. B. Pearson, to the Executives Club Luncheon,
Chicago, March 19, 1954.

It is good to be back in Chicago again. Every time I return I am reminded of those carefree, non-controversial days when, as an employee of Armour & Co., I had nothing to worry about except ways and means of promoting the sale of Armour's "Big Crop" fertilizers. This was in the early, roaring Twenties. On the south side, where I then lived, there was always a sense of adventure, and even a trace of risk in wandering about late-at night; especially if you were known to be a Canadian who might have just crossed that wet border! I had my own adventure one night when a week-end bag I was carrying was suspected of holding something else than a tooth brush!

Those were boisterous days, I suppose - but there have been times since when to me they seemed relatively calm and peaceful, as I struggled with the complexities and problems of foreign policy in a period of tension and cold war, when fear threatens to freeze our diplomacy into immobility or fire it into panic.

Any person with some political responsibility for these problems in a free country needs a sense of perspective, a sense of balance and even a sense of humour. He can also expect occasionally to be shot at from both flanks. I myself have had a taste of that experience. On the one hand, I have once or twice been accused of being rather soft and naive about communism. My own view about that is simple. Communism is a brutal and reactionary doctrine and when allied to Soviet imperialism becomes a menacing conspiracy against our freedom and security. There should be no difference of opinion on that score, though there may be honest differences as to how best to deal with this danger.

I have also had the honour of attack and abuse from Moscow and its friends. Pravda, the Moscow newspaper, for instance, has called me a "zealous and obsequious tool of the American military", and "an ignorant and obtuse American agent".

If I feel - as I do - that occasionally my words and my ideas may at times have been misinterpreted and misconstrued, that has been a mild misunderstanding in comparison with the grotesque picture that has been painted of me in Moscow.

I once, as I have said, had the good fortune to work in Chicago, at Armour & Co. The Soviet journalistic hatchet men learned about this and decided that the word "Armour" had a sinister, war-mongering, and munitions significance. So, in Pravda again, they attributed the following words to me, and this will surprise some of my Chicago and, indeed, my Canadian friends: