



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 54/27 ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

An address to the joint session of the Congress of the United States by the Governor General, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, May 4, 1954

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker
and Members of the Congress:

First may I thank you for the high compliment you have paid my country this morning, and for the warmth of your welcome which has touched me more than I can say. I feel deeply honoured that I should be asked to meet, on this occasion, the members of the two great legislative bodies assembled in this Chamber. I am conscious at this moment - and who would not be - of the relation between the course of world events and the decisions which are arrived at here. You have given me a rare privilege today, and I am grateful to you for it.

I feel no stranger in this city. I spent several very pleasant years here long ago, when my task was to set up the first diplomatic mission from Canada to your country, and my privilege to serve as envoy. This was when the nations of our Commonwealth commenced to send their own representatives abroad - first to this Capital - each concerned with his country's business but all looking on the same Sovereign as the head of the Commonwealth.

As Canadian Minister I bore credentials from our Sovereign. I now come to you again as a representative of the Crown - this time not in a post abroad but in one at home. "Governor General" is, perhaps, a misleading term. A person holding this office does not "govern". His functions, indeed, can easily be confused with those of governors in some other countries who, unlike him, are administrators. We, no less than yourselves, are of course a completely free and independent nation. Canada alone among the countries of the Americas is a constitutional monarchy. Under our system the Governor General represents the Sovereign, who is the Head of our Canadian state and with us, all actions in the field of Government, from the passing of legislation to the delivering of mail are performed, to quote the ancient phrase we use, "On Her Majesty's Service".

In June of last year, an event took place of high significance to us in Canada. In none of Her Majesty's realms was her Coronation celebrated with greater fervour. May I say that as your neighbours, we Canadians