

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

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Summary of what the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, has been saying to different groups during his visit to India. (February 28, 1954)

I have long wanted to come to India. I have now come to the end of a visit that has exceeded even my expectations.

I came a long way to bring to you, the people of India, the warm greetings of the people of Canada. Canada is, like India, a big country but we have only 15 million people compared with your population of 365 million.

This week I have been in India is one of the most fruitful weeks in the whole seventy-two years of my life. I have talked to a large number of your leaders, I have talked to your civil servants, to your newspapermen and to your villagers. I have seen something of your ancient monuments and the great work which you are now doing for the reconstruction of your country.

I have been particularly happy to meet in your villages and your cities some of your children and to see the work which you are doing in India for the youth of your country.

Canada, like India, believes that one of her most priceless possessions is the youth of her country. Men of my age may perhaps think that they are important but we are not important for very long. Children everywhere in the world are important and the children of the villages and cities of India are important. They will pass on from generation to generation the things they have learned from working and living together.

I am very pleased to congratulate you on the magnificent results that are coming out of your cooperative work to improve your conditions. I have seen a community centre in one of your villages. That community centre is, to my mind, a symbol of the community interest of all of us. I would like to see many community centres in all of the nations of the world because when we are meeting together in a community centre we realize that, although we all have faults, each one of us has good qualities.

I have been almost embarrassed by the great kindness shown to me by your Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru. He spent many hours and had many conversations with me in order to help me to understand the background of the social and economic life of the people of India, of whom he is so proud and to whom he is so devoted. I am going back to Canada feeling I have had a new education. I hope that this will be of some value in maintaining and strengthening the cordial good relations between the people of Canada and the people of India.

In Canada, we have the same aspirations as you in India. We have the same need of peace and stability which you have. We, like you, can succeed in our high adventure of economic and social development only if we do have peace and security.