

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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An address by the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Robert H. Winters, to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, at Washington, D.C., April 17, 1954.

I was greatly honoured when your Ambassador to Canada, my good friend The Honourable Douglas Stuart extended to me your invitation to participate today in the proceedings of this distinguished gathering of newspaper editors and their guests. But your invitation means more to us: a gracious gesture of earnest goodwill and sincere friendship from the American people to the Canadian people - and an opportunity to further that goodwill and friendship between two neighbours through frank and constructive discussion of matters of mutual interest.

There are many things that newspaper editors and politicians have in common: They share in the greatest trust that American civilization can bestow: concern about public welfare. The American people, like Canadians, are fortunate indeed in having a national and local press that both serves and strengthens our democratic ways of life. Without a public-spirited press, freedom from fear, from injustice and from want would be beyond the reach of the kind of civilization that North America cherishes and strives for.

Newspaper editors and politicians have also practical problems in common. They are expected to deliver the goods - if they don't they get fired: the politician by the voters when he is up for re-election; the newspaper editor by his publisher. Newspaper editors, unlike politicians, don't have to get elected. They are more independent of short-term changes in the whims and wishes of the general public. But I can tell you there are a few editors who, some of us politicians would like to see face an electorate. There is no substitute for the confidence that comes from knowing that the public approves your policies.

However it may be easier for a newspaper editor to adopt statesmanlike attitudes and to emphasize the long-term good of his country than it may be for a politician whose policies cannot but be influenced to some extent by prevailing sentiments and attitudes of the general public.

I am addressing my remarks today to the newspaper editors of America in their capacity as the statesmanlike interpreters of events, problems and policies to the people of the United States. By explaining to the public some of our common problems and what can be done about them,