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## THE OLD AND THE NEW DIPLOMACY

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, delivered at the 130th Annual Meeting of the Board of Trade, Saint John, New Brunswick, on January 28, 1952.

In these days when foreign policy is as close to home as the building of a post office, it is important to understand the principles and the practices that should guide it. In the past, foreign policy was usually formed and directed by governments in the interests of a dynasty or of a small minority. The people, as such, were neither very often consulted about nor supposed to be very much concerned with the mysteries that went on behind the Foreign Office walls. In a political democracy, however, this was not good enough, and foreign policy has now become the policy of all the people. This, in its turn, means that the people must be given the facts without which public opinion cannot be intelligently formed. Public opinion, however, must be not only informed, it must be responsible. This will not be easy if the spur for governmental action in international relations is mass emotion created by the publicity mechanisms, interested and disinterested, which can now be brought so quickly and so crushingly to bear on all the people. Fifty years ago men had time to think and to make up their minds in relative calm as to what was in the national interest. Their agents in government were also given time to reflect and to decide and to execute. We have now, I think, gone far, possibly too far to the other extreme. The insistent demand now in diplomacy and foreign policy is for "action this minute" and the trend is toward the "hoop-la" and the headline; toward conduct of delicate and complicated negotiations in the spotlight of press and radio publicity, or, worst of all, in front of the television camera. I am beginning to envy those quiet and restrained old-fashioned methods which it used to be the fashion to deride as tricky and undemocratic. Certainly it will become increasingly difficult to work out a wise and mature foreign policy based on sound public opinion when that opinion can be disturbed and distracted by all the mass media of propaganda which we now have brought to such mechanical perfection, and some at least of which seem designed to perpetuate the adolescent mind. This makes it all the more essential, in the testing days ahead, that not only governments, but those who control governments, the people, remain steady and calm and patient. That is not going to be easy when the tempo of life today is so fast, and nervous strain is so great, that we get impatient if we miss the first segment of a revolving door, and cancel our subscription if tomorrow's newspaper does not come out today.