

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 54/11 Speeches by the Prime Minister of India, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. St. Laurent, given at a banquet at New Delhi, India, February 23, 1954.

The Prime Minister, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, said:

"Mr. Prime Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, nearly half a century ago when I was very young in years, I remember reading a statement of an eminent statesman of England who was then the Secretary of State for India. Evidently some people in India had suggested or asked for self-Government for India and had probably mentioned Canada as a place which had achieved self-Government as a Dominion. In answer to that Lord Morley, that eminent statesman said that in Canada people wore fur-coats and a fur-coat was not a necessity to India. Therein, of course, Lord Morley did not exhibit that wide acquaintance with the world affairs that such an eminent person should have possessed, because fur-coats are known to be worn in India at particular seasons, in particular parts and there are certain parts of India where they are worn throughout the year.

In any event, you, Sir, come from the land of fur-coats but ours is a warmer climate and I need hardly say how welcome you are. But I mentioned this fur-coat incident because somehow it has stuck in my mind since then and I was reminded of it today thinking about Canada.

Three or four years ago I went to Canada and it was a great privilege to meet you, Sir, and your colleagues and many other people and above all to have the extreme friendliness of the people of Canada which made me feel as if I was not amongst strangers at all but among friends. I venture to think that during your two or three days here you have also experienced that feeling of being among friends and not wholly in an alien land. India and Canada are far apart, almost as far as any two countries can be. There are many differences, in climate, in background, in history. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we have progressively discovered more and more things which bring us together and which make us appreciate each other. Why is that so? Presumably because -- not because it so happened that we also use fur-coats occasionally -- but because of other things of the mind and the spirit which have drawn us nearer to one another, because even when we have differed in some particular matters, that has made no difference whatever to the fact that we had in a very large measure common objectives, common outlook and even to a considerable extent common ways of approach.

SIMILARITY IN DIVERSITY

I referred to an incident that happened 47 or 48 years ago. Since then much has happened and today you, Sir, visited our Parliament House and addressed our Members of Parliament and you observed, as you said