

GOVERNMENT



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## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of a speech delivered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, at the Official Opening of the Central Canada Exhibition, at Ottawa, August 22, 1949.

It is a great honour to be your guest speaker today and officially to open the Fifty-sixth Central Canada Exhibition.

"Exhibitions" and "Fairs" have played a significant part in Canada's development and that significance is, I think, increasing as our importance as a nation grows, and we have more to exhibit. Though my appearance today is the most impressive and flattering association I have ever had with a fair or exhibition, I am not, I must admit, nearly as thrilled or as awe-struck as I used to be years ago when I would arrive at 9 a.m. at the "Ex" in Toronto on Children's Day with twenty good Canadian nickels in my pocket and twelve hours of pleasure and excitement ahead.

Exhibitions, however, do more than excite children, entertain adults or inspire controversies as to whether a midway or grand stand performance is elevating or debasing. They give town and country a chance to meet and compete. They give producers and distributors a fine shop window through which to impress consumers. They also provide, certainly this Exhibition provides, a fine example of constructive co-operation between individuals, associations and government; an example which must be emulated in all aspects of national activity if Canada is to grow and progress along sound lines.

If Exhibitions play a valuable part in our national life, from the smallest village display to the great International Trade Fair, there is, I think, a particular contribution which the "Central Canada" can make. It is held in Ottawa, the city of many of us by birth, and nearly as many, I suppose, by adoption. To many Canadians Ottawa is merely a collection of government buildings inhabited and surrounded by civil servants. This Exhibition shows how much more there is to the life and activity of Ottawa and the neighbouring counties than the conduct of the business of government. It also gives those of us who are connected with that business a chance to realize that the care and nurture of a carrot, or a cow, which has won a first prize is more important, or may be more important than the alternation of a civil service regulation or the passing of an Order-in-Council.

Nevertheless, while not forgetting its relationship with that non-governmental activity which keeps our country alive, and, incidentally, makes our civil service function possible, Ottawa has the right to claim a very special position among Canadian cities as the capital of our nation and, as such, the possession of all Canadians. Now that we have grown up nationally, all Canadians should take pride in their capital and in the efforts to make it a city worthy of that pride. This does not mean, of course, that the citizens of this city should be put in a favoured financial position as compared with those of other Canadian municipalities, but it does mean that all Canadians should consider it a privilege to share in the