

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA IN THE AMERICAS

An address by Mr. L. B. Pearson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Herald Tribune Forum, New York, March 8, 1947.

I need hardly say how greatly honoured I feel at the invitation to add a Canadian voice to this Pan-American occasion. I should explain, however, that in my country officials in the Government service are normally supposed to be both anonymous and silent. So this afternoon I speak not as an official but merely as a Canadian citizen.

My country, Canada, not many decades ago was a dependent colony but is now a nation with complete freedom - or as much freedom as any nation has any right to have in this interdependent age - to control every aspect of its policy, domestic and foreign. So you can erase that picture from your minds - one which I found to be all too widely accepted when I lived in this country - of Canada as a dependent colonial people paying taxes to an outside King, owing obedience to an outside Government and fighting in far-off fields the battles of other countries at the dictation of others. I can assure you that such a picture is now a mere caricature.

Possibly one reason for the ignorance which still persists about our position is the fact that we achieved our independence without martial drama or drum beating. We won it fighting with, not against, the British. It was the result of evolution, not revolution. The Fathers of our country are not Generals on horseback with drawn swords, but Statesmen in frock-coats with quill pens. Conferences, not campaigns, are the sign posts on our road to freedom. Possibly we should have arranged a sham battle with the British, had a mock capitulation and signed a peace treaty. Then our present status might be better understood abroad. However, our method, though not spectacular, has been effective. So today, Canada stands as a free and democratic nation within the British Commonwealth of free nations but ready and able to co-operate with other American nations.

We are, I think, a nation strong enough to make co-operation with us worth while, both in peace and in war. Please don't believe it if any one tells you that we are just a few frozen farmers and trappers huddled in igloos around the North Pole, emerging periodically to produce wheat, hockey players, quintuplets. During the last war more than a million of our men volunteered to fight. We produced everything needed for modern war from four-engined bombers to uranium. We gave to our Allies under Mutual Aid, our form of Lend-Lease, billions of dollars' worth of war supplies. We are now a strong industrial state.

In peace time, we are one of the five greatest trading nations of the world. You will be interested to know that our trade with the U.S.A., for instance, is greater than that of all Latin American countries combined.