

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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An address by the Governor General, His Excellency the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, to the Rotary Club, St. John's Newfoundland, August 22, 1955.

... I am delighted to find myself once again in this hospitable island and this time I have not come simply to slip into St. John's and out again. I am going to the outports -- a word full of fascinating implications for a Canadian from the interior of our country. I am going to the outports. I am going to see the borders of this great land and the deep fiords which ring its coast where, as an English visitor says "almost anywhere you could safely tie the 'Queen Elizabeth' to a tree and go ashore for a beer"! When I return I hope to have a clearer, a more vivid picture of this tenth Province welcomed so gladly by Canadians as the youngest and the oldest part of Canada. And I am hoping to learn perhaps what Newfoundlanders think of continental Canada as a new and I fear a rather noisy addition to the oldest colony in the Empire. You are older than we. In joining yourselves to us you have increased our age as well as our stature. And you have noble traditions, a special and characteristic way of life, a way that belongs to the island and to the ocean, to the stern ways of the sea rather than to the turbulent expansionism of the continental land mass on which for so long you quietly and not uncourteously turned your back.

You doubtless feel that your own ways are finer and better. Better at least for you, and not to be boiled down in the continental melting pot. I hope you do feel this. I hope you will keep your good old ways, along with your good manners, your good speech and your good names. And, may I say, in keeping them you will not only be good Newfoundlanders; you will be good Canadians. Canada is not a continental melting pot. Canada is an association of peoples who have, and cherish, great differences but who work together because they can respect themselves and each other.

I have said that Newfoundland is marked by strong individual qualities. There are, of course, various parts of Canada which possess such characteristics -- regional communities in which people have much in common in their local history, the occupations they pursue and the ambitions they share. Canada is so large that often these regions are widely separated, not only in miles but in mutual knowledge. As I thread my way through our intricate and absorbing national pattern -- I have travelled about 80,000 miles in the last three years -- I have got to know a number of these regional communities with their strong characteristics and special loyalties. One of the duties of my post, I believe, is to tell people in one part of our country something about what their fellow-citizens are doing elsewhere and perhaps far away.