



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 52/6

THE NORTH ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

Text of an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, delivered at a meeting of the Commercial Club at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on January 26, 1952.

You undoubtedly have heard of the elderly member of the British House of Lords who dreamt that he was making a speech in that august chamber, and then woke up and found that he was. Well, I have dreamt for a long time of the day when I would be able to speak in Halifax. Now I am awake and speaking. I hope the result will not be to put you to sleep!

I am, for the time being, the member of the Government whose special ministerial responsibility is External Affairs and the international relations of our country. The work of a Foreign Office and the diplomatic service was once considered to be somewhat glamorous and not too exacting. The glamour has departed (there is nothing romantic about being called a pig by Mr. Vishinsky), and any leisure that might have once existed has gone too. Furthermore, the curtain of mystery that previously surrounded diplomacy and foreign relations, sometimes with deplorable results - but sometimes with good - has been torn away. The green baize table, the subdued lights, the formal attire, and the courteous confidential consultations in the conference room have been replaced by the United Nations committee with its business-suited members wrangling, sometimes violently, not only in front of 200 or 300 newspapermen, which is terrifying enough, but in front of a battery of television cameras, which is far worse.

I am not sure that we haven't overdone our deep rooted suspicion of secret diplomacy. I base my feeling on my experiences of the other kind during the last five or six years. Calm and quiet and confidential deliberation could usefully be tried in connection with some of the problems that face the world today. But I am not too sanguine that we will be given the opportunity. The Russians, who are secretive enough in other respects, have now become for propaganda purposes, the ardent champions of open covenants openly arrived at; or, rather, open covenants, openly argued - because we don't arrive at many; at least many which are unanimously accepted.

There is another change in diplomacy which affects even the international relations of the smallest countries. In 1952 quite literally "the world is our parish", and everything that happens, from Cape Resolution to Cape Horn, or from Korea to the Azores, has some interest and importance for every country, and that includes Canada.