

*Pandit Nehru***Appendix A**

ADDRESS

of

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*Prime Minister of India*

to

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

in the

HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER, OTTAWA

on

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1949

The Prime Minister of India was welcomed by the Right Honourable L. S. St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada, and thanked by the Honourable Elie Beauregard, Speaker of the Senate, and the Honourable W. Ross Macdonald, Speaker of the House of Commons.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister of Canada): Mr. Prime Minister; fellow members of the houses of parliament: Our country is indeed honoured to have as its guest on this occasion the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Nehru. As Prime Minister of a sister member nation of the commonwealth I find it a most welcome and agreeable duty to extend to you, Mr. Nehru, a very warm welcome to this parliament and to Canada. You come to us, both as one whose deeds and thoughts have commanded widespread attention in these troubled times, and as a most distinguished leader of that great portion of mankind which constitutes the population of India.

I extend also a cordial welcome to the sister of our distinguished guest, Mrs. Pandit, who at present represents India as ambassador to the United States, and to Mr. Nehru's daughter, Mrs. Gandhi, whom it is also a pleasure to have with us on this occasion.

Just six months ago I was happy to announce in this house the understanding reached in London with regard to the continuance of India as a full member of the commonwealth in the event that India should become a republic. It was not only the peoples of the commonwealth who had waited to learn the outcome of the discussions. Others were watching, too; for much hung

in the balance for the three new Asian members which as separate units had joined the family of the commonwealth of nations in 1947. Each was heir to an ancient civilization. Each was inspired by a strong national consciousness and by a great vision of the future as a member in its own right of the international community. Each, moreover, was keenly aware of problems at home and of difficulties in the world at large. Each felt it had a contribution to make in its own way, suited to the genius as well as to the needs of its people.

We in Canada feel that we have been able to achieve some understanding of these things, distant though we are from the great Indian subcontinent. When India, the largest and most populous of these new states, reached the stage where its desires with regard to its constitution prompted it to settle its future status in relation to other commonwealth countries, most people in Canada realized, I think, that the constitution of India was of course a matter for the Indian people to decide for themselves. At the same time we felt that any reasonable arrangement providing for the full membership of India in the commonwealth as a republic, if that form of constitution should be India's wish, would be welcome.