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THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE WORLD TODAY

An address by Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada, delivered to the Canada Club in London, England, on January 8, 1951.

I am grateful to the Canada Club for providing me with this occasion to make my first speech in the United Kingdom since I became Prime Minister of Canada. The Canada Club is an influential informal link between Canada and Great Britain and I am glad to have the opportunity to express the appreciation we in Ottawa feel for its service to both countries.

I cannot help pausing here to say how valuable these informal links between free countries really are. These free and unofficial associations are, in fact, one of the many tangible evidences of the freedom which we enjoy and which, I fear, is denied to those who live under any form of totalitarian rule.

And freedom everywhere in the world seems to be in jeopardy today. In the present state of the world, the very existence of freedom seems to depend on the freedom-loving nations being prepared to stand together to help each other in its defence.

In the past year or so we have got into the way of speaking of the "cold war" between the free world and the other world behind the so-called "iron curtain". But cold or not so cold, none of the nations in the free world wants any kind of war.

Certainly no nation in the Commonwealth wants war. We have no aggressive designs against any other people; and we have always been ready to co-operate, even with the nations behind the iron curtain for peaceful ends; we would be glad of any honourable arrangement "to live and let live". But we want to live our own lives in our own way, and most of us have been forced to the conclusion that we are not going to be allowed to live our lives in our own way unless we have the strength to defend our fight to do so.

That was why Canada joined with her neighbours in the North Atlantic region to build up our combined defences. We felt the combination of our strength was necessary to deter aggression; that a mutual security pact was essential to ensure peace.

I do not need to remind you that the North Atlantic Treaty was concluded because we in the North Atlantic region felt we could not find the immediate security we had hoped for in the United Nations. But we have never given up hope in the ultimate success of that universal organization. If we can prevent the peace from being broken in the North Atlantic region, that will help to protect the growth and development of the United Nations.