

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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HEMISPHERE AND GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Address by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker,
Kiwanis International Convention, Toronto,
July 3, 1961.

This Convention shows the strength of the common dedication to freedom which unites Kiwanians in Canada and in the United States. Kiwanians believe that neither nation can fulfil its destiny in isolation from the other, and that neither nation can make its full contribution to freedom, except in partnership with the other.

Embracing the greater part of the continent of North America is a powerful nation, strong economically, which in less than 25 years has assumed world responsibility, and adjacent to it a nation, one-tenth its population, but no less unselfish over the years in the defence of justice and freedom and in providing assistance to needy people.

These very differences in power explain many common problems and lead to misunderstandings. There are those who assume, as if it were an article of faith, that the weaker must always support and advocate the courses of action adopted by the stronger. At the other extreme are those whose automatic response in almost any situation is to disagree.

Kiwanis has done much not only to strengthen friendship and understanding between our countries and to commemorate historic events. It erected a memorial in 1935 on the old British Legation site in Washington as a tribute to the signing of the Rush-Bagot Agreement in 1817, the Agreement which set limits to the size of armed naval forces on the Great Lakes. It must have seemed unbelievable at the time of the Rush-Bagot Agreement that the events of war so fresh in memory could ever be forgotten: the destruction of the public buildings of the city of Toronto, the burning of the White House in Washington, and the threats of a "war of extermination".

There have been serious difficulties since, but in mutual understanding the United States and Canada have become unswerving friends and the closest of partners in freedom's camp. That friendship and partnership requires constant attention, mutual respect and understanding, and the exercise of tolerance and common sense.