

CANADA: A GROWING POWER IN A SHRINKING WORLD

Speech by the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. A.D.P. Heeney, to the Commonwealth Club of California, at San Francisco, March 19, 1954.

Unless I am mistaken, this is the first time that a Canadian Ambassador has paid an official visit to San Francisco. I am therefore particularly pleased to be in your city and to be appearing before this famous Club. Already I have been made to feel very much at home. But no Canadian could long feel a stranger in a city whose past is so dominated by great railroad builders and by hardy and lucky prospectors. Indeed, were it not for the difference in the climate, many of our new and rapidly growing frontier towns would not be wholly unlike what I imagine San Francisco to have been a hundred years ago.

I know that many of you are well acquainted with Canada. But it may be that, viewed from here in San Francisco, much of the country I represent seems to some of you almost as blank as the waste spaces on the old maps on which helpless cartographers could only write, "Here be bears!" If I may, I should like to try to fill in for you some of the blanks on the map of Canada, 1954.

All of us, I think, are prone to entertain stereotypes which do not always represent accurately the present reality. This is true of people; it is true of countries. Perhaps it would serve to shake the stereotypes some of you may have about Canada and help to present a more accurate picture if I were to mention a few completely unrelated things that Canadians are doing. My brief series of shots might begin with an out-of-the-way plant in northern Ontario. If you were to turn off the main road and were provided with the proper passes, after going a little way through the bush, you would be admitted to an atomic energy plant that contains one of the most advanced reactors in the world. This is the Canadian Government plant at Chalk River. It was designed and constructed, and is operated by Canadian scientists and technicians. The white-coated and rubber-gloved scientists who move as quietly and efficiently as surgeons around the great pile, are as typical of Canada today as the prospectors who are still making exciting new strikes of uranium in northern Saskatchewan or in the Northwest Territories. . . . . Farther afield, if you were visiting your own American troops in Korea, you would find that one of the regimental combat teams that make up the United Nations forces there is Canadian. It has been in Korea for over three years, sharing in the bitter fighting as well as in the present uncertainties of that new and strange peninsular war. . . . . If your interests are in the theatre, you will know that for six weeks last summer in Stratford, Ontario -- a town of not more than 16,000 people in the midst of quiet farming country -- a Shakespearean festival was staged which brought critics and other visitors from all over the United States, and which moved the New York Times to say of one of the productions, that it was "superb".