



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of the Jonathan Peterson Lecture, by
the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Mr. L.B. Pearson, delivered at Town Hall,
New York, April 15, 1953.

It is a privilege for me to be asked - as a Canadian - to give the Jonathan Peterson lecture at Town Hall. This lecture series, which has included, in previous years, so many distinguished speakers, commemorates a great citizen of New York who, for his success in life, drew upon a rich heritage of character and achievement which reached far into the past and linked him with a long and distinguished record in public life of his forbears.

The lecture each year is devoted, in the terms of its endowment, to the promotion of a better understanding among the English-speaking peoples and to the advancement of those principles upon which modern English-speaking civilization rests - namely, respect for human personality, justice for all with individual freedom under law. These are principles of which we should keep reminding ourselves these days when there are so many pressures and persons that would deny them.

These are worthy aims, close to the hearts of English-speaking and, indeed, to all free peoples. You will know, of course, that in the neighbouring country from which I come, English is only one of our two official languages, and that in the General Assembly of the United Nations, over which I have been presiding, we have five official languages, to say nothing of the other languages spoken in the sixty countries which make up our membership. Today, therefore, I will interpret "English-speaking" in a liberal sense!

Language, after all, is only a rough guide to mutual understanding. At times a common language may even be a contributor to misunderstanding by making it too easy to read the less desirable headlines that are written, or to listen to the less complimentary things that are said.

In a talk which I gave at this same Town Hall some weeks ago, I spoke of the friendly partnership which existed between Canada and the United States, and I said:

"In some parts of the world where smaller countries lie next to more powerful neighbours, the dominant keynote is fear and subordination. In North America, it is friendship and confidence, founded on a free and fruitful association. Proximity arising from the facts of politics and geography can often breed mistrust. In the case of our two peoples, it has bred