

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 54/8 An address by the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, at a dinner given the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Konrad Adenauer, at Bonn, Germany, February 10, 1954.

Let me first say how glad I am to be here in Germany, to return the visit paid to my country last April by you, Mr. Chancellor. I should like to assure you that your visit to us was very much appreciated. To many Canadians I am sure it seemed a symbol of the new relationship which is developing so rapidly between our two countries. I am confident that you, Mr. Chancellor, sensed the feeling of welcome which pervaded the atmosphere of your visit.

This is my first visit to your country and I hope you will bear with me while I try to describe to you a few of my first impressions.

I am first of all very greatly impressed with the economic recovery and reconstruction to be seen on all sides. This feat, which is the more impressive because of the shortness of time it has taken to achieve it, is a tribute to the vigour and enterprise of the German people.

But more impressive than your economic recovery is what I think of as the spiritual recovery of Germany. Within a few years you have built the foundations of democracy and freedom, resurrected the traditional values of Christianity, and reintroduced a vigorous system of parliamentary governments. I sincerely hope that this rebuilding has been well done, and I am speaking for all Canadians when I express this hope.

The rebuilding of Germany has gone on in the midst of immense difficulties. The war cost the lives of very many of your young men. Many of your people lost their homes in the East and have crowded into the Federal Republic as refugees. Many others have fled into Western Germany from the terror that prevails in the part of Germany occupied by the Soviet Union.

In Berlin, the difficulties have been particularly great but the brave people of that city, aided from Western Germany and abroad, have kept the lamp of freedom burning brightly. It has become a symbol for the free world. I am proud that Canada since 1945 has maintained its connection with the people of Berlin through our representatives there. I am only sorry that I am unable to visit that great city on this trip.

Let us here express a tribute to the late Mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter, whose fortitude was an example for all freedom-loving people and whose sudden death was a great loss to his city, to Germany and to the free world.

We have followed with intense interest the evolution of the Republic of Western Germany. It is hard to realize that it only came into being in the year 1949 and that the First Bundestag met for the first time on the 7th day of September, 1949. You, Sir, became the first Chancellor of this newly-created state and only recently you have again been confirmed for the second time in that position.

During the lifetime of your first Parliament certain definite policies emerged. During that period Germany, through her government and Parliament, decided to become a member of the European Defence Community. The decision was taken that Germany's future lay in close association with the free powers of the West. In the recent elections you sought the approval of the German people for this policy. I think they clearly gave you their answer on September 6.

I would like to assure you that the Canadian people and the Government of Canada have been watching with careful interest and appreciation the great work of reconstruction and rehabilitation which the German people have been carrying out.

We know that what has happened here and is happening here will have a determining influence on the future course of world history.

We have known too much of war in our generation. Twice since 1914 we in Canada, have sent the best of our young men abroad to fight, and it is a sombre thought tonight that our men on both occasions fought against yours. I think that we cannot forget those dark times, nor should we, for they are a lesson to all of us. But I am sure I need not remind any audience in Germany today how terrible a catastrophe is war, nor how precious is peace and security.

It is to the preservation of peace and the maintenance of security that we must dedicate ourselves in these times. I believe that we are all firm in our agreement on this. Only in a secure world can we preserve the values of freedom and respect for human life, without which life loses its meaning. And only in a peaceful world can mankind progress towards the eradication of poverty, ignorance and distress.

With the end of the last great struggle, Canada in common with a majority of nations and all peoples hoped that we would move into an era of peace and understanding, an era in which the burden of armaments and threats and dangers of war could be lifted from the backs of mankind. It took us some time to realize that this was not to be and that the Soviet Union had a very different outlook. To protect our civilization from a return to the Dark Ages the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created. Canada was one of those countries which, from the first, felt the need for such a body.

I do not need to tell you that Canada stands squarely behind its commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. More than ten thousand of our soldiers and our airmen are in Europe, a majority of them in Germany, in fulfilment of our obligations to NATO.

These young Canadians, all of whom are volunteers, are here in our common defence. I believe their presence here as NATO troops, living among you, has contributed to a better understanding between our two peoples. I know we have appreciated the welcome they have received. We have also appreciated the assistance which the civilian population and German authorities at all levels of government have given us in facilitating the establishment here of these men and their families. Increasing numbers of dependents of our servicemen are coming to live in Germany. And I am confident that they will enjoy their stay here and that they will make friends and profit from the experience.

The new position which Germany is building for herself in Europe is, of course, of great interest to countries like mine which are co-operating in the common defence of Europe. In particular, we have watched the encouraging development of your relations with your western neighbours, and especially with France. In thinking of the relations between France and Germany, I am reminded of the history of my own country. At the outset Canada was colonized by France and later became a British possession. The growth of my country has to a great extent been shaped by the presence of these two large ethnic groups whose memories of the past and where aspirations and interests brought about many clashes. Our development to nationhood has not been achieved without strife and even bloodshed at times. The different races in Canada gradually came to realize that they must live together and they started to seek the things which joined them together rather than separated them. Today Canadians, whatever their race or religion and in whichever province they live, are co-operating as never before in our history. While a majority of the Canadian people are English-speaking, yet I stand here tonight as the Prime Minister of Canada and one who is proud to acknowledge that he comes from the French-speaking section of Canada and is of French and Irish origin. Our success in living with one another makes us believe that we should be able to live at peace with our neighbours and that peoples of different races and with differing interests can work together.

The European countries have made tremendous strides forward in the realization of the age-old dream of uniting Europe. By hard work and perseverance you have wrought marvels of reconstruction in your various countries and with assistance and encouragement from the newer countries across the seas you have re-established your industry and your commerce. In a number of different fields of endeavour you have joined with one another to act for the common good. The European Payments Union, the European Coal and Steel Community, the OEEC and inspiring evidence of the success with which you have pooled your resources and your skills.

It may be, however, that European unity in itself cannot be expected to furnish an answer to the problems that face Western Europe. Perhaps the time has now come to consider whether some of the steps towards closer integration, which we must take if our concept of civilization is not to perish, should be taken within the larger framework of the North Atlantic community. It would be difficult for me at this stage

to particularize. But I suggest that we should perhaps be seeking solutions to the problems continuing to face you of achieving greater unity in Europe in a wider context and possibly in pursuit of Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty. It has become increasingly clear, I think, to all members of the NATO and to those many countries who are associated with us throughout the free world that our very survival and our continued development in freedom and in peace depends upon our ability to look beyond national barriers and to make them somewhat less artificial and more satisfactory. We believe the proper solution to the economic, cultural and spiritual betterment of all free peoples is to be found in an ever closer integration of their activities and in a greater sharing of their endeavours. More particularly, many of us believe the peoples living about the great basin of the Atlantic Ocean might well seek the solution to their problems of economic betterment, political stability and self-defence in this closer integration of their national resources and of their machinery and government.

An interesting and important aspect of the new relationship between our countries is to be found in the steady flow of German immigrants to Canada. We welcome their arrival to our country where we have need of new citizens. These newcomers from your country bring with them the traditional and valuable aspects of German life -- cultural and religious values, a strong sense of the importance of the family, enterprise and a willingness to work with pride in a job well done. In Canada they are finding new opportunities and most of them have fitted very quickly into our way of life. Because there are greater opportunities in certain trades and for persons with special skills we have not found it possible to throw our doors wide open but we look forward to many more of your countrymen coming to settle in our land.

I think we share the belief that the strength of the free world depends to a large extent upon the economic prosperity of its members. Canadians are particularly interested in trade with Germany. Recent technical developments and discoveries in Canada have increased greatly our ability to furnish you with many of the products you need. We recognize the difficulties facing Germans who wish to buy our products, but are pleased that, through your increasing exports to dollar areas, Germany's improved dollar position is easing our trading relations. We welcome the efforts of German businessmen to expand the sale of German products in Canada, since we are well aware that your ability to buy from us depends to a great extent upon Canadian purchases of your products.

Ever since the war it has been the policy of the Canadian Government to work steadily towards the expansion of multilateral trade. We, therefore, attempted to take a full part in the discussion leading to GATT and we have tried to further the cause of greater freedom of international trade wherever the opportunity has presented itself. We welcome German participation in GATT and I feel sure we will find in your country a staunch supporter of the principles for which we have expressed our support.

Personally, I have a great interest in your system of government, which in so many respects resembles our own. We too have a federal system of government arising out of the desire of the people in various parts of Canada to manage part of the machinery of government for themselves. Our political parties, in the same way as yours, reflect the regional differences of the people of our country.

It is true to say that the institutions and interests our nations share in common are drawing our two peoples closer together. And in bringing our people towards a greater understanding, no one, I think, has made a greater contribution than you yourself, Mr. Chancellor and your ambassador to Canada, Dr. Werner Dankwort, who has been in residence in Ottawa since November 1951. It is my fervent hope that in some small way my visit to Germany may be regraded as an indication of the desire of the people of Canada to maintain and strengthen cordial relations between our two nations and thus contribute to our common goal of a happier world through peace and security among men of goodwill.

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