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An address by Mr. L. B. Pearson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Ottawa Branch of the Alumni Federation of the University of Toronto, January 11, 1947.

I have but recently returned from Washington, where I was Canadian Ambassador. It is, of course, a great sacrifice to give up the ease and luxury of diplomatic and Embassy life for the decent obscurity of the East Block. The exchange of the Ambassadorial limousine for the Rideau street car is also an unequal one, though the substitution of Mister for Excellency is, I must say, an improvement. One of the compensations held out to me in my new job was that, whereas an Ambassador has a lot of representational and oratorical work to do, a Civil Servant is supposed to remain, not only anonymous, but silent. Even this compensation, however, seems to be denied me tonight. That, of course, is my own fault as I could not resist the invitation to talk to fellow graduates of my own University, especially when that invitation was extended by my old friend, Wray Patterson.

The fact that we are all graduates of Canada's greatest University, and that many of you are old friends of mine, makes the ordeal by oratory easier and less fearful than it might otherwise be. That is a great comfort. A Varsity occasion is always one at which I feel at home. I think that my connection with the University of Toronto has been somewhat closer than that of most of its graduates. I have been both a student and a teacher at Toronto and acquired there a B.A., a "T", and a wife -- three distinctions which I prize most highly. As a matter of fact I taught my wife at the University for one year, and have been taught by her now for some nineteen; the balance is rapidly becoming even.

Those of us who are graduates of the University, especially those who live outside Toronto, should not weaken in its support, especially in these confused and disturbing days. I do not wish to exaggerate the value or the beauty of the old school tie. It is, however, true that a university cannot achieve its maximum usefulness in the community if it has not a body of loyal alumni behind it. Loyalty, however, means far more than a determination on the part of old grads to "fire" the football coach when the team has lost four games in a row. It is taking an active interest in the affairs of the university and giving it your help, financial and otherwise. In your case it lies also in persuading the best young brains in the community in which you live to enroll

at Toronto and in seeing that they are not lured away by the bucolic attractions of Queen's or the cosmopolitan allure of McGill!

If I have any criticism of our University at the moment, it is that it is too big - 18,500 students. I realize, however, that this is not anybody's fault. It is the result of the decision, above criticism in every respect, to give every returned man the chance which he deserves to catch up with his education. However, I hope that when these unusual conditions are over, Toronto will get back to reasonable proportions, that education will be less wholesale, and more retail. Twenty thousand students does not necessarily mean democracy in education. Democracy as applied to a University means, to my way of thinking, that while everyone who can pass the matriculation examination shall be allowed to enter, only the very best should be allowed to stay.

It is tempting on an occasion like this to reminisce about Varsity days, but I must try to remember that I am supposed to be talking about Canadian diplomacy. For me, it was an easy transition from the University to the External Affairs Department of the Government. I was teaching modern political history and coaching football, and that seemed to be a good combination for the practice of diplomacy, which might be described as history in action. I had spent a summer in Ottawa in 1927, where I came in touch with that great man, who, with our Prime Minister, was the architect of our External Affairs Service - I mean Dr. O.D. Skelton. He almost persuaded me to write the Civil Service examinations for the Department, but I was not quite sure when I returned to college that I wanted to do so. However, during the winter I gave a lecture in Toronto to a teacher's meeting on some international issue -- there were international issues in those days, too--and I was amazed to find two Toronto newspapers, the next day, reporting my talk under the following headlines: "Must cling closer to British Navy," says Toronto Professor, and the other "Must break away from British Empire," says Toronto Professor". I felt then that any person who could make a speech which could be interpreted in such diametrically opposite ways - both of course right - was wasting his time teaching and should be in diplomacy. I have been in it ever since.

Among the uninitiated, and that includes practically everybody, there is a very false conception of diplomacy and diplomats. I laboured under this misconception myself for many years. When very young, I had an unrealistically romantic idea of diplomacy in general and Ambassadors in particular. I thought of them in gaudy uniforms, with crimson sashes across their manly bosoms, dancing Viennese waltzes in crystal ballrooms, with beautiful ladies who invariably turned out to be spies and were always trying to worm secrets of vast importance out of their stuffed shirts. Then I became somewhat more adult, and discovered that diplomats, except on rare ceremonial occasions when they wore knee-breeches, dressed and acted like normal human beings, though somewhat more elegantly, and that their chief distinction lay in the fact that they could say "no" in such a way that it always sounded like "yes".

Then I became a diplomat myself, and learned that the members of my profession were, or should be, merely hard-working public servants, with a variety of tough jobs to do and with as much drudgery as drama to their work. In the public mind, however, the profession is still suspect. We are still supposed to be the "spats and striped-pants boys", whose main job is balancing tea cups. This is a fixed impression, I know, in the United States. It was effectively challenged by the recently resigned Secretary of State, Mr. Byrnes, in an appearance not long ago before a Congressional Committee in Washington. Mr. Byrnes, in reply to some sneers by the Congressmen at the virility of the diplomats in his State Department, replied that he had been in charge of that Department for

over a year, had never seen a spat, and that the only pair of striped pants he had noticed had been worn by a politician who had been trying to get a job as Ambassador.

There is another deep-rooted suspicion about diplomacy; that it is an esoteric science, based on guile and trickery, with Machiavelli as its prophet; that behind the elegant facade of gentility, top hats and tails, there are shocking examples of double-dealing and double-talk. There is, of course, the well-known cliché of Sir Henry Wootton that a diplomat is a gentleman sent abroad to lie for his country. There are the less known words of the writer, George Sand, who once said, "What shameful turpitude is covered by the pompous mantle of diplomacy." "These diplomats", she went on, "are the rulers imposed upon us, to whom are entrusted, without our being consulted, our fortunes and our lives; deep mysteries hover over our heads, but so high, so remote that our eyes cannot reach them; in wagers of which we know nothing, we are the stakes thrown down by invisible gamblers, silent spectres who smile majestically as they make note of our destinies in their pocket-books." That, I may add, was said in France many years ago. No Canadian need worry today about the mysteries of Canadian diplomacy hovering over his head.

It is an "open book" occupation. Practically anyone can get into it and become an Ambassador. I am a proof of that reassuring fact.

Canada's Department of External Affairs and the Diplomatic Service which it administers is a young creation of vigorous, but, I hope, healthy growth. When I joined the Department in 1928, it had 3 missions abroad: London, Washington and Paris. It now has missions in 22 countries and we are committed to the opening of 6 more. In 1928 our total staff at home and abroad was 145; in 1946 it is 671. The diplomatic staff numbered twenty in 1928. It is now one hundred and twenty-six, and they are, I assure you, a hard working lot. I think it is true to say that no foreign office in the world tries to do as much work, at home and abroad, with as small a staff as ours. Many of them are graduates of the University of Toronto, however, which may explain why we manage to get along. In Washington, for instance, there have been five Ministers or Ambassadors, four of whom were U. of T. graduates. Three of these taught history there!

During this period of origin and development, our Department has maintained the closest possible contact with and received invaluable help from the universities. In the War, for instance, we had a multitude of new duties thrust on us, at a time when we could not, of course, recruit young, able-bodied secretaries who had more important work to do. We called on the University faculties, and on women graduates for help, and that help saved us. Most of our professors have now gone back to their overcrowded classrooms, but I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank them for what they did, and to express the hope that they will benefit as much in their university work from their experience in External Affairs as we have done from their association with us. I cherish a hope of bringing them back to the Department from time to time for special temporary duties. They could well form a sort of reserve officers corps for our diplomatic army. I think that both the universities and the Department would benefit from this connection.

It is true that such a plan, if carried out, might give some additional ammunition to those of our critics who say that we are already mostly professors and Rhodes Scholars too far removed from the hard realities of the practical world. That we are men who have never had to meet a payroll! I am willing to admit that we have a goodly proportion of former academicians in our midst, but that proportion is decreasing each year as we build up our Service through recruitment by competitive

examination, and promotion from junior to senior ranks of those so recruited. I can assure you that the ex-service men we are now recruiting are practical enough to satisfy any factory foreman. I do not, however, admit that we have ever been remote from the business aspect of Canadian life. If we were, we would certainly be of little value to our Government and to our country.

The future growth and development of the Canadian Diplomatic Service, is, of course, a matter for Government decision. Our expansion, up to the present, has been dictated by our growth as a nation in the world, and has merely tried to keep pace with that growth. I, for one, have no illusion that Embassies and Legations abroad establish our international position, or indeed add to it. They are merely a reflection of that position. If our standing in the world is now high--and I think it is--that is due, first, to the men who built our nation and our national reputation on battlefields far away, and secondly, to the working men and women at home. They, and not officials, either diplomatic or otherwise, are the ones who have established Canada's status among the nations. To carry out the responsibilities of that status, we should, in my view, be represented abroad in all countries where our interests necessitate such representation. Diplomatic offices never should be a luxury established for considerations of prestige. They must justify themselves by the contribution they make to Canada's interests. On this basis, we should, I think, be represented worthily, but not extravagantly; with dignity, but without display.

It may be that further expansion, to cope with increasing duties, will be required. In some respects we have still not accepted all of our responsibilities as a Department charged with protecting the interests of Canadians abroad. For instance, in the U.S.A. we have only one consulate; in New York. The rest of the Canadian consular work is done for us by British Consuls. In border cities like Buffalo, and Detroit, a large proportion of the work of the British Consul is entirely Canadian. In due course, as we say in official intercourse, that situation will no doubt be corrected.

You will be interested to know that the Canadian diplomatic service is a bilingual one. Not primarily because English and French are the languages of diplomatic intercourse, but because they are the languages of Canada. There are no sectional or racial divisions in our service. One reason for this is that we now insist that our incoming Third Secretaries should be proficient, or become proficient in our two languages. Among other things this gives them a double voice at international conferences--and incidentally makes it unnecessary for them to stifle their heads with earphones for translations.

Posts in the Canadian Service, either at home or abroad (they are interchangeable), are now open to every young Canadian who can qualify by competitive examination to fill them, with a priority--as is proper--given to veterans. Furthermore, it is possible for a successful candidate without any advantages of wealth or position, to rise from Secretary to Ambassador in the Canadian Service. That it is possible, is shown by the fact that we already have several career Ambassadors who have done it. In at least one case that I know very intimately, the Ambassador has had to rely for his livelihood solely on his monthly pay cheque from the Government. In that important sense our diplomatic service is democratic. It is no preserve of the plutocracy and I hope never will become one.

It should not, in fact, be a preserve of any kind, even for those who enter by examination. There must be encouragement for the junior to rise to the top posts. But it should, I think, always be possible to bring in persons from outside who have special qualifications for specific jobs.

In the U.S. diplomatic service, the very top posts have rarely, if ever, been held by career men. That, I think, is not good for the morale of the service. On the other hand, the British diplomatic service is sometimes criticized as too much of a closed corporation of officials recruited from a limited class of persons. I think that the Canadian service, even in its brief existence, has given evidence that it will avoid these extremes. This will mean rejecting the view, on the one hand, that a man who has successfully manufactured safety pins can be equally successful in conducting delicate and complicated negotiations between governments; and, on the other, avoiding the equally dangerous delusion that because a man has not passed a Foreign Office examination and learned how to sign his letters, "I have the honour to be, Sir, with all truth and respect, your Lordship's humble obedient servant", he is therefore not qualified to manage an Embassy.

In some ways diplomacy is now more difficult and complicated; in others, easier and simpler than it used to be. A hundred years ago, an Ambassador in some posts was three months away from his foreign office and often had to make his own decisions on the spot. If wrong he could be fired, but not for three months! A Lord Stratford de Redcliffe at Constantinople, for instance in the middle of the last century, practically determined what British policy towards Turkey would be and advised his government accordingly. In this mechanically marvelous age, however, an Ambassador is never more than a few minutes away from his instructions and his instructors. It can be argued that he is merely the other end of a telephone wire; that all he has to do is to read and deliver a message: act as a Western Union boy running telegrams between governments. Not so. Whereas government a hundred years ago was a simple, one-cylinder science, an affair between monarchs and a handful of rulers, where issues were few, and developments slow, now government has become a hideous, complicated, swiftly moving mechanism, delicately poised on the base of a public opinion which a thousand different forces are trying to shift every hour.

This means that the policy making agencies of government, the repositories of the people's power and the people's will, with a dozen major problems facing them every hour, can determine policy only in broad outline, and their servants, the officials, are left to fill in details within the policies laid down, as well as to execute the decisions reached.

This development is seen in diplomacy and foreign affairs, as in other forms of government. It leaves ample room for the exercise of discretion and judgment (at least in democracies). At home, it imposes on the permanent Foreign Office official the duty of giving advice on a variety of difficult, complicated matters that affect the relations between governments. At the diplomatic mission abroad, there is the duty of interpreting and carrying out the instructions which in these busy days, have often, unavoidably, been decided and drafted in a hurry.

There are, of course, tricks to be learned in executing your instructions so that you may get the maximum result with the minimum of effort. I have been stationed both in London and in Washington, and a Canadian diplomat can attend no better school than our offices in those capitals. I must not give away trade secrets, but I hope I will not be misunderstood if I say that the methods which may be successful in Whitehall do not always work so well on Pennsylvania Avenue. The appeal to the mind, after a good luncheon at the Athenaeum Club, often makes the maximum impression in London where they have been exposed to the wiles of diplomats for a long time. In Washington, an appeal to the heart of an American official, after watching, together, a ball game, won by the home team, is sometimes effective in removing an obstacle to agreement. Not that the British are hard-hearted and the Americans soft-

headed! All I am trying to say is that the skilled diplomat has to adapt his methods to circumstances and to characters. But I must not proceed any further along these potentially embarrassing by-paths.

What about our post-war diplomacy generally? I venture to suggest the following principles as likely to govern its practice:

(1) It will become more and more concerned with trade and commerce. There are many reasons why I think this will be so, but I haven't time to relate them. In a word, an Ambassador will become more and more of a salesman and less and less of a bureaucrat. The morning coat is giving way to the business suit and that is a fine thing.

(2) Diplomacy will be conducted to an increasing extent in public and this should remove most of its remaining glamour. I'm not sure, myself, that this will necessarily be a good thing, if it is carried too far. I am a strong believer in open covenants, but I do not think they should always be openly arrived at. The hard and touchy business of hammering out the details of an international arrangement in Committee should normally, I think, be done in secret, where arguments can be advanced and withdrawn; points won and lost in a way which simply is not possible when every position taken, even tentatively, in the morning becomes a headline in the afternoon. There is nothing so difficult for a government to abandon as a headline. It may be better to have the detailed negotiation in private: the debates on principles and the final decision in public; and then everything that is agreed on to be signed, sealed, printed and broadcast. Full publicity, however, for every stage of a United Nations negotiation tends to play up the differences and to give the impression that modern diplomacy means free trade in insults. Certainly diplomacy, whether conducted in public or private, should not be permitted to degenerate into the tiresome bickering that not so long ago seemed to characterize its conduct. I am reminded of a story. (Story).

(3) A maximum of publicity does, however, help to ensure at least one thing: frankness, sincerity and straight talk. That is all to the good, for these should be the guiding principles of modern diplomatic practice. Frank talk may sometimes arouse irritation but it also removes suspicion born of secrecy and mystery. I remember the story of the diplomat at the Congress of Vienna who was so wily that everything he said was queried; every move he made was suspect. During the conference this diplomat suddenly died and when the news of his death was brought to the Austrian Foreign Minister, Metternich was seen to frown and mutter, "Now I wonder what he had in mind by that move."

Modern diplomacy is not so suspicious as that, nor should it operate on Bismarck's cynical theory, "Tell 'em the truth and they will never believe you."

Finally, it is quite clear that Canadian and other diplomacy in our post-war world is destined to be conducted largely within the arena of United Nations Conferences. The old days of secret meetings of the mighty few are over. The bowl is now completely transparent and is full of gold fish; big, medium and little. The era of a long drawn out succession of international conferences is on us and the waltzing, laughing diplomat of the Italian author has been replaced by the tired, bedraggled, brief case-carrying Canadian official, returning wearily to the Biltmore on the 2 A.M. suburban train after a 19-hours continuous session at Lake Success. The figures are revealing and somewhat frightening in so far as they affect our Department which is the one most concerned with international meetings. In 1928 we had to send representatives to 10 conferences, in 1939 to 18 and in 1946 to 95. In this last year 128 External Affairs officers were absent from their normal posts attending international conferences as delegates, alternates, advisors, or observers. We are in fact, of necessity developing in our service a group of international civil servants; a sort of permanent force of experts who are ready, at the drop of an Order-in-Council, to fly to

any part of the world and represent Canada either at a conference to make peace with Germany or one to suppress the traffic in obscene publications.

The fact that in 1947 there will be no day of the year when some international diplomatic gathering is not in session, is eloquent recognition of the interdependence of nations. Such meetings will be tiring, expensive in money and effort and their results will often be negative. But they seek to substitute co-operation for conflict, and as such, they deserve our full support. As to the expense; a few hours of war cost Canada more than all those 95 conferences that were held in 1946.

These are random observations on my vocation and, I'm afraid, are not very profound. I hope, however, that they will give you some idea of the nature of Canadian diplomacy in 1947. Our work is an inspiring one and a rewarding one in every way--except possibly in financial returns. We serve the state, and there is no prouder service for a Canadian. More than that, we serve Canada in one of the most important and challenging phases of its national life, in its relations with other countries. As such, we are privileged to work for the international community as well. The day has gone, or should have gone, when a citizen's loyalty to his own country, or a diplomat's loyalty to his own government, is enough. It must not now exclude loyalty to the whole community of nations. As our Prime Minister has said, "over all is humanity", and no person can be a good Canadian, certainly a good Canadian diplomat, who does not accept that dictum and act on it. There can be no permanent solution to the problem of the international anarchy of competing and suspicious national sovereignties, the breeding grounds of war, except by the development of this universal community within the United Nations; founded on law and backed by international force. Our own country has played a good part in the effort to realise this ideal. We in the diplomatic branch of the Civil Service are grateful for the opportunity of participating in that work and thereby making our small contribution to the establishment of a peace, worthy of the men who have died for it.

(22.1.47/m.p.)