



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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An address to the joint session of the Congress of the United States by the Governor General, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, May 4, 1954

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker
and Members of the Congress:

First may I thank you for the high compliment you have paid my country this morning, and for the warmth of your welcome which has touched me more than I can say. I feel deeply honoured that I should be asked to meet, on this occasion, the members of the two great legislative bodies assembled in this Chamber. I am conscious at this moment - and who would not be - of the relation between the course of world events and the decisions which are arrived at here. You have given me a rare privilege today, and I am grateful to you for it.

I feel no stranger in this city. I spent several very pleasant years here long ago, when my task was to set up the first diplomatic mission from Canada to your country, and my privilege to serve as envoy. This was when the nations of our Commonwealth commenced to send their own representatives abroad - first to this Capital - each concerned with his country's business but all looking on the same Sovereign as the head of the Commonwealth.

As Canadian Minister I bore credentials from our Sovereign. I now come to you again as a representative of the Crown - this time not in a post abroad but in one at home. "Governor General" is, perhaps, a misleading term. A person holding this office does not "govern". His functions, indeed, can easily be confused with those of governors in some other countries who, unlike him, are administrators. We, no less than yourselves, are of course a completely free and independent nation. Canada alone among the countries of the Americas is a constitutional monarchy. Under our system the Governor General represents the Sovereign, who is the Head of our Canadian state and with us, all actions in the field of Government, from the passing of legislation to the delivering of mail are performed, to quote the ancient phrase we use, "On Her Majesty's Service".

In June of last year, an event took place of high significance to us in Canada. In none of Her Majesty's realms was her Coronation celebrated with greater fervour. May I say that as your neighbours, we Canadians

were greatly touched by the deep and widespread interest displayed by the American people in this event. May I be permitted to convey to you the sincere appreciation of the Queen's subjects in Canada, for your sensitive understanding of a ceremony which meant so much to us and, we believe, much to the world.

On an occasion such as this, made possible by your graceful hospitality, one is reminded of all that our Commonwealth owes to you, and, indeed, has owed ever since you established your free republic here on this continent. The principles enshrined in your Declaration of Independence and in your Constitution were a challenge to the British peoples in the 18th Century, and since, to seek out the sources of their ancient freedom - sources from which we all have fed. Thus, you helped us to cultivate our own institutions under the Crown, which to us is a symbol of freedom and duty. We are grateful to you for aiding us in the Commonwealth to preserve and enrich our own way of life.

Even at the very beginning, the noble emotions inspired by the Declaration of the fathers of this Republic, and the solid framework of the Constitution which they built, were comprehended and welcomed by many in Great Britain. I belong to a Club in London - a stronghold of the Whigs in the 18th Century - many of whose members used to receive the news of General Washington's victories with undisguised satisfaction. One of them, indeed, boasted that he had drunk the General's health every night during the course of the war in America.

To say that you in the United States and we in Canada have much in common, is a venerable platitude. Living as we do side by side on the same Continent, our resemblances are many. We have, too, similar views on fundamental things. Among our common characteristics, one of the greatest, I believe, is our dislike of regimentation - our respect for the differences which lend colour to everyday existence. We believe that each man should lead his own life; that each group of men should preserve its own customs. It is not surprising, therefore, that for all that we have in common, you and we should each preserve certain habits and traditions which we cherish because they belong to us. We know it is not your wish to have on your borders a mere replica of your own country, but rather a self-respecting community faithful to its own ways. We are thus better neighbours, because self-respect is the key to respect for others. On our side of the border you will find a country in which parliamentary government has been, we believe, successfully married to a federal system; a country whose people cherish two languages and two cultures - English and French; a land which has inherited from its mother countries in the old world many forms and customs which have been happily fitted into life in the new. These ways of ours you respect because they are ours, just as we respect your ways because they are yours. Thus, in the words of the "Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation", which laid the foundation of our present concord as long ago as 1794, we

"promote a disposition favourable to
"friendship and good neighbourhood".

In Canada we are indeed fortunate in our neighbourhood. We have a warm-hearted neighbour. This your people have shown us over the years. There are countless bodies in this country in which, through your invitations, Canadians share membership with their American friends. We are not unmindful of what we owe to your great universities and foundations. Let me say, too, that we are ever conscious of the warmth of the hospitality we receive when we are your guests.

We have a powerful neighbour. Your massive strength, economic and military, excites a sense of wonder at its magnitude. The dedication of this power to the cause of freedom evokes the gratitude of all who love freedom everywhere. Your Canadian neighbours know that when you assumed the grave responsibilities you bear today, it was not of your choosing. And for what you have done, we honour you.

We have a friendly neighbour. There is no need to enlarge on the traditions of neighbourly good sense which for so long have marked our relations. We can only hope that they may be reflected elsewhere in this troubled world.

We are happy to think that we know you well. Countless Canadians have personal friends on this side of the border. Many of us have relatives here. It is, of course, natural that a small community should know more of a larger neighbour than that neighbour knows of it. We are getting to know each other better as the years pass. We welcome your visits to us. Often your objective may be the river or the forest, and we are happy to offer you a playground. But perhaps you will let me say that we would not have our visitors show too strong a preference for those parts of Canada which are not yet inhabited by Canadians! We should like you to know our people - what they do and how they do it. I would not, of course, suggest that you are aware of what is going on in Canada in the field of engineering and industry. Much of our development in these spheres, I need not say, is a result of your confidence in our future. Nowhere has our recent growth met with warmer acclaim than in this country. It is true that quite extraordinary things have happened of late in Canada, but we prefer sober adjectives with which to describe them. Our expansion has been rapid, but it is steady and it is built on sound realities. It is based on the character of our people and on the quality of our national life. It is based on a hardihood and spirit of adventure as remarkable as that shown by our first explorers; on the disciplined intellect of our men of science seeking out new horizons and knowledge and usefulness; on the devotion of our legislators working to fulfil the conscious vision of the Fathers of our Confederation who almost a hundred years ago came together to found a new nation. We believe that the Canada of today is not unworthy of inspection. I invite you to come and see us.

I have talked about ourselves as your neighbours. I have said little about ourselves as your partners. You and we work together in the international community. Along with kinsmen and friends across the seas, we are allies in defence of the things we value. And, if I may say so, I think that we in Canada, like you, have given proof that those values must be actively and zealously defended. In

the far north we are working with you to strengthen the defences of this continent on our territory and on yours. In Korea there has been, from an early stage, a Brigade Group of Canadian troops. They are now standing guard against the possibility of renewed attack. Twelve Squadrons of the Royal Canadian Air Force and a further Canadian Brigade Group are stationed in Europe. Such formations, I need hardly say, should naturally be related in our minds to the size of the population which provides them.

We are also supplying our European friends with mutual aid on a considerable scale. Canada, too, is giving help under the Colombo Plan to the countries of southern Asia. We believe - as you do - that the problems of our time cannot be solved by military strength alone. The line can be held only by the deployment of force, but the objective - peace - can be won only by the quality of infinite patience. In our collaboration, we may not always agree on every detail of the plans we must discuss together, but there is no difference between us on the fundamental aims which we pursue; we may differ now and then on the "hows" but never on the "whys". You may depend upon us as faithful friends and comrades.

S/C