



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Excerpts from a speech given at
Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.,
U.S.A., Sunday, June 8, 1958, by
Mr. John G. Diefenbaker, Prime
Minister of Canada

I am honoured to be admitted to the fellowship of Wesleyan College which, for more than a century and a quarter, has been in the forefront of outstanding colleges dedicated to the liberal arts and noted for their hospitality to freedom.

I regard it as an honour given not to me personally but to my country, whose relations with yours are unequalled anywhere among the nations...

With freedom challenged today in all parts of the world, and with the emphasis that is being placed on material things of defence and survival, there has developed in the conscience of many good and responsible people a demand that universities should endeavour to achieve a virtual monopoly of scientific training and research.

While the encouragement of science must receive emphatic support not only to meet the international emergency but to assure the continuing benefit of mankind, I am of those who believe that for the universities of the free world to forsake the encouragement of the spiritual things and enthrone the machine would be a course as dangerous as it would be short-sighted. To meet the challenge of the tyranny of Communism does not mean that we must adopt the techniques of its tyranny.

To repudiate emphasis on the things which make for the freedom of the human spirit, or to subvert education to materialistic purposes would, in the longer perspective, cause the irretrievable loss of freedom.

In my college days, science promised its uses for the benefit of mankind and humanity's golden age. Communism would make its use the moral cockpit of mankind, having adopted science as an essential means of dominating mankind.

The danger to mankind's survival was anticipated with prophetic accuracy by the Rt. Hon. Herbert Asquith, one of the First War Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom when, in 1920, he said:

"The experience of this war has made actual what was unimaginable before. But there are, or would be, if the old system were to continue, two new factors at work. The first and most obvious is the unexplored and still incalculable effect of the harnessing of science to the chariot of destruction. We have seen in these four years only the rudimentary application of methods and agencies unknown and undreamt of in the campaigns of the past. Science has in these matters not only said her last word; she is still lisping the alphabet of annihilation. If she is to be diverted for another 20 years into the further elaboration of the mechanism and chemistry of destruction, we may as well pray for the speediest possible return of the glacial epoch".

What would he have said today in this era of hydrogen bombs and atomic warheads and intercontinental missiles?

Scientific miracles have wrought fantastic changes in material well-being for mankind but science dare not be allowed to become the master of free men or freedom will perish...

Believing that the honour conferred on me is designed to be an honour to my country, I intend to speak to you on the importance of Canadian-American relations to the future of the free world, and the need of fostering and expanding the unity of our purpose in the cause of freedom.

Our two nations have a major mission for freedom; - the United States, with its vast industrial power and population and by the contribution that it has made in war for freedom and in peace so unselfishly given to the welfare of all nations, and Canada, with its vast mineral and other resources and by its equally proven devotion and sacrifice of 100,000 men in two world wars. We have much in common.

Our nations must stand together with other freedom-loving nations. Our two nations have an appointment with world destiny, for the shield of freedom requires not only the resolution of free men that springs from the sharing of common spiritual values which are the heritage of all free nations but as well the material strength of material resources with which our two countries have been singularly blessed. The unity of these two countries, therefore, a unity of purpose, is of importance not only to ourselves but to the nations of the free world.

Politically, Canada and the United States, while each drawing the inspiration of their political systems from Great Britain, have grown up by separate and different ways, one achieving its freedom and independence by revolution, the other by evolution -- the United States a Republic, while Canada, an equally sovereign nation, gives its allegiance to the mystic and intangible unity of the Crown in a Commonwealth of Nations joined by no agreement, and maintained by no compulsion, but by the common aspirations of independent people in all parts of the globe...

The Constitution of the United States, and our Constitution, written and unwritten, are based on the belief that law and authority derive from moral principles by which, and in no other way, can freedom and justice be achieved.

The United States owes much to the political genius of British peoples, and British peoples owe much to the wisdom of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Canada is indebted to Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, and others of your founders for the federal system of government which we borrowed and applied to the needs of our nation, and without which Canadian Confederation could not have been achieved.

The concept of the Commonwealth of Nations provides freedom and independence to each of its members, while giving to each the enrichment of a partnership in a family of nations global in extent. Few of our people realize that the concept upon which our Commonwealth was built was first enunciated in 1775 when the Olive Branch Petition was signed by forty-six members of the Continental Congress including Elijah Dyer, Roger Sherman and Silas O'Deane of Connecticut, as well as John Hancock, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Richard Lee and Thomas Jefferson, and presented to King George the Third.

All of the principles of the Statute of Westminster, which binds the Commonwealth together, were embodied in this Petition delivered to the British after the battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill had been fought. Had it been accepted it would have brought about the principles upon which the Commonwealth is now built. This was not to be but the ideas of the Founders of this nation, expressed in that petition, in the process of time have become the cornerstone of the Commonwealth.

As Nicholas Murray Butler said, some twenty-five years ago:

"It is one of the most astounding things in the history of government that these men off in this distant series of colonies, economically in their infancy, financially helpless and dependent, had the vision of organization which has come now

to all the British peoples So it is in the history of our race. Ideas, how slowly they travel; arguments, how slowly they are apprehended; action, how slowly it follows upon conviction".

Based on a common faith in and devotion to the same abiding principles of liberty and peace, the relationships between us constitute a model for mankind. And so they must remain. Now, and in the future, that need has been intensified by the developments of science in intercontinental ballistic missiles and Canada's strategic position as the neighbour of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

It is necessary for both of our nations to carefully examine that relationship, not only for the benefit of our respective countries, but for the contribution we can make in unity for all mankind.

There is a desire among the people of your country to understand not merely Canadian problems, but to understand Canada and Canadians.

I can assure you that there is a universal desire among Canadians to increase their understanding of the United States and to the end that our unity of purpose shall remain unimpaired.

In population the United States is ten times greater than Canada; economically the United States is about twenty times as strong. We live as it were as two families in the same house - one continent - in which one of the occupants is a giant, and with another giant just around the corner who does not share our views.

We have difficulties arising from our trade relations and in particular from the fact that while there has been a continuing unfavourable balance of trade for Canada over the years, in the last two or three years we have been purchasing from the United States more than a billion dollars a year more than the United States has purchased from us, and that in the disposal programme of agricultural products by the United States, Canada has been materially hurt economically.

A major source of difficulty has been the disposal programme of surplus farm products abroad which has had the effect during the last two or three years of detrimentally affecting Canada (which depends heavily on wheat exports) by way of barter deals and subsidized tied sales which in our opinion go beyond what is fair and competitive.

We are united in our defences both in Europe and in North America. We have recently entered into the NORAD Air Defence Agreement (which will come before the Canadian Parliament on Tuesday for approval) which is indicative of the co-operation necessary in the interests of survival for both of us and for freedom itself.

But unity in defence is not enough. We must re-inforce our defence action by economic collaboration.

The relations between our countries cannot be taken for granted. They require constructive, continuing and co-operative consideration. We will let you know when we have grievances, as you will let us know. Good relations are reciprocal. I want to reiterate that our attitude is not one of anti-Americanism but rather of pro-Canadianism. As the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sidney Smith) said recently, "True friendship cannot be wrecked by honest frankness".

One of the most encouraging signs of a desire to bring about the dissolution of potential difficulties between our countries was the action taken by the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs in issuing a special report on May 5 last on Canadian-American Relations which was prepared by Congressmen Brooks Hays of Arkansas and Frank N. Coffin of Maine.

The U.S.S.R. appears now to be directing its major attention to the weakening of the free world on the economic front. I believe that the nations of the free world will have to act co-operatively and effectively on economic matters, as they do in defence -- that the free nations will have to refrain from actions which will detrimentally weaken their partners in freedom's quest for freedom's survival anywhere in the world.

Just to mention a few of the things in respect of which an imaginative policy could be helpful...

To remove overhanging surpluses of wheat and our storable farm products and at the same time to assure that strategic reserves of these commodities will be available in Europe should war come.

The setting up of a NATO food bank would have a dual purpose in this regard and could also be used to assist food deficit nations when in need.

The problem of serious unemployment is another that must be met in the free world, for should it become general it would afford Communism its greatest impetus. Joint action to meet the problem would seem to be something worthy of consideration.

To meet the problem of the relations of our nations the Hays-Coffin Report suggested a Congressional Committee on Canadian Relations. I am sure that the Parliament of Canada would give the fullest consideration to the setting up of a similar committee of Canadian Parliamentarians who in periodic visits to our respective capitals would do much to achieve suggested solutions of recurring problems.

The benefits that will flow from such a joint meeting were very apparent in 1942 when, at a Parliamentary Conference at which I had the honour to preside, members of the Congress of the United States met in Conference for the first time with Canadian and Commonwealth Members of Parliament.

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