

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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"THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA IN THE POST WAR WORLD".

(Address by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Under-Secretary
of State for External Affairs at Convention
of Kiwanis International, Los Angeles, California,
June 8, 1948).

It is a great privilege, but a greater responsibility for a Canadian to speak on such an occasion and to such an audience as this. I am grateful for the privilege, but very doubtful of my ability to discharge the responsibility in a satisfactory way. I am not worried so much about the American part, the major part, of my audience. I have lived in this country long enough to know how tolerant and generous Kiwanis audiences are. They will, I am sure, make the necessary allowances. But I am nervous about the Canadian minority, who may be less charitable and more demanding. If they don't like what I say, they may persuade the government "to fire" me when I get back to Ottawa.

I have noticed, with very great satisfaction, that the first two objectives of Kiwanis for 1948 are: 1. To promote world peace through international understanding and preparedness, adequate to preserve free governments. 2. To proclaim the friendship of Canada and the United States as an outstanding example of international good will.

About the first, I may have something to say later. But I cannot mention the second without taking this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the work that Kiwanis has done in this field. I know something of that work, both through my sojourn at the Canadian Embassy in Washington and my occupancy of my present post. As a Canadian citizen, I can only say "thank you". As a Canadian official concerned with the relations between our two countries, I can assure you that Kiwanis' efforts to promote Canadian-American friendship and understanding makes the work of our department of government easier. It helps in a most effective way to create the right kind of public opinion, which is the only solid foundation, in a democratic state, for its international policy.

The strengthening of good relations between countries in a world which is suspicious, frightened and divided is now more vitally important than ever before - in a world where far too many states are too far removed from that concept of good neighbourhood which inspires our two countries.

The relations between Canada and the United States have always been considered as a model of international friendship and understanding. They are - of course. We have had a very long period of uninterrupted peace. We have fought together in two world wars. Our boundary is unguarded for 3,567 miles, though you might get a different impression if you tried to smuggle carrots or diamonds into Canada (they are almost of equal value these days), or if I tried to get past some United States immigration inspector who had discovered that I once was a member of the Young Radicals Basketball team at high school. The fact is that we feel at home in each other's country, which is, after all, the foundation of good neighbourhood. We should, for we are at home.

The intermingling of the populations of Canada and the United States is almost unprecedented in history. About 30,000,000 people cross our boundary in the course of a normal year. Some are going north in search of solitude and game; some south in search of noise and games. We cross and we often stay. So attractive, indeed, have been the flesh-pots and the cultural opportunities of the United States to Canadians, that almost one-third of all the people of Canadian descent now live in the United States. Why, in spite of these attractions, they could ever decide to leave Canada, I never will understand. For it is merely repeating the obvious to say that there is no country like Canada, not even the United States. When Canadians, however, are misguided enough to cross that border, and stay, they make no minority problem in the areas where they settle in the United States. They fit in without delay or difficulty, and become indistinguishable in a very short time from those who have been here since Plymouth Rock or Pocahontas.

They become university presidents, managing directors, movie and baseball players, clergymen and Kiwanians. They are, I suppose, the most easily assimilated of your immigrant groups; so much so that they do not form groups at all. I am afraid that it is easier to form a Slovenian or an Armenian Club in a United States city than a Canadian Club, because Canadians do not feel the same need for associations of that kind in a country which is so much like their own; and which they already know all about from radio, screen and magazine. Canadian-Americans (the hyphen doesn't divide, it unites) have no divided loyalties; or rather their sentimental feeling for their former country, Canada, does not prejudice their loyalty and duty to their new country, the United States. This is, of course, because they find many of the same basic things to which to be loyal here, that they had in Canada; the same way of life, the same emphasis on individual freedom under the law and the same spirit of democratic progress.

Nevertheless, the good relations between our two countries, the way in which they can co-operate to their mutual advantage in the sorry spectacle of our post-war world, must rest on something more solid and real than the friendly exchange of compliments and mutual back pats at joint celebrations. It must rest on information and not on ignorance; on real understanding, not on a casual appraisal; on an appreciation of our differences, as well as our similarities.

Canada and the United States were not always friends. They have passed through difficult periods of history. We have had our 125 years of peace; not because there was nothing to quarrel about, but because we spoke the same language even when we differed, and could always find a peaceful solution to our differences. Anyone can keep the peace when there is nothing to row about, but we have had our rows without wars, and that is something for pride. It might easily have been very different. Our boundary disputes, for instance, might have left a sour feeling of bitterness and defeat. We Canadians feel that we have lost out in these disputes, both to the United Kingdom and to the United States.

Take a look at a map of the Pacific Coast, and you will wonder why United States territory should straggle down like a wayward ribbon for hundreds of miles into British Columbia. That Panhandle, which of course should be ours, was taken from us by the United States in what we think was one of the most unjust arbitral awards in history. If that had happened in Europe, its sad heritage of national suspicions and racial hatreds, you can imagine what would have been the result. But in Canada, when the Panhandle is mentioned, no patriotic schoolboy stands to attention, salutes the flag, faces British Columbia and vows that some day that territory will be regained. We have more sense than that, and, in any event, I am afraid we are not big enough to regain it, even if we wished to.

Our relations, then, must be built on knowledge and understanding and not merely on sentiment. So far as knowledge is concerned, we Canadians have more to complain about than you. It is natural, however, that we should know more about you than you do about us. We are a small country, in population. Though short on quantity, we are, of course, long on quality: We have too few people and too much geography. Furthermore, it is only during recent years that we have gained complete constitutional control of our own affairs. Previously, we were lumped as colonials with "those British". What we do, or do not do, does not often make much difference to you. We are friendly and well disposed, and can be taken for granted. We do not normally even have enough nuisance value to command attention - until we begin to restrict the importation of oranges from California and vegetables from Texas.

We have little exotic appeal, except as lone trappers or indomitable Mounties. We are merely the country from which the hockey players and the cold waves come, and which provides occasional headlines when five babies are born to one mother, or a doctor discovers insulin or we uncover a nest of spies, or a new gold mine. We have, in fact, been lacking in colourful appeal, except possibly in Quebec, where the people, speaking another language, are different enough to be quaint and interesting to you. It is always exciting, of course, to try out your high school French, but if you did it in Toronto, Winnipeg or Vancouver, you would probably be answered in high school "American". Why, even politically and historically, we haven't much sex appeal. We change our governments - when we do change them - by general elections, which aren't, I fear, as exciting as yours, though conducted, we think, with much less fuss and waste motion and more efficiency. Certainly we have nothing that could compare with a Latin American revolution as a method of political change.

On the other hand, I assure you that we know all about you. You have made certain of that through films, radio, magazines, books and even speeches. Canadian cities are on the North American circuit and the North American wave length. Much of what we know gives us confidence and hope. Some things cause us anxiety, as I know they do you. We view your activities with a friendly but not a flatterer's eye. How can we help being worried, when we realize that on the foreign and domestic policies of this great, newly-awakened, reluctant giant, which has had world responsibilities imposed on it without its own contriving, depend to a great extent our own prosperity and our own hopes of peace.

It has been said that the British Empire was established in a fit of absence of mind. It is far more accurate to say that the power of the United States in the world, a power now decisive, was established against the will of Americans, who were quite content without it. But there it is, and there it will remain. Canada, like other countries, however at times feels a shade uneasy at the realization that her destiny lies to such a great extent in the hands of another country. At the same time, as the people who know you best, Canadians can tell the other peace-loving nations of their good fortune that this power is in the hands of a people who are decent, democratic and pacific; unambitious for imperial pomp or rule.

We are, then your closest neighbour, your most candid friend and your most constructive critic. It is therefore essential that we should have, not a better knowledge of you, we have that; but a better understanding of your problems, and appreciation of your motives and actions. You on your part, as I have said, should, I think, learn more about a country which is now of great importance to you, in war and peace.

Therefore, as a Canadian speaking the fellow-Americans, I would like to tell you something of our basic facts of life and how they affect you.

In the first place, and I apologize at having to mention it, for it shouldn't be necessary, we are no longer a dependent colony belonging to the British - or indeed to anybody else. We are an independent state inside a group of states, the Commonwealth of British Nations, all of which are as free as any other states to run their own affairs. This development, however, has been accomplished without drum beats or drama. You see, we got our independence without fighting the British, so possibly you may think there is something "phony" about it! The founders of our nation were staid Victorian gentlemen in frock-coats sitting around the conference table. We can't contribute a single general with flashing sword and prancing steed to our Fathers of Confederation. All very dull; but very effective.

Having achieved this independence recently - the last stage was the passing of the Statute of Westminster in 1931 - we have the sensitiveness of the debutante about our national appearance, and are inclined to get somewhat annoyed, if we are told that our colonial slip is showing!

We are not only sensitive, but proud of our Canadian nation. The motto "we ourselves" is out of place in this atomic age, but we hope that Canada will be able to stand on its own feet, without treading on other people's toes; leaning neither too much on Uncle Sam or John Bull, but marching with both, if they will only go in the same direction. However, I don't want to overdo this emphasis on our own independence. Partly because modern science and modern politics both make a mock of national boundaries and necessitate a complete re-examination of the doctrine of national sovereignty; partly because I don't wish to give too much support to the criticism of one of my fellow-countrymen who said that Canadians spent so much time trying to prove that they were neither British nor Americans that they had no time to be Canadians.

I will merely say, then, that you should consider us as a friendly but separate state, one whose people are close to you, in every way, but satisfied that it would be in no one's interest to confuse co-operation with absorption. Surely you don't want another 18 Senators!

I would like to mention something else; that we are a country with whom, I think, it is worth while to co-operate. We can offer you something that is not merely material or economic. We have our roots, you know, deep in Europe and have never severed those roots, though our branches swing wide in the North American air. We can, then, both in war and peace, be a useful northern bridge across the Atlantic between the new world and the old.

In war, we have shown that we can make an important contribution to the victory of free men over tyrants. One hundred thousand Canadians who lie in foreign fields are the tragic evidence that we have been ready to back our faith in a just cause even, when necessary, by the blood of our best. We have been at war for 10 years out of the last 34; something that makes us think hard about international problems. We have suffered, as you have, in the defence of ideals which have meant more to us than immediate comfort and ease.

In the second world war, we mobilised over a million men and us, a huge industrial machine which was able to make everything required for modern war - from a trigger to a tank; from atomic energy to jet propulsion. Compared with your own gigantic war effort, ours was relatively small, but there is no other state in this hemisphere which has made as great a wartime contribution to collective security as Canada. We will again play our part the forces of fighting democracy, if the stupidity of statesmen and the aggressive designs of totalitarian despots, make this necessary. But we have no illusions: we know that the next war may well be the last one; but in the wrong sense!

We know also that in this age of guided missiles and supersonic speed, the defence of our two countries must now be considered as a strategic whole. Both our governments have recognised this and the expression of that recognition is in our joint and co-operative defence arrangements.

There has been some criticism of those arrangements, naturally, by those whose aggressive designs might be checked by them. We expect that and we need not get too excited at malicious and false reports about far flung and provocative preparations for offensive war in the far north. The exaggeration of our very modest joint defence activities in the Arctic into a fort on every iceberg and an air base on every ice flow, would be amusing, if its purpose were not so mischievous. However, there has also been some criticism in Canada of our joint defence arrangements, by those who are worried lest this may mean that the United States is going to "take over" Canada through peace-time occupation of bases on Canadian territory. This fear springs from that sensitiveness which I have spoken about and is a natural and not unhealthy reaction of a vigorous people, proud of its own independent position. It was answered the other day in our House of Commons by our Minister for External Affairs when he said:

"Co-operative defensive arrangements with a neighbouring state need not of course be inconsistent with collective defence within the terms of the Charter of the United Nations. Such measures are, in the present circumstances that confront our two countries, normal and necessary. They infringe no rights, inside or outside Canada. I can assure the House on this point. There is no threat to the control of our own affairs in our collaboration with the United States on joint defence. The Canadian Government is aware of the sensitiveness of our people in this regard. The United States Government also is aware of it and respects it. It readily accepts the position laid down formally by ... the two Governments ... that all joint defence undertakings on Canadian territory - and they are of a very limited character with very few United States personnel involved - shall be under Canadian control."

It should not be thought, however, that the recognition of our strategic importance as a North American nation, situated in the air map between the two most powerful super-states, the U.S.A. - U.S.S.R., and its expression in joint defence arrangements with the U.S.A., mean that we would not like to extend such co-operative arrangements to other states; indeed to all other states. Having said that, I hope that this very modest and unofficial Canadian olive branch will not be seized on by the Tass agency or the Soviet radio as the apologetic opening of an open door; as a confession of sin and a plea for forgiveness. It merely means that we in Canada have never thought of our co-operative defence arrangements with the U.S.A. as anything for which we need apologize to anybody, or as either exclusive or aggressive.

Above all, we do not consider our closer co-operation with the United States as weakening in any way our intimate association with the nations of the British Commonwealth. That association is today based on no written agreements or treaties of any kind. It is based on a community of political and social ideals; on an adherence to a common doctrine of decency and liberty and tolerance in human behaviour and social organisation. Canada, now a free nation and I think a great country of the future, cherishes her position in that association, not because it is narrow, threatening, exclusive, but, on the contrary, because it is composed of peoples who, with those of the United States, can show the way to the only ultimate solution for the problem of peace and war, a Commonwealth of all nations.

Co-operation between the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A. - though of first importance - is, however, not enough, to ensure the defence of those values which are worth defending - even unto war. There should be collective strategy, and collective defence preparations on the part of all the democratic freedom-loving states. There should also be collective political defence against aggression on the widest possible basis.

Canada and the United States and other peaceful countries had once - and not so long ago - high hopes that this objective could be achieved through the United Nations. We know now - and the knowledge is distressing - that this is not now the case. In the present position of the world, with the unhappy division between East and West, between free democracy and revolutionary despotism, the United Nations cannot, in its present form, give security to anyone; to Arabs or Jews in Palestine, to Hindus or Moslems in Kashmir, to social democrats in Czechoslovakia or liberals in Spain. Every, or almost every, important political problem which now reaches the Security Council of the United Nations is considered by the Great Powers in the light of this two-world division. This has naturally resulted in frustration and futility, the symptom of which though not the cause, is the veto which paralyzes action in the Security Council. There is no point in fooling ourselves. In this case, let us avoid self-deception, the peculiar weakness of the Anglo-Saxon mind.

The United Nations, in its present form and in the present international situation, can guarantee nobody's security. This does not mean that we should scrap our international organization. Not at all. The United Nations has performed useful work in the social, economic and even in certain political fields. It remains, through its Assembly, the town-meeting of the world, even though its debates have on recent occasions tended to degenerate into ideological brawls. It is the world agency, through which we must try to organize prosperity and security; through arrangements which, if possible, will include every state. But if that is not possible, then it must be done through arrangements which will include those states in the United Nations who are able and willing to participate, and whose pacific purposes and non-aggressive policies have been demonstrated.

To make the U.N. effective at once as a universal security organization would require an amendment to its present Charter. Such an amendment would be subject to the veto and would get it. Well, what can be done? Over-ride the veto, and form a new organization with a new charter, with those who don't want to come in, staying out. I think, myself, that such a drastic step at this time is unnecessary and unwise. So does your Secretary of State, so I am in good company. It would mean a decisive and accepted final split between the democratic and the Soviet systems, with not an iron curtain, but an electrified barbed wire fence between them. But we must do something. We do not wish to lose our shirt while we are bathing in Lake Success, or to put it more prosaically, we cannot stand idly by an impotent United Nations and watch states fall one by one to the aggressor.

That would be suicidal folly as the recent past has shown. No nation - not even the most powerful nation - can be safe in that kind of anarchic world. Security cannot be guaranteed by national action alone, even on the part of the most powerful state. The Rhine is everybody's frontier now, or rivers farther west, and there are no little countries far away, whose fate, like Czechoslovakia's in 1938, means nothing to us. Nations therefore cannot safely rely on national aims or national arms alone. These have never in the past guaranteed more than an armed truce. On the other hand, reduction of armaments in the circumstances of the present would be a snare and delusion; an invitation to the aggressor to strike swiftly and with warning. Nor should our people be seduced into false security by signing pacts outlawing war which lull the deluded citizen into forgetfulness, and give him a feather duster as protection against a tank.

Security now can be found only in an association, or association of peaceful, but determined states, organized under the Charter of the United Nations, the members of which are willing to pool their arms and their resources for defence - who will not use those arms except in defence, but will not hesitate to use them when any member of the group is attacked. For this purpose they must be willing to surrender; no, to utilize, some of them

sovereign rights in the interest of their own greater security, which may mean, indeed will mean, the security of others. In the old days - and I mean the days before 1939 - this would have been a hard doctrine to accept. Those were the days of fire-proof houses, of communities safe in their isolation; when oceans gave immunity, and skies concealed no terror; when "atom" meant a football war cry and not a prelude to annihilation. Those were the days when we on this continent felt that we were being asked to produce the security which others would consume.

Well, the situation has changed and we have, I hope, changed with it. We know that Europe is the strategic frontier of America, and that America may be the path of attack against Europe. There is only one way to meet this menace, by accepting the doctrine that the security of one member of the group, is the security of all. Any Manchurian, Ethiopian or Belgian or Pole can prove the validity of that doctrine by his own experience to any citizen of Omaha or Galveston or Medicine Hat. It follows, then, that any attack on one member of the group is an attack on all and should be treated as such.

The United Nations Charter shows how this can be done, under Article 51, which recognizes the right of collective self-defence. Well, let's collect, and let's defend ourselves. Under this Article we can form an association of strong and free democracies which, inspired only by love of peace, will act as the best deterrent to war.

The Rio Inter-American pact already marks one such association. The Brussels Pact of Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg is another. But a wider and more powerful association than these is required to stop the aggressor. The resources of the new world must be added to the defensive determination of the old. But this should be done not merely by supplying arms and by giving guarantees. That smacks too much of an old-fashioned military alliance. It is not enough and it is too much. What is required is an association of Western European and Atlantic democracies under Article 51 of the Charter, every member of which will take on equal and reciprocal obligations for collective defence and mutual aid in war, and work together for freedom and prosperity in peace. By doing so we will confront reactionary and aggressive communism with the inescapable fact that our democratic system is not only better than theirs in peace, but stronger than theirs for war.

By building up this kind of association, for purposes sanctioned by the Charter of the United Nations, we can ensure a decisive superiority of power, physical, moral and economic power, on the side of those who do not believe in power, but are resolute in their determination to use it against those who would prevent peaceful progress.

The Canadian Government has already stated through its Prime Minister and its Secretary of State for External Affairs, its acceptance of this doctrine and given assurances of its will to co-operate with the United States in its translation into action. There are of course, difficulties in the way of doing this, difficulties which only the United States can overcome. It would not be appropriate for an outsider to tell you how this can be done - even if he knew. I have confidence, however, that it can and will be done. Yours is the major responsibility, because yours is the power, but you can count, I feel sure, on the support of your northern neighbour for any steady and consistent, firm and unprovocative policy to this great end.

It is not, however, merely in war and in the search for political security that co-operation between the United States and Canada is important. What about less dramatic things like trade?

Our economic importance to the United States is not always appreciated in this country. The extent and nature of Canada's natural resources - many of which are essential for your defence and are becoming scarce in your own country; the importance of Canada as a field for investment and development, where questions of confiscation and expropriation and political instability do not arise; all this should rouse and hold your interest. There are more U.S. dollars invested in Canada -- five billions of them -- than in any other part of the world. And those investments have been the most fruitful that United States investors have made in any foreign country.

Above all, our trade relations are of great and increasing importance. Canada is at the present time the third trading nation in the world. You exported to Canada in 1946 more United States' goods than to all the Latin American countries put together. Last year our 12½ millions bought from this country nearly 2 billions of dollars worth of goods and services. Your hundred and thirty-five millions, however, bought only 1 billion dollars worth of Canadian goods. You don't need to be an economist to see what that unbalance means to us. It has given us a headache, which we are trying to cure by remedies that we don't like; including restriction of U.S. imports.

The medicine is as bitter to us as it is to you, but it is not our fault that we have to take it. Another cause of this headache is that we have probably tried to do too much to help restore world trade and to reconstruct the war-shattered economy of Europe. During the war, we financed our own war effort and gave our allies in mutual aid relatively more than even you did under lend lease. Since the war, we have given help to Europe, in the form of outright relief or credits, to the extent of nearly 2 billions of dollars. This is, I know, small stuff in comparison with your astronomical figures, but it represents for us, in terms of relative national incomes, something like 32 billions of dollars.

Now, we didn't do this because we liked being Santa Claus. We did it from motives of intelligent self-interest, to help our European friends and customers back on their feet. That was a major Canadian as it was a major United States interest. Unfortunately, this process is taking longer than we expected; and not through anybody's fault. So with an unfavourable balance of trade with the United States in 1947, and Europe unable to pay cash for our exports, you can see that we are on a tough spot.

We are trying to get off that spot and build up our depleted dollar reserves by a programme of import restrictions from hard currency countries by putting our financial house in order so that we can again play our part in assisting European economy and in bringing the world back to the best kind of trade; multilateral trade with a minimum of barriers and restrictions between traders.

If this process succeeds, well and good. If it doesn't, Canada will have to give serious consideration to the whole pattern of her future economic and trading relationships. But whatever happens, we hope that we can make further progress in removing all unreasonable trade barriers between our own two countries. Between peoples like ours, such barriers have no justification and we should do away with them. But remember, please, in this connection those figures I have used, we buy 2 billions from you; you buy 1 billion from us.

Also, do not confuse freer trade with a customs union. They are very different things and arouse a very different reaction in the breast of Canadians who understand the difference. Most Canadians would, I think, not wish for any economic relationship which might weaken our own national position. That is a factor that should not be overlooked in any easy talk about a customs union. We have, as I have said, a strong faith and pride in the future of our country. Our resources are immense.

Our development is just beginning. We don't want to be "swallowed up" by even such a benevolent whale as the United States. I recall that in the classic swallow of all time, neither Jonah nor the whale was comfortable.

However, as a friend and neighbour, you can count on us to back you in all good causes. We know that we are tied closely to you and we wish it to be the tie that binds, and does not chafe. We have no delusions about our ability to stand alone in an uneasy and interdependent world. We realize that our future is bound up with the future not only of the United States, but of the United Kingdom, and the United Nations. For better or for worse, in sickness or in health, for richer or poorer we are wedded, bigamously, I fear, to London, Washington and Lake Success.

It is for us a shade ironical that, having just achieved national status and learned to walk on our own feet, we have learned also that we have to keep in step with others whose stride at times is a little longer than ours, and whose progress seems to us sometimes to be something less than direct. "Follow the leader" is not always an easy game for smaller nations to play these days.

May I just say this in conclusion and it gets me right back to where I started. The international picture is sombre. The hopes of San Francisco have been cruelly shattered. In this deteriorating and depressing situation however, there is one redeeming feature. In the face of the menace of aggressive communism, the free peoples are coming closer together. In that gathering together, the good-neighbourly relations between Canada and the United States should be both an example and an inspiration.

On our boundary line, between your Montana and our Alberta, there is a peace garden dedicated to the friendship between our two lands. In that garden is a tablet which reads:

"To God in His Glory, we two nations dedicate this garden, and pledge ourselves that as long as man shall live we will not take up arms against one another."

May that tablet, one day, be reproduced on every borderline between Nations, and may its message be written deep in the hearts of all men.