

GOVERNMENT



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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An address by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. J.G. Diefenbaker, at the Commencement Exercises of Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, on June 7, 1959.

... As I listened to those warm words of introduction, sir, I was particularly touched by the fact that they come from one whose contribution to the building of strong Canadian-American relations is recognized in every part of our country. We are appreciative of your contribution to the cause of international co-operation. You mentioned something of my interest in external affairs, and naturally when an opportunity such as this arises, you would expect me to say something in regard to our relations, going back over the years to those dark months in the summer of 1940 when the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada joined together in the Ogdensburg Declaration which established the Canadian-United States Joint Board on Defence. You, sir, have occupied a position on this Board since 1954 that has earned for you the appreciation and friendship of the people of Canada. In the discharge of your responsibilities you have made your contribution to the achievement of that peace so eloquently set forth in the invocation made here today.

We entered into that agreement. Yesterday, I was in the city of Prince Albert in northern Saskatchewan, and witnessed there an example of American-Canadian co-operation in the inauguration of a radar laboratory similar in kind and nature to the Lincoln Laboratory in Boston, Mass. When this joint Board was first formed, there were many who said that it would not last in the days of peace. They felt that, after all, it was merely a stopgap. They have been proven wrong in the intervening years, as we meet that challenge to which you referred, that is ever present in the hearts and souls of all of us.

John Foster Dulles

As this is the first occasion on which I have visited the United States since the death of John Foster Dulles, may I say this, on behalf of the Canadian people: we believe that in him we lost one who had been a friend to us and with us in the

darkest days, and in him the world lost at a critical time a great and a steadfast personality, ever vigilant in the defence of freedom.

And it is of that defence that I am going to speak today. Canada is the one country on the globe which lies between the United States of America on the one hand, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the other hand. What could be more deeply moving today than that this vast assembly should sing your national anthem and God Save the Queen, united as we have been in the darkest days of war? Today we are united at a time when it is so necessary that unity be maintained, realizing as we do something of the danger and the potential danger ahead.

That is one thing which we do not have to establish. The free world knows that there is fear in the hearts of men. We in Canada are a contiguous neighbour of these two countries, the United States and the U.S.S.R. We do not look to the south when we think of threats to peace.

We are joined together, endeavouring to achieve peace through the instrumentality of peaceful negotiations, realizing as rational human beings that we cannot accept as inevitable the thought of a world laid waste by nuclear warfare. On the other hand, we cannot deny that possibility. Contemplate it we must; accept it we cannot. One of the great things about our two nations is this: we realize this fact, as do the nations of the free world both in the Commonwealth and outside, that we must maintain sufficient military strength to deter any aggressor while at the same time, through the medium of diplomacy, we must endeavour to establish, step by step, the necessary foundation of international confidence.

Mutual Need

We have been able to do that. You mentioned, Mr. President, unity. We are joined together to share in co-operation the burden of defence on the North American continent through NORAD. We are joined within the framework of the larger North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We are joined because for the first time in history each is exposed to the possibility of crippling attack.

Canada by herself cannot provide adequate defence in a modern war. Each is needed by the other. Indeed, the United States of America, strong and powerful and carrying a mandate to all parts of the world, the hope of freedom to mankind, cannot on the North American continent defend itself effectively without Canadian co-operation and without defence facilities on Canadian territory. These are basic factors.

But there is more than that to our unity. There is the fact that our close relationship geographically, socially, and ideologically, makes it natural that we should join together,

for each of us has the common heritage of freedom, and the common aspiration for peace.

What I am going to do in the very few minutes that I have in which to speak to you is to tell you something of what we have in mind in our country. We look forward to the days ahead, to the attainment of that destiny to which you referred, sir. We believe that it is necessary for us in the fulfilment of our destiny to maintain and assert our sovereignty. We believe that can best be assured by co-operative arrangements which are designed to attain, first, survival, while at the same time, maintaining non-jeopardy of our political and economic destiny.

In other words, we are united with the United States in a realization that only in the maintenance of our unity is there the assurance of our survival. We are united, too, because we realize that the fantastic cost of modern weapons of war would impel us to be united in any event. Canada with its relatively small population could not afford the whole panoply of modern war.

Defence Production

We are united in air defence. We are united in a common idealism. We are united in a common geography. We are united in an integrated defence. Through our own volition, we have joined together to maintain those things which are of the essence in our respective countries. I feel this, and I say this in all sincerity, that it is essential that there be an equitable sharing of costs in the tasks of defence production, in the same manner as we share our co-operative defence measures.

I take the words of the former Prime Minister of Canada and the words of the former President of the United States in the Hyde Park Declaration, and I apply them to the situation today. In general, in mobilizing the resources of this continent, each country should provide the other with the defence articles it is best able to produce, and above all produce quickly, so that production programmes shall be co-ordinated to that end.

We continued that in 1950. The Government of the United States and the Government of Canada today are striving in that co-operation to make those agreements of 1941 and 1950 effective in practice. Significant progress has already been attained.

Recent changes by the United States in procurement arrangements made possible a greater opportunity for us in Canada to share in production of military equipment required by the armed forces of the United States. It was an encouraging development, and when implemented in greater measure will contribute to the better functioning of the defence partnership.

There must be unity in defence, unity also in defence procurement, and a new realization of the basis of our economic and commercial relations. Only by the maintenance of the strength of each of the various countries in the free world can we hope to maintain that certainty as to the future which after all is the reason that we are joined together in NATO, in NORAD, and in these other organizations.

Here I have an opportunity to say to the people of the United States something that more than anything else has had an effect on our thinking in Canada. We express our concern and our disapproval. We disagree in vigorous terms. It is equally true that the Government of the United States, going about its proper task of promoting American interests, does so with equal vigour. But whatever the vigour of the representations, it is matched by the determination of each of us to find solutions to our problems. Recently, an action was taken by the Government of the United States to remove the embargo on oil that had existed since July of 1957. That decision met with universal approval and appreciation in Canada. It was an example of that mutual forbearance, that understanding which is so needed to assure good will and co-operation.

Canada's Position

What of the future? Well, I have read some of the commentators recently, Mr. President. They have raised some unfounded misgivings concerning the position of Canada and the discharge of its international responsibilities. Let this be clear. There is not and has not been any neutralism in Canada's thinking or conduct. There is no weakening in our support for NATO. We believe that the member nations of NATO must remain strong in defence, and economically strong, ever watchful for progress that can lead to ultimate settlement of our difficulties and differences with the Soviets. That is the attitude of my country. That is the stand of our people. That is the attitude that I believe is inherent in the potentialities that are ours, as we look ahead into the future, sometimes most darkening.

Some weeks ago we had a visit from the military leader of the NATO forces, General Norstad. We heard him with pride speak of our Canadian soldiers and airmen serving under his command in Europe. This gives me the opportunity to say that Canada intends to maintain her forces there, so long as they are needed.

We make our respective contributions together. Together we realize that only in unity can there be survival.

To you, the new graduates today, I am not going to give advice, although if there is one who should be qualified to do so, it is a Prime Minister, because he gets advice on every subject under the sun. I give you no advice today.

I salute you, graduating at a time more challenging than ever before in history. I say to you this: whatever your field of endeavour may be, may you never cease to be participants, rather than spectators, in the world scene. May your motto be that ascribed to Lord Morley when it was said of him, he wasn't always right; he was sometimes on the wrong side, but he was never on the side of wrong.

I bring you the message that I received when in India a few months ago, a message that represents to me something of the embodiment of those things that are of the essence of freedom. It's the message to be found on the doorway of the Viceroy's home in India, today the home of the President. It says this: what should we do so that our country may become great. It asks those who read it to practice these particular qualities: in thought, faith; in words, wisdom; in deed, dedication; in life, service.

I say to you, sir, today, that needs to be the message too of the free world. Leaders must not waver in their understanding of the threat that faces freedom. We must not waver in the necessity of preserving unity in purpose and in defence. I am among those who believe that the price of freedom is co-operation; the prize of co-operation is freedom. What the free world nations stand to lose by failure to co-operate is freedom itself.

One hundred years ago, your forefathers recognized the principle that a house divided against itself cannot stand. That principle is as vital today in the world of freedom as it was in your nation in Lincoln's day and since.

Canada and the United States must stand together, stand in co-operation, in defence, in defense production, and in economic co-operation. I believe that they will, and that in the years ahead, generations yet unborn will look back and say of us that our fathers builded for us a world of peace and prosperity. In that day, co-operation was the price of peril; freedom was the prize. Thanks be to them, they builded better than they knew.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been deeply moved by this opportunity to speak and this privilege and this honour, and I say to you in conclusion, we in Canada realize the necessity of the maintenance of that spirit which is so characteristic of the welcome that I have received here in Michigan, first, from the President of this institution, secondly, in a telegram from the Governor of the State, and even beyond those things, that friendliness, that warm-heartedness, that generosity which has been accorded me this afternoon as I have met so many of the faculty.

All I can say is that in the years ahead I shall look back on this occasion. In this place made famous -- not every year, but in some years -- by your outstanding football team, I shall look back on this place and say it was worthwhile being here. Once again I shall feel that spirit, that dedication that is so apparent. To these graduates, to whom my congratulations and best wishes go to each, I say: may they be the architects of the future, for the preservation of that peace which is the dedication of our lives.

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