

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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FENCES

Speech by Mr. Sidney E. Smith, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the Kiwanis International Convention, Chicago, June 30, 1958.

Oftentimes as I ponder matters concerning relations between the United States and Canada my mind turns to a favourite poem by Robert Frost, which tells of a fence which has to be repaired at spring mending time, and the poet says:

"I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again."

You notice how the poet thinks of a fence which is jointly maintained by neighbours in friendly co-operation. Later the poet goes on to tell us that the neighbour has kept and respected his father's saying, "Good fences make good neighbours."

My picture of this fence shows it as built of carefully placed stones - a friendly appearing fence. On each side stands one of the neighbours on his own property, with a friendly hand extended across the fence. But neither neighbour, as I see it, would ever be sitting on the fence, either literally or figuratively. There is no place for someone who is a fence-sitter, someone who seeks to evade responsibility and to avoid facing life squarely and on his own two feet.

As the poet has done, I like to ponder whether good fences make good neighbours. It seems to me so much depends upon the neighbours; so much depends on the kind of fence. If they are unneighbourly neighbours, a fence separates them. If they are friendly neighbours, the fence becomes a meeting place where they can come and talk about their common interests and their common problems. The fence avoids arguments because it delineates where one man's property ends and the other's begins, and so there is that certainty and security in their relations which prevents the arguments and unpleasanties which otherwise might ensue. The fence permits to each a certain measure of privacy.

There are certain matters which belong peculiarly to each - not better and not worse than those of his neighbour, but different and distinctive. I suppose in many ways the characteristic of democracy is the right to be ourselves and, at the same time, to be different from our friends and neighbours. Under totalitarian philosophy each should be made from the same mould, bear the identical impress, have no distinctive characteristics of his own and no privacy. So I think that fences can be a symbol of some of the best things - things which we most cherish. As we talk about our two great countries, I would like you to picture with me this long borderline fence which forms the meeting point for good friends and neighbours as the nice country stone fence of the poet and not the high board spite fence of which we hear on other continents. The length of our friendly fence is not 4,000 miles of undefended border as often stated by orators. It is 3,987 miles, not including a distance of some 1,540 miles with Alaska.

There is one important thing to remember about the fence between Canada and the United States. It is a very low fence and it has many gates. Because it is not defended by watchdogs any more fierce than Customs and Immigration officers it has been possible, I find, for a whole horde of Canadian Kiwanians to descend upon Chicago to attend your meetings this week.

There is a very close association between the Department of External Affairs and Kiwanis International. Every year during April you celebrate "Goodwill Week" and it is our pleasure and opportunity to join with you at many of your clubs on these occasions. Indeed it is only a couple of months ago that I met with our Ambassador in Washington and Consuls from our various posts in the United States and discussed such problems as how, with our small numbers of staff, we could possibly cope with the large number of attractive invitations offered to us to celebrate "Goodwill Week". With several thousand Kiwanis clubs in the United States, it just is not possible for some thirty or forty officers to visit them all at the same time. A practical solution, of course, has in many instances been worked out by providing some of the productions of our National Film Board, of which we are very proud, and which help present Canada in beautiful and true colour. As a concrete suggestion, may I say that where co-ordination of requests has taken place within a district and it has been presented by the Lieutenant-Governor's office, it has cut down considerably on our administrative work and also, I believe, made it easier for us to meet your requests. I feel sure I am speaking for the United States Ambassador in Canada and his Consuls when I suggest that clubs in Canada give similar consideration to the practical aspects of the implementation of your praiseworthy annual "Goodwill Week".

Like the god Janus, Kiwanians have the capacity to look two ways at once!

I note that your convention theme this year is "Dedicated Community Service". It would be superfluous for me to comment on the remarkable success that you have already had in your endeavours to help your respective communities. I know your President has reviewed your achievements in his speech yesterday and that you are discussing these matters in your workshop meetings.

Closer, however, to my own personal responsibility is the other Kiwanian outlook - the one in which you look beyond the borders of your immediate community into possibilities of service to your state or province - beyond that again to areas of service to your nation, and then to the whole prospect of service to the cause of international goodwill, with more particular attention being paid to relations between the United States and Canada. Goodwill is not a sterile commodity. If you try to lock it up in a vault it withers and dies. By its very nature goodwill must grow and expand. Goodwill must have an objective toward which it is directed. So it is that goodwill among Kiwanis of its very nature leads you to look ever outward. I noticed in the Kiwanis magazine of several months ago that you described this convention as "a forum wherein Kiwanis examines its relationship to the community, the nation and the world". I assure you that no statement of objective could more endear you to one in my position than such a simple and direct formula as that.

It is of the very essence of our democracy that individuals should group themselves together in a voluntary organization such as Kiwanis in order to accomplish as a group what could not be done as individuals. You seek no government grant, no special privilege. Your views are not dictated by government. Your programmes are not in any way supervised by government. This heritage is far too often taken for granted because we do not see at close range the alternative to it. The strength of any government can be gauged by the strength of voluntary organizations in the nation. Individual members may put forward proposals and, as everywhere in a democracy, each of us enjoys the right to be wrong. As a matter of fact, I am sure that all of you will agree with me that in seeking the truth there are usually three sides - yours, mine and the actual truth. Indeed, in many voluntary organizations, although probably not in any of your branches, one can find the five-H man: you know, the man of whom all others say: "Heck, how he hates himself." Yet, all these people, whether they are right or wrong, or whether you or I agree with them, are permitted to put forward their views, which can then be examined on their merits, and each of us then is at liberty to come to our own conclusions. Out of your consideration of what is most important to you and what as Kiwanians you should do, may I again say how pleased I am that you have chosen to examine your relationship to the community, the nation and the world.

All of you are busy with your own problems of making a living, looking after your family and seeking to perform your responsibility as Kiwanians in performing some public service. I wonder if you have had an opportunity to picture the problems of government as being somewhat similar to those which you face in the allocation of your time. Government also has to look Janus-like in two directions at once. The more immediate and pressing responsibilities are bound to be those which have to do with local domestic interests. As a Member of Parliament it is my responsibility to look after the particular needs of my constituency. No matter how insignificant a particular project may appear by comparison with the most recent Soviet initiative, the interests of Canadians are, and must always be, my primary concern as Minister. But as with you, it is necessary for the government to look beyond the borders of its immediate community and somehow to reconcile its family or national interests with its international obligations. Mr. Dulles recently wrote: "We do not forget that every government has a primary duty to serve its own people. But usually that service can be best rendered by finding ways which help others also, or which at least do not hurt others". I have no doubt that you, from time to time, find that there is some conflict between your obligations and loyalties to your families and your duty to your community. Nevertheless, you must somehow or other reconcile the two, unless you are to become either a hermit on the one hand or be hauled into court for neglecting your family on the other. That is why you are Kiwanians - because you have the conviction that a full and useful life demands the reconciliation of your two loyalties.

You are the same person whether you are seen as head of the family (both husband and wife may take a bow with respect to this), or whether you are the person who is active in community work, or as one who serves his national interest. Indeed, the nation is made up of individuals who collectively create foreign policy. As an individual you may think you have very little influence in such affairs, yet if you look at it carefully it becomes obvious that unless you relinquish entirely your interest in public affairs (and as a Kiwanian you cannot do that), then you will have some small part in forming the foreign policy of your government. This being the case, you cannot shirk responsibility. I would not expect you to do that. Just as you have had to reconcile your family obligations with your community duty, so, somehow or other, you have to reconcile your national interests with the objectives of your foreign policy. If you fail to do this, the most obvious result will be schizophrenia.

It is very difficult for any of us to avoid being prejudiced on any question that arises. It is natural enough that each has his own point of view, conditioned by his past experience, his environment and his knowledge. One type of

prejudice, however, we can and should avoid. It is the prejudice which has been described as being "down on what you are not up on" - the prejudice arising from ignorance.

What objectives of foreign policy have we then? Some people would probably consider this a difficult question and one requiring a great deal of intricate and involved thinking. I would not agree. It seems to me that the answer which you would quickly give is simple and straightforward. Canadians and Americans alike basically seek two things: peace and prosperity. Do these objectives seem trite? I can only repeat the wisdom of a bygone day: "The new is not true, and the true is not new." Peace and prosperity.

The statement of our objectives is easy. The accomplishment of them is fraught with great difficulty. Indeed, the wisest of men and women have not been able to resolve the problem of how we achieve our objective. They have not been able to agree among themselves as to the best means of seeking their attainment. I suggest to you that the means by which each of us seeks to attain these objectives need not be identical. Quickly, however, I add that the means we use to seek our objectives must always be consistent with the objectives themselves. However, now and again someone with the best of intentions tells us to fight fire with fire. In the short run, such means may seem to be successful, but I urge you to question whether it can ever be adequate in the long run. So it is that the means whereby the peoples of the United States and Canada seek to achieve peace internationally have to a large degree coincided. We together have made use of the large machinery of the United Nations and of NATO and in these two organizations each has played its full part, and we may say with pride that we have had success in very large measure. Beyond these two organizations we in Canada have perhaps placed the accent upon our ability to be of assistance in maintaining peace through policing tense areas where we have provided personnel in Kashmir, in the Middle East, and the Indochinese states. The United States, on the other hand, as a great power, has assisted in keeping peace by entering into a series of alliances throughout the world. Once again, we joined together to overcome what might have been a more serious threat to the peace of the world in Korea. Together, today, we co-operate in the air defence of North America to protect the main deterrent to Soviet aggression and thereby we save not merely ourselves and our NATO allies but, indeed, the whole world from the fear of imminent danger.

What of our common objective, prosperity? We of course believe in the private enterprise system. At the same time we have to realize that in present-day circumstances the free play of the market has been greatly interfered with by governments. Taxes, subsidies, tariffs, quotas, labour legislation, social legislation of all kinds, provision of public works - all these have an effect upon costs of doing business and upon the freedom

of movement of goods. Accordingly, the government today has some responsibility to redress the effects of such measures as these and endeavour to provide for the two elements which we earlier agreed must exist together in our thinking. We must look after our own local community welfare and at the same time we must look abroad beyond the confines of our national borders to ensure that our prosperity is shared with our friends. Yes, we agree that I must be my brother's keeper, but the question always arises, "And who is my brother?" The practical implementation of our desire to determine who is our brother and how we should act toward him is by no means easy. However, I suggest to you that it requires as a fundamental precondition the utmost of goodwill and broadmindedness on the part not merely of those individuals who find themselves in official government positions but of all thinking citizens. Once again I repeat that foreign policy can in some small way be influenced by each one of you, Americans and Canadians alike. The goodwill and friendliness generated among Kiwanians can be projected into a sine qua non for reconciling local, national and international objectives in the field of trade as well as elsewhere. As a practical suggestion, you might wish to undertake in each of your communities a survey of what you produce and where its ultimate market is. I think that you may be surprised to find to what extent your own prosperity is linked with that of your neighbour.

Of one thing I would warn. We cannot expect perfect answers in a democracy. By very definition we are living, growing, changing, developing. There is independence of opinion and action. The challenge to us is to maintain our belief in the virtues of such seeming democratic anarchy and by our own self-discipline to retain our perspective. Our way of life does not depend upon strict regulation or rigid precept. Rather it is an indefinable state of mind which causes us to react voluntarily and cheerfully and with a recognition that there is a duty to our neighbour as well as to ourselves.

There is a certainty about a fence, and good neighbours do not seek to move it under cover of night or because of a passing caprice. So it must ever be with the fence which joins our two nations, for, particularly in commercial relations, certainty and confidence in your business associate and his willingness to stick to his bargain through thick and thin are most valuable qualities.

The long fence, the long boundary between our two countries, is, I am sure you will agree, a meeting-place where neighbours quietly and without emotionalism meet together frequently to compare notes, to discuss problems which they have in common, the dangers that threaten them from without. They talk over ways and means of doing business with one another so that each and his family may ever increasingly prosper. At the same time, each one's house is his castle, each one has his own back yard, the sons and daughters visit back and forth as do their parents -

this kind of fence presents no obstacle to friendship and co-operation. Domestic responsibilities do not prevent common action of neighbours in their joint interests, in the interests of the community as a whole. Once more, may I repeat how heartwarming it is to find a large group of representative members of the community with a twofold outlook. In one direction, Kiwanians look toward the betterment of their immediate family - the community in which they live; and in the other direction they look toward their state and province, their nation, and beyond that into the international field, seeking to achieve their ultimate objectives of peace and prosperity through such acceptable means as they can from time to time devise.

Sometimes it is difficult for us to co-operate with others in this uncertain world. It reminds me of the story of the young lad who was being asked by his father what he had learned in Sunday School. This boy, who showed, I must say, a remarkable degree of perspicacity, replied: "I was taught to love a lot of people that I can't like." It is easy to have a deep affection and concern for the members of your immediate family and for those who are closest to you and who, incidentally, are able to give you some return for your affection. Much more difficult, a distinguishing characteristic of personal and national maturity, is the ability to look abroad and to love even those people whom you cannot always like.

Among ourselves in the United States and Canada there is not much of a problem about liking one another. The ties of personal relationship, fraternal bonds, business associations, and just plain friendship are so many and so great that today any differences of view are approached in a spirit of candour and goodwill which is most refreshing. I do not pretend for a moment that there are no unresolved points of difficulty; there inevitably are, just as there are unresolved differences of view between individual persons within a country. The important thing is that the goodwill which has made it possible for us to resolve many problems in the past and to deal in a friendly manner with those problems which we now face, should grow and expand and not be smothered. I do not intend to discuss this evening some current questions that are under discussion, such as imports of oil, lead and zinc, wheat marketing and so forth. I hope that as between good neighbours each government will put forward its point of view and seek to get as near to what is fair and just as it is possible for human beings to do. Self restraint and self discipline on both sides are needed always for the settlement of disputes large or small.

In closing, may I say how happy we in Canada are that your President and Secretary of State will be visiting us next week. When we meet there will be much to talk over. Some people will refer to this as a summit meeting. How different it is from that other summit meeting about which so much has been said but far too little has been accomplished. When President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Diefenbaker meet, there will be real friendship

and cordiality and the common desire to reach agreement on any questions which may require consideration.

Once again, I thank you for having done me the Honour of inviting me to be present with you on this happy occasion. I cannot close without expressing my admiration of Chicago, this great metropolis of the Middle West. This is the bustling Middle West where, as Mark Twain once remarked, "One man is as good as another and a darn sight better." Here it is that man as an individual has long since been recognized as having a dignity and presence which is of the essence of democracy. Kiwanis have built on that concept. Kiwanis have flourished in that building. Kiwanis International is truly an organization for peace and prosperity. Maneat! Crescat! Floreat!

s/c
