

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 54/11 Speeches by the Prime Minister of India, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. St. Laurent, given at a banquet at New Delhi, India, February 23, 1954.

The Prime Minister, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, said:

"Mr. Prime Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, nearly half a century ago when I was very young in years, I remember reading a statement of an eminent statesman of England who was then the Secretary of State for India. Evidently some people in India had suggested or asked for self-Government for India and had probably mentioned Canada as a place which had achieved self-Government as a Dominion. In answer to that Lord Morley, that eminent statesman said that in Canada people wore fur-coats and a fur-coat was not a necessity to India. Therein, of course, Lord Morley did not exhibit that wide acquaintance with the world affairs that such an eminent person should have possessed, because fur-coats are known to be worn in India at particular seasons, in particular parts and there are certain parts of India where they are worn throughout the year.

In any event, you, Sir, come from the land of fur-coats but ours is a warmer climate and I need hardly say how welcome you are. But I mentioned this fur-coat incident because somehow it has stuck in my mind since then and I was reminded of it today thinking about Canada.

Three or four years ago I went to Canada and it was a great privilege to meet you, Sir, and your colleagues and many other people and above all to have the extreme friendliness of the people of Canada which made me feel as if I was not amongst strangers at all but among friends. I venture to think that during your two or three days here you have also experienced that feeling of being among friends and not wholly in an alien land. India and Canada are far apart, almost as far as any two countries can be. There are many differences, in climate, in background, in history. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we have progressively discovered more and more things which bring us together and which make us appreciate each other. Why is that so? Presumably because -- not because it so happened that we also use fur-coats occasionally -- but because of other things of the mind and the spirit which have drawn us nearer to one another, because even when we have differed in some particular matters, that has made no difference whatever to the fact that we had in a very large measure common objectives, common outlook and even to a considerable extent common ways of approach.

SIMILARITY IN DIVERSITY

I referred to an incident that happened 47 or 48 years ago. Since then much has happened and today you, Sir, visited our Parliament House and addressed our Members of Parliament and you observed, as you said

today in another place, that we have reminded you of your own Parliamentary institutions because after all they are modelled more or less in the same way. And not only in that but in so many other matters too our institutions are similar. Our ways of approach to many problems are also, if not very similar, at any rate not very far apart, and yet obviously conditions in Canada and conditions in India differ greatly. Our backgrounds differ, our history differs. Everything -- not everything but many things that have gradually moulded us in past ages are different from what has moulded the Canadian people. Here are those great differences and here is also that thing which makes us similar in many ways and so many common things between us. People talk about the East and the West. Perhaps it has some meaning but I have never been able wholly to grasp its meaning. In a few days time you will be leaving India and going east to Canada, not west. And so even geographically and much more so otherwise, these conceptions of East and West get rather mixed up and overlap and certain differences remain not of East and West but rather of the conditioning factors in the past which go to make a country or a race or a people and at the same time other factors in which make them come nearer to each other. It is not always true that countries that are very near to each other are necessarily similar or have much understanding of each other but anyhow today all of us are nearer to each other. During the past five or six years I have often met representatives of Canada, Prime Ministers -- you, Sir, and your predecessor Mr. Mackenzie King -- at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Those conferences as you said in another place, are unique in their own way, in the sense that every one there is completely independent and free to say or do what he likes in his own country or there and yet some invisible bond brings them together and makes them try to find the common ways. At these conferences, we always found, we who went from India that we were peculiarly close to Canada in spite of the fact that in many ways their approach may have been different. In fact, I hardly remember any occasion when, though we may have differed in some matters, there was any marked difference between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Prime Minister of India. In the United Nations also we have been close to many countries and we tried to be friendly with all. But there are few countries with whom we had such close contacts in our working at the United Nations as with Canada. That is rather unique and I do not quite know why that should be so. It is a very welcome thing. But why that should be so because after all the problems we face here are different and our backgrounds are different. Nevertheless, we found the kinship of spirit with the representatives of Canada there and elsewhere. I cannot explain it except that there was some kind of deeper understanding, deeper attempt to understand and a successful attempt to understand even though perhaps in some matters we could not wholly agree which was natural of course. And so it led me to think that perhaps what is almost more important than the final acceptance of another's viewpoint is that approach to understand not merely the outer meaning of the words but the inner significance. And if that earnest and friendly attempt is made some good result is bound to follow. There are many differences in the world today, differences which sometimes become rather

frightening. At the same time there are instances where these can be got over. And there are instances when even hostility has been succeeded by understanding and friendship. And perhaps one of the most notable instances is when India and Pakistan became independent countries after a long period of some kind of colonial or semi-colonial domination by the United Kingdom. It is a remarkable instance in history when after long generations of conflict, this question should be resolved in a friendly way, leaving practically no trace of ill will or bitterness behind. Apart from that being good in itself, it has always struck me as a sign and a reminder that one can solve the most difficult of problems in a friendly way if one approaches them in the right way. I have found this spirit of approach to these problems in a friendly and right way peculiarly in evidence in the statesmen who have represented Canada in the United Nations or elsewhere or even, if I may say so, in Delhi. And so it has been a very great pleasure for us during these years to cooperate with Canada in various fields of human activity and to grow progressively more and more to appreciate this friendly outlook of Canada, this friendly and tolerant outlook of Canada which holding fast to her own beliefs and conventions, can understand other's viewpoints too and where possible adapt itself to other's viewpoints. That is essentially a spirit of understanding and tolerance which takes us very far and which would take us very far in the solution of the world's problems if we applied it more and more.

To you, Sir, I can say little except that I have considered it my high privilege to have known you and to have your friendship. We have met each other in the course of the last few years on various occasions, not very much at leisure but always rather hustled by events and by our work. But even these brief occasions that I have had of meeting you, you have left on me a deep impress - I believe not only on me but on others from my country who have had the privilege of coming in contact with you and I believe that that opinion is shared by a very considerable number of my countrymen, in any event as a representative of a great country. There is something more than that about it. We have honoured you as a representative of a country with which as I said we have developed these closer bonds of understanding and we have honoured you as a man of high integrity, of high purpose and high endeavour. After all, it is more important what a man is than what a man says. All of us who are engaged in this game of politics say far too much, much too much, and sometimes maybe we contradict ourselves. But the important fact remains as to what we are, whether as an individual, a group or as a country and not what we go on repeating and saying. And sometimes perhaps the mere act of being conveys more than other forms of action.

So we have been very happy to welcome you here. For the last three years I have looked forward to your coming here and when I finally heard that you were coming that made me glad and it made many others happy also. I hope, in fact I am sure, that your visit here will leave in the minds of innumerable people in India the pleasantest memories not only about you, Sir, - that was inevitable - but also of Canada whom you represent so nobly.

The Prime Minister then proposed the toast of Right Hon'ble Louis S. St. Laurent.

Mr. St. Laurent said in reply:

There are no words to make you realise that I am moved at the honours that have been extended to me by the Prime Minister of this great nation. It is true that I have been looking forward to repay the visit with which the Prime Minister Nehru honoured us three or four years ago. When he came to our country I hope he felt that warmth of our affectionate feelings for himself and for the great people he represented sufficient to offset any climatic conditions that might have tempted him to secure a fur coat in our land. It is moving to be treated in the manner I have been treated in the last few days I have been here and in the next four or five days I will be privileged to be in this great land. Because after all when we come from the other side of the Atlantic and when we look at the vast areas of land and water, we feel Canada is a big country. But when we come to Asia we realise that our population is merely 15 million people and that we are received on a footing of this cordial and friendly equality by the Government of more free men and women than in any other country of the world. It is something which is apt to go to one's head when one finds here that great mass of world's population. One finds here also the evidence of the fact when we celebrate a centenary, even in Canada, we are celebrating a very short portion of that period during which intelligent men and women have produced extraordinary civilisations on this terrestrial globe.

I had a very interesting half an hour with an archaeologist here. He pointed out only a fraction of those things which he is studying so intently for many years and of which he is still, according to his conviction quite uncertain. Nevertheless, he pointed out the witnesses of several empires which have successively had their capitals in this Delhi area and which have succeeded each other and have left traces of techniques. But we of the New World are perhaps a little bit prone to think that we have invented everything. It confirms one in the impression that his own span of activity is relatively short but that the species go on and that even the families go on and that traditions of the past are constantly being added to by the accomplishments of the present day. And we had come with humility to these historic parts. We do realise that we are perhaps somewhat different. But we are apt to remember the two things said or written by Kipling. There was perhaps none of greater truth than what was expressed in this comment: "The colonel's lady and Bridget O'Grady are much the same under the skin".

I do not know if in the generations of the thousands of years in the past they had the fear that grips us, of the prospect of the terrible results of this control we have acquired from time to time over the great forces of nature. Perhaps it was so. It may have appeared to the first discoverers of fire that fire could bring about the destruction of everything and it may be that when we discovered electricity it and it may be that when we discovered electronics we were put to what terrible purposes electronics can be put. And there is no doubt that many of us are very terrified at the

was realised to what terrible purposes electronics can be put. And there is no doubt that many of us are very terrified at the prospects of the havoc and destruction that could be wrought by these atomic forces that men have now discovered.

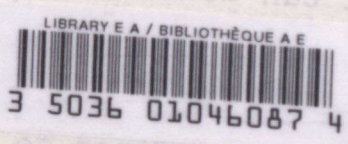
But after all most of us believe that it is not merely men who determine the course of human events and perhaps it may be permitted to continue the belief in the Greater Force than that of human intelligence that does design the destinies of mankind and permits us to discover only those forces that we can control with their likely use. The discovery of fire and electricity have given greater comfort and greater welfare to this world. And when we realise that these tremendous forces are at the disposal of all of us and that the attempt by any one of us to use them against a neighbour or a neighbouring State or even a distant nation would bring about the kind of retaliation that would mean the end of this 20th century and the end of civilization. I think that thought will be present among the factors that will influence the decisions that responsible men in nations of intelligent people will at any time have to make.

And I can assure the Prime Minister and the people of India that we enjoy their friendship, the warmth of their friendship. But we are very self-interested in our attempt to display our own friendship because we do realise that under present world conditions a cataclysm cannot be confined to any one country or even any one continent. And likewise we hope that welfare and prosperity and opportunities to derive benefit and satisfaction from the bounties of wise and All-seeing Providence will also be not the lot of any one country or any one continent. But that all can work together and share together the annual increment that nature makes it possible to derive from the bounties which are gradually being released and which we look upon as being new discoveries. But still when we see the existing fear, we begin to wonder if we are really making any discoveries.

For a country like mine, with a relatively small population, immense areas and immense resources which still are untapped, we find ourselves in much the same position as your great people of India. We have much to do and it cannot be done unless the world be at peace. We wish to do our share to keep the world at peace. We know it cannot be a large share but we know that it can be of the same quality, if not of the same quantity as that which will be done by the really great nations of the world. And we are beginning to realise that rather more than half of the people of the world have their homes in the continent of Asia. And I think it is a healthy thing for us to come to the realisation of that real fact because these problems have to be dealt with in a realistic way. And it will be very helpful to have realism in our concepts of what each of us can do, of what each of us should do. I can assure the Prime Minister that the people of Canada have all agreed about the right thing that I have attempted to do. When it was announced that I was going to repay the Prime Minister's visit to India, there was no dissenting voice throughout the whole Canadian

public and our public has sufficiently realised what will inevitably be the influence, of the peoples of the East on the destinies of a country in the northern half of the North American continent. People there were happy to learn of the visit of their ambassador of goodwill, as they put it, to express to the people of the East our appreciation of their importance in the course of the world events and our confidence that that influence would be exercised in such a way that we could go on and develop and put to use the bounties Providence has bestowed generously upon this vast area of the Northern America. And I will take back to my people even greater confidence in the prospects of the future. So I must thank you, Sir, for this embarrassingly cordial reception these great peoples are affording to their ambassador of goodwill during the few weeks we have been among the people of the East.

(Mr. St. Laurent then proposed the toast of the Prime Minister, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru.)



For a country like mine, with a relatively small population, immense areas and immense resources which still are untapped, we find ourselves in much the same position as your great people of India. We have much to do and it cannot be done unless the world be at peace. We want to do our share to keep the world as peace. We know it cannot be a large share but we know that it can be of the same quality, if not of the same quantity as that which will be done by the really great nations of the world. And we are beginning to realise that rather more than half of the people of the world have their homes in the continent of Asia. And I think it is a healthy thing for us to come to the realisation of that fact because these problems have to be dealt with in a realistic way. And it will be very helpful to have realism in our concepts of what each of us can do, of what each of us should do. I can assure the Prime Minister that the people of Canada have all agreed about the right thing that I have attempted to do. When it was announced that I was going to repay the Prime Minister's visit to India, there was no dissenting voice throughout the whole Canadian