



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## U. S. RELATIONS WITH CANADA

Text of an NBC broadcast in the series  
"Our Foreign Policy", January 15, 1946.

Participants: Mr. Hume Wrong, Canadian Ambassador to  
the United States;

Mr. Ray Atherton, United States  
Ambassador to Canada;

Mr. Sterling Fisher, Director of the  
NBC University of the Air.

ANNOUNCER: This is our Foreign Policy. On this broadcast we bring  
you Mr. Hume Wrong, Canadian Ambassador to the United States,  
in his first broadcast to the people of the United States since  
his arrival last month as Canada's official representative in  
Washington; Mr. Ray Atherton, United States Ambassador at  
Ottawa; and Mr. Sterling Fisher, Director of the NBC University  
of the Air. They will discuss relationships between two countries  
which are entirely independent yet are closer together, economically  
and spiritually, than any other two important nations in the  
world today. Mr. Fisher.

FISHER: With two prominent diplomats on this program, I suppose that  
our discussion this evening will reach new heights of politeness.

ATHERTON: That shows, Mr. Fisher, that you have not been following  
the newspaper accounts of diplomatic discussions during the past  
year or so.

WRONG: Yes, I am afraid that politeness is sometimes regarded as a horse-  
and-buggy attribute of diplomacy these days. I think, however,  
that you won't be faced with the problem of seeing that we are polite  
enough for radio standards. Mr. Atherton and I are old friends;

and we are not at an international conference tonight.

FISHER: However that may be, I hope that, despite being diplomats, both of you will talk very frankly on this program, so that at the end of it we shall have a better understanding of each other. Language, diplomatic or otherwise, can be a tricky thing. Starting with a common language however, it seems to me we ought to be able to arrive somewhere by the end of this program.

WRONG: You have asked for frankness, Mr. Fisher, and I am going to pick you up right there. You have forgotten that I represent a country that is bilingual. Please remember 50% of our population is of French origin. In the Province of Quebec alone there are several hundred thousand Canadians who can speak only French. Both English and French are spoken in the Parliament of Canada; official documents are printed in both languages; and on our national system programs are broadcast in both French and English.

ATHERTON: And when I am in Canada, I find myself speaking both your languages.

WRONG: I bring this up, Mr. Fisher, because it is a point which is often overlooked when our relations come up for discussion. It's overlooked just as naturally as you did just now when you said we had a common language. It's true. We do. But our other language, French, is important to all of us who are Canadians, and particularly to the Canadians who speak it.

FISHER: Well, I see that there are unsuspected hurdles on that undefended boundary line between us. I would like, before we get really underway, to mark out with you the areas we would like to try to cover in the time we have. For in-

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WRONG: You have asked for frankness, Mr. Fisher, and I am going to pick you up right there. You have forgotten that I represent a country that is bi-lingual. Please remember 30% of our population is of French origin. In the Province of Quebec alone there are several hundred thousand Canadians who can speak only French. Both English and French are spoken in the Parliament of Canada; official documents are printed in both languages; and on our national system programs are broadcast in both French and English.

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stance, joint defense. We, in this country, are intensely interested in this problem, Mr. Wrong. We would like to hear what you and Mr. Atherton have to say about it.

ATHERTON: All right - but joint defense is only one of the many mutual interests the United States shares with Canada.

WRONG: Yes, for instance economic ties between us are very important and contribute very materially to our understanding and sometimes our misunderstanding of each other. I think we should discuss them.

FISHER: First, returning to our famous boundary line, I should like to hear what both of you have to say about the flow of Canadians and Americans back and forth across the border.

WRONG: Now, Mr. Fisher, you are making me captious again. You said Canadians and Americans. But, of course, we Canadians are Americans too - North Americans. Some misguided people here still seem to think that our membership in the British Commonwealth makes us somehow not an American nation.

ATHERTON: May I add that, in the same way, your position in the British Commonwealth does not make you any less an independent nation.

WRONG: I'm glad you mentioned that. I actually still encounter occasionally in this country the absurd idea that Canada is really governed from London, pays taxes to London, and obediently does what it's told by London. We are certainly very good friends with the people of the United Kingdom. We share the King with them and the rest of the Commonwealth. But they no more dictate our decisions than we dictate theirs - or yours, for that matter. We declared war on Germany in 1939, a week after Great Britain. We even declared war on Japan a little ahead of either Great Britain or the United States. And we don't have to declare war on anybody if we don't wish to.

ATHERTON: Canada certainly is a major power, agriculturally and industrially, in her own right. She proved that during the war when her contribution to United Nations victory placed her very high among the democratic countries. No American who gets to know Canada at all well can possibly think of our northern neighbors as anything save a strong, friendly, sovereign state. If we take anything for granted about Canada - and I confess that Americans do take things for granted about Canada - we take that fact for granted.

FISHER: I think that is one reason why many people feel that Canadian-American relations are so difficult to get excited about.

WRONG: If that is so, why did you suggest a broadcast on them, Mr. Fisher? After all, we all know that there is a solid tie between us. When one thinks of the headlines we've been reading for years, one might say: happy the two countries whose relations keep off the front pages. Yet I imagine you'd like to have this subject on the front pages if you could.

FISHER: Of course. It would be a good model for an unhappy world to copy.

ATHERTON: It won't get on the front pages for the very reason you just gave, Mr. Wrong. Our relationship with Canada is so good it isn't news.

FISHER: If I remember correctly, however, there have been instances in our history when that was not true.

ATHERTON: It has taken more than a hundred years to reach our present sympathetic understanding, Mr. Fisher. But that doesn't mean we can afford to sit back and take that relationship too much for granted.

FISHER: Of course there are certain pretty deep economic reasons for that relationship, aren't there? It seems to me there are some striking facts about our inter-dependence economically.

ATHERTON: There are. The bread and butter of a lot of us on both sides of the border depend on our trade. Our trade with Canada is greater than that with any other nation. It is the greatest volume of international trade carried on between any two countries in the world.

FISHER: I should be inclined to think that we would go a long way to keep that position, especially after we've seen what happens when you fight about that sort of question.

WRONG: You'd think that now. We all think it and believe it. But not so long ago, we didn't.

ATHERTON: We haven't always made the most intelligent use of our common border, Mr. Fisher. I think it would be true to say that for many years trade and investment between the United States and Canada flourished in spite of - not because of - support. We raised tariffs on each other. We devised restrictions on the movement of persons. We did the best we could to deny the facts of geography. In 1911, for instance, we were willing to enter into a reciprocal trade agreement with Canada. Canada at that time was unwilling.

WRONG: And several times since then the shoe has been on the other foot.

ATHERTON: It has. And yet Canada sells to us, and buys from us, more than anybody else. We have about five billion dollars invested in Canada. How much have you got invested in the United States, Mr. Wrong?

WRONG: Personally, I have very little invested anywhere, worse luck; but if you mean what Canadians have invested in the United States, the total is somewhere between a billion and a billion and a half. Relatively, that is larger than your investment in Canada, as there are over eleven times more people in the United States than in Canada.

ATHERTON: That figure includes direct plant equipment and securities. In fact, when you look at corporations you find they're as complicated as Delaware and New York. Canadians and Americans

sit on each other's boards.....

WRONG: A fact which made it a good deal easier for the two countries to utilize jointly their resources in the war.

FISHER: That, I think, brings us directly to the question of joint defense. During the war, Mr. Wrong, as you have just pointed out, we came to act pretty much as a unit. The Permanent Joint Board on Defense, I take it, is one instance of where we are continuing to work together intimately. I think it would be of interest if you and Mr. Atherton would discuss that Board for a few moments.

ATHERTON: It stems, I think, from 1940. In that year, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Mackenzie King said publicly what a great many Canadians and Americans had realized for a long time but had left unsaid. That was that if any foreign aggressor lodged on Canadian soil the defense of the United States would be much more difficult.

WRONG: And Canada recognized, as Mr. King said, that if there was any large scale attack on Canada, it would be impossible for Canada to handle it without outside assistance.

ATHERTON: Obviously it ought to be our assistance - in our own interest. So we set up, with Canada, the Permanent Joint Defence Board.

FISHER: Does that Board have final authority over military questions between the two countries?

WRONG: On the contrary, it has no authority at all, Mr. Fisher.

ATHERTON: It's duty is to study and advise the Canadian and United States governments on the proper measures for the defense of North America.

FISHER: I have noticed that the word "permanent" is in the title of the Board.

ATHERTON: Yes. For a very good reason, Mr. Fisher. The facts of geography don't change. The Board is an interesting illustration of our joint relationship.

WRONG: Membership on the Board is equal. The status of the two countries is exactly the same.

ATHERTON: There's a very interesting point about the Board, Mr. Fisher, that I doubt is known. As I said, it was constituted back in 1940. So far nothing has ever come to a vote.

FISHER: Just what does that mean?

ATHERTON: All questions with which the Board has dealt so far have been talked out around the table until a unanimous viewpoint was finally reached.

WRONG: You don't mean, Atherton, that we've never disagreed, of course?

ATHERTON: Naturally, there have been many initial disagreements and differences of opinion, but they are always ironed out in friendly fashion.

FISHER: I should think the Board wouldn't be of much value if there had not been disagreements to reconcile.

ATHERTON: My point is that these differences have been talked out so that, as I said, a vote has never had to be taken. And, it's also interesting I think to note that when these differences have cropped up, it hasn't always been Canadian members divided against American. Quite often the split has been with the Canadian and American military members on one side and the American and Canadian naval members on the other.

WRONG: I think it ought to be pointed out that there is nothing mysterious about the Board, Mr. Fisher. And it cannot commit either government to any course of action.

ATHERTON: No. All it can do is recommend. And its name is strictly accurate. It is a defense board. It is not in any way concerned with offensive action. The questions it considers and on which it makes recommendations are questions that deal with the defense of North America.

WRONG: And it is not set up as an agency which tells people what to do. It is much more correctly thought of as a committee which talks



things over and makes suggestions. It is not a gathering of brass hats. It has, for instance, civilian chairmen of each section.

FISHER: While we're on this question, I should like to introduce a point that I have seen discussed in the press from time to time. It's this: there seems to be a movement on foot for the standardization of weapons between us.

ATHERTON: That has been discussed from time to time. Naturally.

WRONG: I should like to point out that there is a good deal of loose thinking about what that means. In its broadest sense, a good deal of standardization already exists.

FISHER: You mean we have already decided to produce weapons that are interchangeable? Or that have parts that are interchangeable?

WRONG: Ohno, nothing as specific as that, Mr. Fisher. I said in the broadest sense. Take aircraft equipment. We use American engines in our planes. There hasn't been any formal agreement to standardize; but common sense requires that when the security of two countries is bound up together, the forces concerned should be able to operate together without difficulty.

ATHERTON: I think that overall standardization would take quite a long time. Standardization began during the war by force of circumstance rather than by design. The United States became "the arsenal of democracy". Canada, too, on a smaller scale was sending arms and equipment to the Allies without cost. We called it Lend Lease, you called it Mutual Aid. All the allied forces in every theater had some American and some Canadian equipment. And back home we developed comprehensive machinery for determining what each would produce.

FISHER: Can you give an example or two?

WRONG: Well, here's one. Nearly everyone knows that Canada as well as the United Kingdom was a partner with you in the development of atomic energy. Here's another. We were pioneers in the manufacture of radar sets on this continent. Right after Pearl Harbor, we diverted post haste a number of radar sets to be used

for the defense of the Panama Canal, although they were badly needed elsewhere.

ATHERTON: We did not have the equipment at that time, Mr. Fisher.

WRONG: I'd like to point out that standardization is a question of using resources economically and efficiently. After all, it was only in June of last year that the Charter of the United Nations was signed. Its basic principle is the pooling of resources against a breaker of the peace. We may all have been dissatisfied in the way it has worked so far, but we haven't given up that hope. And whatever may be accomplished in the way of developing common weapons and equipment won't be exclusively a matter for our two countries. Nor would it mean that Canada would merely adopt your models, although most people naturally think of it that way.

ATHERTON: I'd like to underline what you just said about the United Nations. But let's not be pessimistic. It was a terrific war and the problems of peace are correspondingly terrific. We are making progress and we are determined to make more.

FISHER: We all know that we must make more. Now---I have another question. It seems to me that the other day I saw figures which showed that over 20,000,000 visits to Canada have been paid by Americans this year.

WRONG: If you include all the crossings of the border by everybody, it would reach that figure.

ATHERTON: I don't suppose you could, strictly speaking, prove this, Mr. Fisher, but it's substantially correct: almost every other family in Canada has relatives on this side of the border. And, in the northern tier of our states, the same holds true for our people.

FISHER: Well, even if it's a standard reference in any luncheon or dinner speech, that doesn't alter the fact that it's a good point -- I'm thinking of the famous "undefended border" between us. The ease with which we can cross that border is one of the main reasons for the flow back and forth between us.

WRONG: I can say this: although I don't know why, we always seem to look for superlatives. It's a North American habit, I suppose. The border is crossed by more goods, by more travellers, and by more trains, cars, newspapers, films (good and bad), and radio programs (good and bad) than any other international boundary. Nevertheless, a lot of people think there's still too much red tape along that border.

ATHERTON: By the way, isn't there some place where a man can get his hair cut in Canada and his shoes shined in the United States at the same time?

WRONG: I've heard that that interesting feat can be performed at Rock Island. Even if it's mythical, that barber's chair could exist. More important than that particular instance is the sort of thing that happened out west this fall. From Saskatchewan alone, 375 grain combines crossed the border to help reap the harvests from Texas north. They harvested in Oklahoma, Kansas and the Dakotas. Then, when the harvest moved north across the border into Canada, United States combines came up to help ours harvest our own grain.

FISHER: I would call that a very tangible expression of the good neighbor policy, Mr. Wrong.

ATHERTON: At the same time there's a danger in regarding this border too carelessly, Mr. Fisher. Because of the movement back and forth, and because we find that so many of the same products and ideas are common to both of us, we sometimes tend to forget that after all our neighbors to the north are, as I have said citizens of a different nation. And that can lead us into pitfalls. That fact was brought out, rather as a surprise to us I think, recently when, for instance, we learned that Canada has agreed to sell the bulk of her export surplus of wheat for the next five years to the United Kingdom.

WRONG: I'm glad you brought that up. It gives me a chance to correct what seems to be a fairly widely held misconception. We always

have sold the bulk of our export wheat to the United Kingdom. The agreement is for four years, not five. But that's not important. What we agreed is simply this: We undertook to provide a stated amount of wheat for the United Kingdom at a price below the present world price. The price specified for next year may also be below the world price, although no one can be quite sure of that. The price is still to be fixed for the last two years of the agreement but the agreement set minimum figures below which we will not go. For the first two years the United Kingdom will get the bulk, but not all, of the wheat it needs from us for fewer dollars than they would otherwise have had to spend. That's their advantage. For the last two years, when there may well be a large surplus of wheat again in the world, our producers are assured that the price will not fall, for part of their exports at least, to catastrophic levels. That's the Canadian advantage.

ATHERTON: Yes, well the point is that to us that looks like bilateral trading whereas we were of the opinion that Canada, with us, regarded multilateral trading as the best insurance of prosperity. In other words, if two members of a family, let us say, living in a small community, agree to do all their business with each other: there is not going to be a great volume of general trade for the community as a whole. Whereas if they buy their shoes, for instance, from one source, their clothes from another, and conduct their own business relations in terms of the products they specialize in, it will be better all around.

WRONG: Of course we agree with you on that, Mr. Atherton.

ATHERTON: Some Americans point to the wheat agreement and say that looks like an exception.

WRONG: You forget that there is an "escape clause" in the agreement. Both parties are obligated to amend it if it comes into conflict with any multilateral arrangements that may be agreed upon. We have been trying for years to get a multilateral agreement on wheat,

and we have been working with the United States and other major exporting and importing countries to that end, in the International Wheat Council. We are not now very far apart; and we in Canada are very strongly in favor of the establishment of the International Trade Organization.

ATHERTON: I know well that Canada strongly supports the International Trade Organization, and indeed every aspect of the work of the United Nations. I'm sure also that Canada fundamentally goes along with the American idea of multilateral world trade, because that is the germ of the whole International Trade Organization, and the essence of the spirit of all economic cooperation among the United Nations.

WRONG: You are entirely right. As in so many of the basic things in life, Canada and the United States see eye to eye on the fundamentals of world peace.

FISHER: Gentlemen, in the few minutes we have left I wish you'd both say what you believe to be the most important factors that concern us in our mutual relationship. Mr. Atherton, may I ask you to say what you think about that?

ATHERTON: I have been studying Canadian-American relations for quite a few years now, and, if I were asked to single out one factor more important than any other in the record of our uniquely friendly relations, I should unhesitatingly lay stress on the free circulation of knowledge and ideas between the two peoples of North America. It is more than speaking the same language. Literally, as Mr. Wrong has pointed out, we do not all speak the same language, since almost a third of all Canadians speak French. But, in a wider sense, we all speak the same language of ideas, the same spiritual language, and in this wider sense it is true that French Canadians are quite as truly North Americans as we are or as English-speaking Canadians are. This intellectual and social harmony has been brought about by the slow but inevitable process of friendly intercourse over many generations. It

was not part of any master plan; it has not been directed either by governments or by special organizations; it has been a mass phenomenon involving millions and millions of people. We are not unique neighbors in the world because of unique qualities or because of a unique geographical situation. We have become the closest of friends simply because millions of ordinary Americans and Canadians have become the closest of friends over the years, the decades and the generations. If there is here a moral for the United Nations, for all countries of the world, the moral is that the common people are the only sound base for national policies, the only true base for international relationships. The plain people have built and have preserved North American unity. The plain people alone can build and maintain world unity.

FISHER: Mr. Wrong, it's your turn.

WRONG: I wholly agree with what Mr. Atherton has just said. There are, however, two or three points I should like to make which, I hasten to say, are not intended to qualify your general statement. In the first place, you have referred to the free circulation of knowledge and ideas between our two nations. It exists, but inevitably the Canadian people know a great deal more about what goes on in the United States than the American people know about Canadian affairs. That is because of the disparity between our countries in population and importance. On the one hand, you, Mr. Atherton, can follow in Ottawa the course of events in the United States by reading the Canadian papers which report fully the affairs of this country. On the other, I, in Washington, may be able to learn from the American press the high spots of Canadian affairs, such as the results of a general election, the feats of the Mounties, or the fortunes of quintuplets, but not very much more than that. I am not complaining about this. I am merely stating it as a necessary fact which helps to keep alive the misconceptions about Canada to which we have already referred.

Secondly - and I know you agree - we must not over-emphasize the similarities between Canada and the United States for fear that we shall forget the differences. We have referred already to some of these. There are, however, other differences which we may have passed over too lightly. If it were not for the differences, there might not be very much purpose in having an international boundary at all. To illustrate, our nations are alike in that both are profoundly wedded to a democratic system of government based on adult suffrage, and in having a federal structure of government. But we have organized our democracy in quite a different way from yours. Except in municipal politics, our only public elections are elections to provincial or federal legislatures. Our administrations, both federal and provincial, are headed by ministers coming from the dominant party in the legislatures and sitting in them. We cannot have a situation in which the executive government is controlled by one part and the legislature by another, because the legislature can then vote the executive government out of office, and promptly does so. All this may sound a little involved and abstract, but it has important practical results since it means that a deadlock between Cabinet and Parliament - between, that is, Administration and Legislature - is impossible. In the conduct of government, and in the attitude of the public toward it, this results in profound and subtle differences between the politics of our two countries.

Nevertheless, we come back to the essential thing. Even if it may seem at times to the people of one country that the other country is acting selfishly or short-sightedly, we do not distrust each other. We know full well that our international problems will be settled peacefully, that each country will be ready sooner or later to arrive at a just compromise through negotiation, and that never in any circumstances will there be a resort to force. That, as you have said, Mr. Ahterton, is the achievement of the common people of our two countries, and we are, one and all, convinced that it is an achievement of enduring worth.

FISHER: Thank you Mr. Wrong, and you too Mr. Atherton for coming on this broadcast. I see that our time is about up. We have been broadcasting this series for very nearly two years now and this is the first time that I have had the pleasure of having two Ambassadors on a program at the same time. I think that among the things you have done in discussing relationships between our two countries there is this point: --- you have shown that the language of diplomacy does not always have to be used to veil. Thank you both for being in our studios for this broadcast.

(15.1.46 n.p.)