



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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An address by Mr. Hume Wrong,  
Canadian Ambassador to the  
United States, at the Lions'  
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It is one of the duties of an Ambassador from time to time to venture forth from his Embassy and make speeches. Speaking personally, this duty detracts from the pleasure, as one travels about the country, of making new friends and seeing new places. Furthermore, when Ambassadors speak they are expected to talk about their own country, to expound its merits, to conceal its shortcomings, and to do this without boasting and without giving offence to anybody. The results are often not stimulating to their audiences.

I am going to follow this pattern, in part at least, by saying some things about Canada. Most of the people whom I encounter in the United States think that they know a good deal about their closest and most friendly neighbour. I wonder how true that is. I hear a good many things which lead me to believe that more is known by the general public about more distant countries. Perhaps that is because Canada has never been a problem child in the family of nations, and it is the problem children who usually get the most attention.

Yet our populations have been mixed up for a good many years. I am constantly surprised at the number of Americans whom I meet who have at least one Canadian ancestor within the last three or four generations. North Carolina is a long way from the Canadian boundary, but I expect that if I were to ask those of you who had at least one Canadian grandparent to raise your hands I would receive a considerable response. The same thing is true about Canada. Several of my own ancestors reached Canada from the United States because, in view of the outcome, they backed the wrong horse at the time of the American Revolution.

Yet this intermixture over a number of generations does not necessarily lead to accurate and up to date knowledge about each other's affairs, even when one adds to it the constant and enormous flow of visitors who cross the boundary in both directions. It is safe to say that Canadians know a good deal more about the United States than Americans do about Canada. That is inevitable because there are about 13 million people in Canada and about 145 million in the United States. The destinies of the two countries are closely locked together, but it is obvious that what happens in the United States is much more important to Canadians than what happens in Canada is to Americans. Nearly everything important that happens in the United States is of direct interest and concern to Canada. Not a great deal that happens in Canada is of direct interest and concern to many Americans. Perhaps if Canadians made a nuisance of themselves and behaved more like the people of some countries I could name but won't, a good deal more would become known about what goes on in my native country. This is not a course which I would recommend.

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The result is that no American can follow closely the course of events in Canada, even by studying four or five of the best newspapers. A good deal more Canadian news is being published than even two or three years ago, but it is still sketchy and erratic in coverage. Any Canadian who reads a good Canadian paper can follow closely the course of events in the United States. He can learn as promptly as an American about election campaigns, the price of stocks in New York, the baseball scores, the latest doings in Hollywood, and even the most recent lurid murder mystery. Since most Canadian centers of population are within a hundred miles of the international boundary, he can tune his radio to American programs nearly as easily as to Canadian, and he frequently does so, for better as well as for worse.

I am not boasting about the superior knowledge of Canadians. The point is that we in Canada have to know more about the United States than Americans have to know about Canada. Would it be very misleading of me to say that when most Americans think of Canada they have visions of plenty of ice and snow, of handsome members of the Mounted Police (doing on the films things which they would never conceivably do in real life), of stalwart hockey players, perhaps of good whiskey, of great wheat fields, of Arctic wastes, and of lakes full of fish waiting to be caught. Asked to name prominent Canadians, they might mention my friend Mr. Raymond Massey, and possibly Mr. Mackenzie King, who has just relinquished the office of Prime Minister after holding it in all for over twenty-one years.

This vision of what Canada is thought to be like has, of course, elements of truth. We have all the things that I have mentioned, but they do not constitute the warp and woof of Canadian national life. Behind these distortions one frequently encounters some more serious misconceptions, to some of which I propose to refer. One can divide them into two rather contradictory classes: those arising from the belief that Canadians are "Britishers" living in Canada - displaced citizens of the British Isles - and those based on the idea that Canadians are "just like us" - displaced Americans who have somehow stayed north of the international boundary.

The first misconception is the hardest to deal with briefly, because it involves a consideration of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is no wonder that the nature of the Commonwealth is misunderstood. It is nowhere exactly defined. It certainly possesses no constitution. It evolves from year to year. It has evolved in the last year particularly with remarkable rapidity; India, Pakistan and Ceylon have become full members.

I always find it easier to say what the Commonwealth is not than what it is. Its countries have no central government. There is no-one who is able to speak for all of them. They are under no obligation to pursue common policies, and very frequently they follow divergent lines at international conferences. There is no obligation for them to make war together. Each of the members is under no compulsion of any sort to agree with any or all of the others. The United Kingdom is primus inter pares, but receives no taxes or tribute from the rest. Only the people of the United Kingdom and of the colonies are governed from London. The King lives there, and other Commonwealth countries owe him allegiance; but, in the old phrase, he reigns but does not rule, and he exercises no political power in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

After this list of negatives I shall try to state the position more positively, using Canada to illustrate. Canada began just as the United States began, as a group of separate British colonies. Like the original thirteen states in the colonial era, the colonies in Canada had their own legislatures and wide powers of self-government. Eighty-one years ago they joined in a federal union, which now contains nine provinces and will probably shortly secure a tenth through the addition of Newfoundland, which

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could have been a province of Canada from the beginning. In the same general way, about 160 years ago the thirteen original states joined together in the federal union which now includes 48 states. So far the parallel is close. The results in political terms were not dissimilar - the creation of two North American nations, each spanning the continent and in full control of its own affairs.

Canada, indeed, is independent in as full a sense as the other countries of this very interdependent world. Independence, however, was not attained by resort to arm against a former sovereign, nor by any sudden political action. One could say that its final stage - that of achieving international recognition as a fully sovereign state - was secured not by fighting against the British, but by fighting with them and other allies in the two greatest wars in history. In the development of the Canadian nation we have no national heroes comparable to George Washington. We have, however, figures comparable to the memorable group of statesmen who drafted the American Constitution; but in Canada they did their work, not around a single table at a single period, but over a succession of generations, and they did it in friendly collaboration with statesmen of the United Kingdom.

This little bit of potted history throws light on the modern British Commonwealth. The countries of the Commonwealth seek to work together by agreement; they share the same general principles of national and international conduct. Their statesmen discuss matters of common interest with the greatest frankness. At international conferences which I have attended the most outspoken - and at times even among the most acrimonious - discussions that I have heard have been at meetings of the Commonwealth countries. Throughout, however, there is a recognition of common ideals and interests which should be preserved, and, furthermore, a recognition that these interests and ideals are not exclusive but are shared with other countries and particularly with the United States.

Do not think, therefore, that because Canada is part of the British Commonwealth it is not also a friendly American country managing its own affairs.

The second frequent misconception about Canada is that it is a northwards extension of the United States, whose inhabitants somehow or other, through obstinacy, or sinister British influence, or plain stupidity, would not see the light and join the American union. Canadians are Canadians, not Americans living somewhere up north. Although there is no-one in Canada who does not desire the most cordial relations with the United States, few would approve political union between the two countries. There are also not many Americans today who would assert the old doctrine of "manifest destiny" and regard the absorption of Canada in the American union as a desirable aim of policy.

We still have controversies, but they are no longer serious controversies involving the possibility of fighting. There have been serious controversies in the past. It is not often remembered that American armies have twice invaded Canadian territory. One force even burned the public buildings of Toronto, then known as York, some little time before British troops took retaliatory action in Washington. These events took place long ago! It is 136 years since York was burned, and over 170 years since General Montgomery failed to capture Quebec in the Revolutionary War. In both cases one motive for the attack was the idea of conquering Canada for Canada's good - a mistaken manifestation of American idealism.

Of course it is perfectly true that there are many similarities between Canada and the United States, but tonight I want to emphasize the dissimilarities. To start with nearly one-third of the people of Canada speak French as their mother tongue. They are descended from the French colonists in the once-great French empire in North America. English and French are both official languages in federal affairs and in the Province of Quebec.

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French-speaking Canadians are most definitely not transplanted Frenchmen but Canadians. Their political connection with France was severed nearly 200 years ago. They have more generations of North American ancestors than any other national group on the continent north of the Rio Grande except the Indians and Eskimos.

Then Canada, too, is a northern country. Canadians cannot escape from winter by travelling to a Canadian Florida or California. They share the pleasant amenities of the United States in this regard. They cannot grow oranges or sugarcane or cotton. Northerners are supposed to be more conservative, slower to change their views and ways. One must not, however, stress climate too much, for a good part of Canada is south of a good part of the United States. If that statement surprises you, look at the map. There is no climatic boundary line, in spite of the story of the old lady who was relieved, when the section of the boundary on which she lived was resurveyed, to find her house was really in the United States after all, because, she said, it was so much colder in Canada. Whatever the cause, it is probably true to say that the Canadian public is not very prone to rapid changes of opinion.

Another difference, subtle and profound, I shall only refer to in passing, for to explain it fully would require a lengthy lecture on the art of democratic government. We organize our system of government in Canada in a way very different from that in the United States. The King's representative is head of the state, as is the President; but he is not head of the government and he has no political power. The chief of the government is the Prime Minister. He must be an elected member of the House of Commons and so must the other Ministers who head the departments of government and together form the Cabinet. Unless the Cabinet can steadily maintain support of a majority in the House of Commons they must resign or appeal to the people at a new general election. There can be no protracted deadlock between legislature and executive, because they are intertwined. Both must always be controlled by members of the same political party, and the leaders in the legislature of that party make up the Government.

I could elaborate on the consequences of these differences at some length. All I will say now, dogmatically, is that they affect many aspects of national life. They produce a different attitude towards law, towards public administration, towards political parties. I do not suggest that the Canadian system is necessarily better or more democratic than the division of powers in the United States. Both governments draw their authority from the people at the polls.

These are a few of the obvious differences between our two nations. They do not obscure the central harmony. Except for the tiny French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon our countries share the continent north of the Rio Grande. Both are very large; both are inhabited by skillful and progressive people. Although one is far more populous, wealthy and powerful than the other, they look forward to living together indefinitely in peace and friendship. Whatever their differences in ways of life, their peoples share the same fundamental aims. If their relationship to each other could be extended to all the nations of the world, armies and navies could be disbanded and atomic bombs forgotten.

Unfortunately there is no prospect that this will take place. I wish, therefore, to say something about the place of North America in the dangerous world of today.

When the Charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945 it would have been thought almost incredible that the victorious allies, who had won the war with so much effort and bloodshed, would soon be ranged in two great opposing groups. Yet that is what has happened, and we know from bitter

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experience that the differences between the groups cannot be settled by the usual democratic methods of conciliation and compromise.

There is no neat general solution for the international rivalries of today. Beware of the person who propounds simple solutions, who thinks, for instance, that if the Charter of the United Nations were amended, or if the chiefs of the governments of the great powers were to hold a meeting, or even if the issues were forced quickly to the point of war, the world would soon emerge into an era of harmony and prosperity.

We must work towards amelioration and not hope for complete solution. Political problems are rarely wholly solved; they only change their shape and their importance. It has taken some time for the people of the Western world to appreciate the realities of today. The events in Prague last February clearly established that one great power would pursue at least all means short of war to attain its ends. This was a tragic coincidence for the Czechs, because it was the Munich decisions about Czechoslovakia in 1938 that ended the last hopes that the world might be able to live in peace with Hitler's Germany.

I think that our peoples are agreed that a strong effort must be made to stop the insidious form of indirect aggression which was practiced in Czechoslovakia and in other satellite states. They are also agreed that in union there is strength. As Benjamin Franklin said at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately".

Economic assistance to the countries of Western Europe is one way to go about it. Canada has extended such assistance since the end of the war on a scale at least comparable to that of the United States, taking into account the relative wealth of the two countries. The Economic Recovery Program, a great feat of imaginative statesmanship, is bringing remarkable results under the skillful administration of Mr. Hoffman and his staff.

Economic recovery, however, is not enough by itself. Fear still clouds the horizon of the European peoples and helps to dictate their policies - fear of conquest from without and of disruption from within. To allay this fear more is needed than economic aid. What can be done about it?

The Security Council cannot cope with the brand of aggression, direct or indirect, which gives rise to the fear. It is paralyzed by the use of the veto. The Charter was drawn up as a constitution for an international community. The plain truth is that there is no international community. Therefore the premise on which the Charter was based has so far not been realized. If there were a collective will to make the United Nations work, the United Nations would work without much difficulty. Such a collective will is lacking; for there is no common purpose among the greater nations to join in a sincere effort to remove the troubles that plague the world.

In the Charter itself, however, there were incorporated provisions which make it possible for the free nations to "hang together", and so to avoid being "hung separately". While at San Francisco we all hoped and expected that the veto would be far less of a barrier to decision than it has been, there still were doubts. Article 51 was written into the Charter, which preserves "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence pending positive action by the Security Council."

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While continuing to strive to make the United Nations a success, we must not allow it to become an obstacle to progress. Use can be made of this article and other provisions of the Charter to bring together like-minded countries within the United Nations which have a common will to unite for worthy ends - and mutual security is surely a worthy end.

You have doubtless read about the project which is now evolving for a defensive pact binding the countries which surround the North Atlantic Ocean. Discussions began last summer in Washington to see what could be worked out, without committing at that time anybody to anything. Seven countries took part in these discussions - the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, which last March concluded between themselves an alliance known as the Brussels Treaty, and the United States and Canada. The first stage of these discussions ended a few weeks ago in agreement on a paper to be considered by the seven governments. This consideration has now been completed, and the discussions are to be resumed at once. There is still a good deal of ground to cover, and I do not anticipate that final conclusions will be reached until early in 1949.

What I hope will emerge is a treaty binding the countries which I have named, and other North Atlantic countries, to work together in peace to combat aggression, and, if need be, to fight together in war. Surely any aggressor, no matter how powerful, would think several times before taking any action which was likely to cause war with a coalition of over 250 million people controlling a very high proportion of the industrial capacity of the whole world. It seems to me that the time has come in the cold war when it must be made abundantly clear that, if a hot war begins, the free nations will be prepared, equipped, and ready to go.

My Government has taken a leading part in publicly urging the establishment of this defensive group of free states. I should like to quote a few words from a speech last month by the new Prime Minister of Canada about this project:

"For my part, I believe that the most certain and the most practical approach to security for us is the achievement, as soon as possible, of an alliance of the North Atlantic nations. It is not enough to have right on our side; it is just as important to have the strength to defend the right. The only way to achieve that strength is for us and the other North Atlantic nations to combine our resources. We know only too well where isolationism leads. The last war proved conclusively that isolationism is no guarantee of security."

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"Anything less than a North Atlantic Pact would give us no real hope of maintaining a preponderance of material and moral strength on the side of peace. And it is only if we can maintain an overwhelming preponderance on the side of peace, that we can maintain the peace".

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"What I want particularly to emphasize is that we should build up our strength not for the purpose of waging war but for the purpose of preventing war".

To undertake commitments of this nature in peace-time would be as great a departure from the traditional foreign policy of Canada as from the traditional foreign policy of the United States. Tradition is not a safe guide for action in the atomic era. Both our countries have had to fight two great wars within thirty years. In both wars we were given, by geography, an interval of time to build our military strength while others were doing the fighting. This saving interval is not likely to be repeated again. North America, too, is no longer completely immune from direct attack. We should have learned, and I believe a great majority of our people have learned, that aggression on a great scale anywhere is in the long or short run aggression against us. Let us seek to make aggression too dangerous a venture; but if it does come let us be well prepared to keep the aggressor as far from our own continent as we can.

Canada and the United States are, as I have said, interdependent countries. That has been recognized for a long time. What is now being realized acutely is a newer fact: the interdependence of the two sides of the North Atlantic Ocean. It is wise and urgent, therefore, to find means of increasing our joint strength, even when the means run counter to past policies and may arouse ancient prejudices. Can anyone suggest a more effective means than the early ratification of a North Atlantic Pact?

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