



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 58/43 THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS.

An address by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. John G. Diefenbaker, to the Pilgrims Society, New York, on October 28, 1958

I am honoured to be invited to be with you tonight at this distinguished gathering as I stop over for a few hours on the first stage of a tour around the world.

For over half a century the meeting of the Pilgrims Society of the United States has been an important forum for discussion of mutual relationships and international responsibilities for those who inherit the Pilgrim tradition -- for those who came from the Old World to remove forever the mystery of the New.

Historical Connection

We Canadians share your Pilgrim tradition in many ways. One part of our cultural background is the story of those who crossed the ocean from Old France to seek opportunity in New France about the same time the forerunners of the Pilgrim Fathers came to North America; your Jamestown was founded in 1607 -- our Quebec a year later.

Another part of our cultural background, which we call United Empire Loyalist, carried the Pilgrim tradition into the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario. In that epic migration the Thirteen Colonies lost and we gained descendants of the Pilgrims.

It is one of the ironies of our common history that on the Plains of Abraham in 1759, a decision was made that North America was to be British rather than French, but that a few years later within this English-speaking family the debate was reopened and the question was whether or not North America was to be British; the American Colonies settled that question with finality.

In this newly created nation were retained English thought, tradition and political experience. To it were added a New World experiment in self-government with the "rights of man" and "natural law" -- ideas borrowed from the political thought of France. France in turn reabsorbed these ideas a few years later to provide some of the ideological fire for its own revolution.

Since 1776 the story of freedom has been in a remarkable degree the story of the English-speaking peoples spreading through many lands. In the 19th century the key role was played by peace-keeping Great Britain, and in the 20th, by a towering and powerful United States. Paradoxically, out of the separation of 1776 has come added strength to the liberty of men everywhere in the world, and in ever-increasing measure Anglo-American friendship has become a major foundation for the preservation of free and democratic society in the Western world.

In that friendship Canada shares. Canada and the United States have taken different yet parallel courses towards the kind of political sovereignty which each has found suitable to its people. Independence and self-government were attained in different ways -- "in the United States by revolution, and in Canada by evolution". In going separate ways, each has been inspired by a common history, by a common heritage of institutions, by the eternal values of right, and equal justice under law, and by a common international purpose -- the maintenance of peace in Freedom.

Both our countries have been able to bring about a unity among different races by welding together on equal terms and in freedom, English and French, German and Dutch, and all the races of mankind. Canada, founded by two great races -- British and French -- has achieved something more -- a unity and partnership between them which retains the best traditions of both. The successful mingling of races in Canada and the United States furnishes a hope for all mankind -- a hope of achieving peace among men irrespective of differences in race or nationality or creed.

Each of our nations is as sovereign and independent as the other; -- while Canada is a monarchy, whose Queen is the Queen of Canada, it has to be reiterated that Canadians contribute to her nothing for taxation or otherwise. Indeed, had the British Government listened to the request of the Olive Branch Petition, signed by forty-six members of the Continental Congress, including John Hancock, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Richard Lee and Thomas Jefferson, the course of history would have been changed. This Petition, delivered to the British after the battles

of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill had been fought, embodied the principles of the Statute of Westminster of 1931, upon which the Commonwealth is now built. The ideas of the founders of this nation expressed in that Petition have in the process of time become the cornerstone of the Commonwealth.

As Nicholas Murray Butler said, some twenty-five years ago:

"It is one of the most astounding things in the history of government that these men off in this distant series of colonies, economically in their infancy, financially helpless and dependent, had the vision of organization which has come now to all the British peoples.... So it is in the history of our race. Ideas, how slowly they travel; arguments, how slowly they are apprehended; action, how slowly it follows upon conviction."

Being agreed on the essential unity of our two countries, I wish to refer to the mandatory need of continued care and devotion to the maintenance of good relations. Some fourteen months ago, speaking at Dartmouth College, I expressed the concern of many Canadians with respect to trade and economic relations. I underlined my views in these words: "I emphasize that the Government of Canada has as its duty and responsibility to consider Canadian interests first." I adopted as my own words those ascribed to Mr. Dulles: "The purpose of the State Department is to look after the interests of the United States", -- subject to the substitutions necessary to make them applicable to my country. I further stated, and this has been made abundantly clear: "It is not now, and will not be, anti-American."

Improved Relations

Many Canadians have concluded that there had developed an assumption that relations with Canada could be taken for granted, and that the flowering plants in the garden of United States-Canada relations required little or no nourishment or care.

Tonight, I feel reassured that beneficial changes have taken place in these relations since I spoke at Dartmouth fourteen months ago. The plants in the garden are being more carefully nurtured; they are being trained up and guided, not left to grow jungle-wild. The process is not complete and will never be, for as Robert Louis Stevenson once truly said, "the art of friendship is a capacity for continually repairing fences".

What then are some of the reassuring evidences of the improvement to which I refer? In answering this question I shall be more general than might be the case at other times less politically controversial than at the moment.

(1) I recall the visit of President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles to Ottawa in July. On that occasion we examined in frankness and forthrightness and mutual confidence, matters of great importance to our two countries. The measure of that frankness was evident in the President's speech to the Parliament of Canada in which, in Canadian surroundings, the points of view which guide the United States were reviewed.

May I divert here to say that a most encouraging aspect of events of the past year has been the manner in which the editorial writers and columnists of the United States and Canada have placed added emphasis upon examining and understanding the various points at issue, as well as to the many points of contact where we are in complete or substantial agreement. They have written with understanding -- and, I believe, written more quantitatively and more frankly than ever before.

(2) Arising out of the discussions with President Eisenhower, a Cabinet Committee, to be known as the Canada-United States Committee on Joint Defence, has been provided for, which will consult regularly on matters bearing upon the common defence of the North American continent which lies within the North Atlantic Treaty area.

This Committee, which will have its first meeting in the next few months, will not seek in any way to take over the technical responsibilities which belong to our respective Chiefs of Staff, or the advisory functions of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, but will provide a close and intimate contact to the political leaders whose responsibility it is in the final analysis to decide on matters of the highest policy with respect to defence preparation. A clear understanding and identity of views in regard to the safeguarding of our peoples on this continent will be thereby assured.

(3) Another important move has been the action taken towards arranging on an organized basis an exchange of visits and regular exchanges of views between the legislators of our countries.

I proposed in the House of Commons the establishment of such a Committee. United States Senators Aiken and Capehart and Representatives Brooks Hays and Coffin have recently visited Ottawa to further the establishment of such a Committee and the first of these meetings will take place in Washington in 1959.

(4) Then too, I should mention the joint United States-Canada Cabinet Committee on Trade and Economic Questions which in a meeting two months ago came to grips with various economic problems affecting our countries and in discussion revealed a mutual desire to assure fairness.

It is most important that our trade relations have regard to the rights of each of us. The United States is our largest customer but purchases from the United States far exceed by hundreds of millions of dollars our sales to the United States.

Only a month ago a Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference took place in the City of Montreal. The theme of that Conference and its conclusion can be summed up as an expanding Commonwealth trade in an expanding world economy.

As the free world must meet not only the military but the economic offensive of the U.S.S.R., I believe that it is the language of common sense that the nations of the free world must co-operate economically as in defence. To do less means that freedom can afford to allow the weakening economically of any of the free nations.

The recent extension by Congress of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act shows that the United States will continue to look with an open mind to the gradual evolution of an expanding area of multilateral trade. I was heartened by the stand taken by Congress this year in amendments to Public Law 480 which is of particular importance to Canada, dependent as my country is on major exports of wheat.

Rome was not built in a day nor can mankind in this era of space travel easily overleap the moon, and progress must be made by progressive steps towards the assurance that the economic policies of each of us are consistent with the international objective which is the maintenance of peace with freedom. Both must recognize that with the diversification of our two countries it is difficult to reconcile the numerous differing and widely-separated geographical regions and economic groups within each of our nations.

If, in each of the problems that arise the leaders of each of our nations keep constantly before them the realization that the economic strength and well-being of each is essential to the security of the other, co-operation in economic affairs as in defence will be assured.

Conclusion

In concluding, I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak simply and frankly to you to the end that each of us may contribute in larger measure to understanding the problems of the other and having understood, determine to act.

We will always have to meet problems as they arise but in the spiritual unity between Canada and the United States they will never be insoluble. That spiritual unity embraces a common approach to the decencies of civilized living; a common belief in the needlessness of poverty, of disease and illiteracy, a common faith in the eventual ability of men of goodwill to solve national and international problems are the ultimate and common beliefs of our people.

We are united, in international aims, purposes and ideals. Someone described the lives of those in this generation of cold war as moving always "between the tower and the abyss", the tower being the region of endless good possibilities in the development of man and society; the abyss is the disaster which will come if the tensions of recent years are not resolved by pacific means, knowing as mankind must now know that the arithmetic of scientific destruction is almost limitless.

In this world watershed of history there can be no divergence in the dedication of free men in unity. In facing the world-wide peril to freedom, we of the free world must in unswerving unity preserve those beliefs and traditions that make life not only worthwhile, but offer sure hope and inspiration to all mankind.

The great triangle of nations, Great Britain, the United States and Canada must join with others of like mind in a common effort to assure new hope for the betterment of people who have been disenfranchised from the bounties of Providence. It is a primary duty to be our brother's keeper to those underdeveloped areas of the world and to give aid, both economic and technical, so that the gulf between their living standards and ours shall become narrower. Since we in North America are blest with more than our share of the good things of life, an over-riding mandate in that we must help those who have less.

In this crusade for freedom we are joined in a common pilgrimage to duty, a pilgrimage imposed upon us by the good fortune of geography, history and tradition.

I repeat what I said at Dartmouth, which still represents the situation now as it then appeared to me although viewed now in the perspective of the intervening fourteen months.

"Our two countries, with Great Britain, have a joint heritage of freedom. We are united in our determination to preserve our heritage of spirirual values that are dearer than life itself. To preserve that steadfast

and undiminished unity that saved us in war, our governments, our peoples, must give due regard at all times to the problems of each other with infinite respect, tolerance and consideration."

"In the days ahead many grave decisions will face our peoples. In the last analysis, how Canadians and Americans and Britishers get along is a world test of 'neighbourhood' international relations.

"In concord with the other free nations, the solidarity of Anglo-Canadian-American friendship is vital to the peace and well-being of the world and will provide the key to whether we succeed or fail in our great quest to maintain freedom for this and future generations."

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