



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 59/12

CANADA AND CEYLON

A speech by Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker, the Prime Minister of Canada, to a joint meeting of the two Houses of Parliament of Ceylon, in the Grand Oriental Hotel, Colombo, on November 26, 1958.

To visit this island has been an experience that only those who have it for the first time can fully appreciate. As you spoke Mr. Prime Minister, and referred to those points of divergence between the story of the Garden of Eden and the plants particularly indigenous to this country, I thought for a moment of Shakespeare's words, that are so applicable to the beauty of this country: "This sceptred isle, ... this other Eden, demi-paradise". And that's the appeal that it has to me - kindness personified, friendliness exemplified - a spirit that is only in keeping with those qualities. Through the years I have been one of those who have believed in the strength of the relationship that is maintained by such tenuous bonds between the members of the Commonwealth, because after all, Mr. President, as I visited with you this morning, and with you Mr. Speaker, I felt at home. Your Senate may be different from ours, because if you are appointed to our Senate you stay for life, and there are those who seek a life interest in an institution such as that. ....in our country, the Senate is not elected, it is appointed. The House of Commons is the same as your House of Representatives. Your rules are our rules in the main; your courts our courts, and as the Prime Minister said so well, we have in common the heritage that is ours as people within the Commonwealth - the heritage of parliamentary government, the common dedication to similar principles, the realization that in co-operation there is strength, and in the maintenance of the rule of law whereby each of us through an independent judiciary is able to secure and maintain his freedom.

And, having said that, may I just for a few moments refer to the kind words of both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition with reference to Canada's stand on the Colombo Plan. Our attitude is one wherein we ask nothing;

wherein we request nothing; wherein we attach no type of strings, politically or economically or otherwise. We believe, however, that in the building of that world unity that is so necessary economically, each of us is indeed his brother's keeper, and it is in that spirit that in the past few years, Canada, a country with only 17 million people, has contributed 250 millions of dollars to the Colombo Plan. And in addition to that, we have in the last few weeks undertaken that in the next three years, we shall expend \$15 million more per year, or \$50 million a year, not for control of the mind or the body, not to bring about through insidious methods of any kind whatsoever, any control over those who co-operate with us under the Plan, but simply to implement in some small measure the responsibilities that fall on us. We, who are blessed by nature and also by our tremendous expansion, believe that in the world in which we live, each of us must do our part in order to raise standards everywhere in the world and give other nations the same opportunities for development as we have within our own. I underline this, because I hear on occasion that those of us who belong to this Plan have some ulterior purpose in mind. I do not know what it is. I have no conception of what is meant, but I am of those who believe in this responsibility.

One of my major purposes in visiting the Asian countries in the Commonwealth, is that I am here for the purpose of learning, of realizing something of your problem, of understanding something of your concepts, and at the same time thereby to do my part for the achievement of what I believe in implicitly - the mission of the Commonwealth in the world of today. A mission which is intensified by reason of the fact that we are able to show mankind that, different as we are in racial origin, in geographic position, in economic capacity, in colour - in all the other things that ordinarily separate people - we indeed are able to show mankind that these things are not divisive and by realization of each other's problems, constitute a unifying force.

When I say I was one who, at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in June of 1957, brought before the Conference the need for action to be taken to expand trade; not to expand trade only within the Commonwealth, but to expand trade within the Commonwealth and outside the Commonwealth. Believing in that, I brought before the President of the United States and others, the concept of the need to extend the Monetary Fund, and the resources of the International Bank, so that - liquidity being increased - trade would be possible. Out of that Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference came two concepts. We began to realize that we had so much in common, that we have opportunities in trade that we have not yet in any way exercised, and that we have potentialities to assure something that is of importance to you in Ceylon. That is the maintenance, in respect of certain commodities, of at least a modicum of certainty in price. In other words, in

assuring that the producer in our various countries should not find himself from year to year with varying returns based on international requirements and on the laws of supply and demand. At the Conference, we achieved a good deal. The United Kingdom and Australia removed certain discriminatory practices in trade; we took our stand by freezing our tariffs as between the United Kingdom and other countries within the Commonwealth, and in addition to that, the foundations were laid for mutual assistance. In other words, the joining together of our resources - not to control, as I said a moment ago, but to assure an expansion of trade, and also to assure that each of us will to a greater extent than ever before, expand and develop that spirit which is inherent in the Colombo Plan.

I am going to summarize our attitude on the Colombo Plan in this way. The basic principles of Canadian policy in economic co-operation can be summed up in these words:

Canada answers in action rather than words; Canada tries to offer understanding rather than sympathy; Canada aims at the development of a systematic programme of co-operation rather than handouts dictated by expediency; Canada seeks to help without taking political advantage and without attaching strings to tie the hands of the nations involved. It's just as simple as that. What advantage is there to us, I ask anyone here? What are we going to gain from it, except the realization that within the Commonwealth, if it means something, there must be developed the spirit which indicates that each of us has a responsibility to the other.

Then I want to say one other word: Canada is a nation, south of which lies the United States of America, - 3,500 miles of undefended frontier on which any suggestion of war has been ruled out beyond any possibility. That is how far we go. We do not always agree. Some times we disagree, but we solve our disagreements in a spirit of negotiation and conciliation. In other words, when I hear it said that the United States of America is aggressive in its attitude, I say, after all, judge them on the basis of the position Canada occupies with reference to that nation. They are all-powerful economically, with the highest standard of living in the world; yet we have lived side by side for almost 100 years since Confederation in 1867. But at no time have we had the slightest reason to believe that the United States of America, in anything that it did toward us, had as its purpose, indirectly or directly, the annihilation of our rights or the acquisition of our territory. And when they speak of the United States going elsewhere, I cannot think of any country that would be more beneficial for the United States to acquire than our own, with the tremendous resources that we have in minerals, in oil and all those things that go

to the maintenance and the assurance of the modern industrial machine in any nation. And, I say that, because I have been asked this question: what do you think their attitude is? What purpose have they in mind? Well, I say if you want to see their purpose, come to us, and in the words of one who wrote of Sir Christopher Wren, "if you would see his monument look about you". In other words, we are not armed; we have no border fortification. Our other nearest neighbour is the U.S.S.R. We are in between them. Our fortifications are not to the south of us because we know that never, regardless of what conditions may transpire, never will arms be taken up as between us and our southern neighbours.

Those are just things I wished to bring to your attention in the few minutes at my disposal. I thank you, and thank you most sincerely, for the reception that has been given to my wife and myself. We will always recall yesterday. My wife had an orchid named after her - nothing could be more orchidacious than that, and as far as a welcome is concerned, everywhere I have gone there has been friendliness. Your Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Jayasuriya - to him I want to express, and to you, Mr. Prime Minister, and to the Government of this country, the kind of feeling that cannot be translated into words. As I have gone about, the warmth of the feeling of your people for us - that indescribable spirit of fellowship that has been apparent - these are the memories which will be ours in the years ahead; the memory of a feeling that is not achieved outside of this Commonwealth relationship to the extent that it should be. The reason is simply this: we have something in common, we have that heritage, which the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition have mentioned. We have the feeling of oneness. That is why I came here, because I believe that in particular it is among the Asian countries of the Commonwealth that in the years ahead, the Commonwealth will have its greatest responsibility. Here in this portion of the globe, I believe we shall together be able to achieve the unity, the realization of a common destiny in prosperity, that sense of a responsibility each to the other. It means that in the years ahead those who say the Commonwealth has outlived its usefulness are those of little faith, for in the years ahead we are building not without organization, not by statute, but in our hearts the feeling that makes each of us regard the other as indeed his brother. That is the spirit that has been transmitted to me here today. Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, when I go back to Canada, I shall convey your message and the message of the Prime Minister, a message of goodwill which I have tried to reciprocate in these few uncertain words.