



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADIAN RELATIONS WITH JAPAN

Text of Address by the Prime Minister, Mr.
L.S. St. Laurent, to the Japan-Canada
Society, Tokyo, March 12, 1954.

It is now five weeks since I left Canada on a tour which has led me through a number of friendly countries in Europe, and through equally friendly countries in Asia - Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea, and now Japan. From here I will return home across the Pacific. This is my first visit to your country, and while I have been here I have been trying to learn something more about the people of Japan, their problems and their aspirations.

In such a short visit I cannot expect to acquire much more than a surface impression of some of the aspects of Japanese life, but even this fleeting view will help me to picture this land of yours which has played, and which is bound to continue to play an important part in international affairs.

I have already been impressed by a number of things I have seen and heard, and in particular by the industry of your people, their zeal for education and self-improvement and their evident genius for organizing themselves to work together to fulfil common purposes.

I have seen here the combination of modernization and respect for ancient things so characteristic of Japan. The natural beauties of this country, of which I have seen all too little up to the present time, but the way in which you capture these in the artistry of your gardens, of your flower arrangements, of your paintings will be memories that I will treasure of this visit to your country.

You may be expecting to hear something from me about Canadian policy and Canadian interests in the Pacific area in general and in Japan in particular. Fortunately, the problems existing between our two countries are not numerous. Canadian interests may be summarized briefly, in just two words, "peace" and "trade". These aims apply not just to Japan, but to every country with which Canada has dealings. There are, however, certain particular aspects of our relations with Japan about which I should like to say a few words to you here today.

During the early years of their nation's history, the thoughts of the majority of Canadians were turned eastward towards Europe. This was natural enough, because nearly all of the people who live in Canada have come, or their ancestors have come originally from Europe. Many maintained ties of blood and friendship with their former homelands in

Europe, and then Canada's principal trade relations, outside of those with our immediate neighbour the United States, were mostly with Europe. Canadians, however, for a long time now have shared many interests with the countries on this side of the Pacific basin; and that is especially true of the people of our westernmost province, British Columbia - their trade and contacts with Asia have continued now for more than a century.

As you know, there has been a tremendous economic development in British Columbia during the past few years, and I have no doubt, as this growth proceeds and I think there is every reason to expect that it will proceed, trade between Western Canada and the countries of the East and the Far East will increase substantially. Recent developments in air travel between North America and the Orient have facilitated closer relations, and as a matter of fact, the Pacific Ocean instead of being a barrier to those relations affords an easy and economic way of transporting goods and commodities from one nation to the other. Then again Canadian missionaries and teachers have lived and worked in Japan for many years in the hopes of bringing something of benefit to this country. We have a substantial community of Canadians of Japanese ancestry who have maintained close connection with Japan over the last half century while at the same time contributing to the development of Canada.

The emergence of new independent nations in South and Southeast Asia in the last few years has introduced a new orientation into our outlook upon international affairs. Through the United Nations, we in Canada have become more acquainted with the problems of these new nations of the East, or new in their present form, and their struggle to find their place in a somewhat insecure world.

We have been even more intimately introduced to Asian problems through our fraternal associations with the independent Asian members of our Commonwealth of Nations: India, Pakistan, Ceylon. In developing our views on Asian problems we have the advantage, and it is an advantage, of the close consultation with them which is a feature of our Commonwealth relations. Each one of us is the absolute master of his own affairs, both domestic and foreign, but we do get together and talk things over in a frank manner and we do, I think, all of us, derive some benefit from those frank and friendly discussions. We have been further influenced by the extent to which our good friend and neighbour, the United States, has become interested in the problems of Asia in recent years.

What I have said is intended to show the increasing awareness on the part of Canadians generally of this part of the world and of our dependence upon this part of the world for our own welfare in the Western world: Asia's needs, Asia's aspirations, and Asia's friendship - and, Japanese needs, Japanese aspirations, and Japanese friendship, have become more and more important to us and we don't forget that Japan is Canada's closest Asian neighbour. We in Canada need to learn more about Japan, and are trying to learn more.

As a consequence of all this, we in Canada realize that we need to learn more about Japan and we shall.

I just made a visit to Canadian forces in Korea and this morning to that part of our Canadian forces who have been serving for the last four years on units of our not very large but, we think, pretty good Canadian navy. Canada has been represented in the Korean conflict by a brigade of 5,000 or 6,000 soldiers, three destroyers and an air transport squadron. These forces, together with the much larger numbers in training and at work behind the lines and at home to support them, to keep them up to strength and to provide for an appropriate system of regular rotation constitute quite a substantial contribution and commitment to a collective operation for a country with a population as small as that of Canada.

Now, some of you may wonder why a country as richly endowed as ours is known to be and so far from the areas of international tension should send its soldiers to far-distant parts of the world.

Where we have been able to do so - as in Korea - we have taken part in collective measures to repel aggression under the direct authority of the United Nations because we believe that this is the best way to maintain international peace and security in the interests of all the peoples of the world and in the interests of Canadians as one of the nations constituting the peoples of the world.

The United Nations reaction to aggression in Korea under the great leadership of the United States of America has provided, I think, an example of what can be achieved by peace-loving nations working together to resist aggression and to restore peace.

Canadians are a profoundly peaceful people who want peace, not only for its own sake but also to enable them to proceed with the development of the great resources with which Providence has endowed this immense stretch of land from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Yet we know that we cannot build a wall around our country and we can't live behind it isolated from the rest of the world. Canadians are dependent on world trade for the kind of livelihood they now look upon as necessary for their well being and their welfare. A large part of our national income is derived from international trade. Although Canada is richly endowed with many resources, our northern climate does not permit the growth of many products that we need or think we need for our daily living. The development of our economy, therefore, is based on the concept of the widest possible international exchange of goods and services.

But trade, we all realize, requires stable international conditions to prosper. We have two vivid and unfortunate memories of what happens to trade when the world is not at peace. This is one of the important reasons why a disturbance of the peace anywhere in the world is of concern to us in Canada. We also know that totalitarianism, if permitted to grow and to extend the sphere of its tyranny, will eventually threaten the freedom we ourselves cherish for its own worth in our own land. It is for this reason that we attach such importance to the statement in Article I of the Charter of the United Nations that the first purpose of that organization is to maintain international peace and security and to that end to take effective collective measures to remove threats to peace and to suppress acts of aggression. We hoped that might be done through the

United Nations generally and we called its principal organ the Security Council. But it wasn't very long until we found that because of the terms of the Charter and the right of any one of the five great powers to prevent any effective decision on any important matter without unanimity between them, that the Security Council was not giving us the feeling of security that we needed or that we felt we should have in order to be able to quietly and prudently go about the business of developing our resources for the benefit of future generations and that was the reason for the organization of this North Atlantic Treaty pact - not for the purpose of making war but for the purpose of building up that united international strength that would be behind the statement we were all making that aggression against any one would be met by us all to the end that any potential aggressor would have to feel that if he started anything he couldn't win unless he was able and until he had succeeded in overcoming us all. Well, I think that the cold war hasn't become hot war, with the exception of the unfortunate situation which developed in Korea, and we still feel that this organization has served the cause of freedom and the peace and security throughout the world.

Resistance to aggression is only one of the methods for the restoration of peace and for stability in the world. Fortunately, there are also more constructive forces which can be and which are being applied for the general well-being of mankind. Canada has joined in programmes designed to raise the standard of living of the people in countries which, in spite of their glorious past, have not been, in recent ages, so fortunate as we are in the Western world. Most of these programmes operate under agencies of the United Nations. In Japan you are familiar with the activities of the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, with UNESCO, with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

In Korea there is also the Korean Reconstruction Agency which is assisting in the rehabilitation of that war-devastated country. Because I believe that there is a moral obligation on the rest of the free world to take its appropriate share of the burdens that this Korean demonstration of the possibility of successful resistance to aggression has brought about for the unfortunate people of the land where that demonstration has been and is being made. Canada is making a substantial contribution to the Agency's work both in money and in personnel.

Perhaps you are not quite as familiar with the Colombo Plan. A scheme to render economic and technical assistance for the development of the countries of South and Southeast Asia originated at the Conference of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Colombo, Ceylon, four years ago, and I had the satisfaction of observing some of the work that is being done under this plan during this present tour.

We sincerely hope that, through their own efforts and with the help of the Colombo Plan and the various United Nations programmes, the peoples of these countries will be able to raise their standards and enable thus all of them to live fuller and more satisfying lives. And we hope too that under these plans they will prove for themselves and

to their own satisfaction and conviction that the democratic processes which characterize the non-communist world offer more substantial opportunities for material and cultural advancement than the empty promises of communism. Through co-operation in these undertakings, we in Canada have acquired a broader understanding and a deeper sympathy for the people of Asia.

I think that one of the most effective means of bringing about a lasting improvement in the standards of living of the people of Asia would be a healthy expansion of world trade in which Japan and other friendly countries could and would share.

As I have already stated, Canadians are well aware of the importance of broader and freer international trade. Our country, like yours, is dependent upon foreign trade to a very large extent for its economic well-being. There are, of course, differences. Canada's main exports are foodstuffs and raw materials, while I take it that yours are primarily manufactured goods.

But our two countries have a common interest in expanding trade and there are opportunities for the growth of trade on a complementary basis with many other nations as well as with each other. We in Canada are anxious to sell the products on which we depend to pay for our imports. On the other hand, you have an interest in buying food for your people and in acquiring the raw materials for your industries where you can get them in the most economical and satisfactory conditions. In that way, your country will be better able to sell competitively in the markets of the world, and as a consequence your people will enjoy a higher standard of living.

In these circumstances, it was not surprising that our two countries should endeavour to work out suitable arrangements for exchanging most-favoured-nation tariff treatment and for promoting trade between them. I am gratified to feel that there is every indication that these negotiations will shortly have been successfully completed. I am confident that the Agreement, when it comes into operation, will be of great benefit to both our countries. With goodwill and sympathetic understanding on both sides, this Agreement when it has been ratified should serve to promote trade and to encourage even closer business relations between Japan and Canada.

We appreciate that Japan has been one of Canada's very good customers during the past few years. While, from the very nature of our economy and the size of our population, it may not be practicable in the near future for you to sell directly to us as much as we sell to you, I hope that, without disturbance to our economy, we will be able to absorb an increasing quantity of the kind of goods which you desire to export, and I think you realize as well as we do that we already consume a larger quantity of goods originating in Japan than are shown in the commercial statistics of direct purchases by Canadian firms from Japanese dealers. We have been in the fortunate, or unfortunate position, if you will, of relying to perhaps too great an extent upon our American neighbours as the intermediaries and I know from my own experience that people of my family wear fabrics that come from Japan but that come to Canada from the United States. That doesn't affect the broad picture but will endeavour to broaden the market for Japanese exports among our people

because we realize that if there is to be an expansion in world trade there has to be a joint effort. (impromptu remarks not recorded).

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It is fitting and in the interests of all of us, that further progress be made as soon as possible to enable Japan to take her rightful place in the wide field of international trade. The rest of the world has been impressed by the action which you have taken to strengthen your economy and to enforce a high standard of commercial conduct.

From the outset, the Canadian Government has supported efforts to bring your country back once more into the international trading community. We were happy to join with other countries in welcoming Japan to the meetings of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. And, with the completion of the commercial agreement between our two countries, we intend to declare our readiness to have the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade apply to our trading relations with you for the immediate future.

We also hope that the requisite negotiations can soon be arranged for your full membership in this General Agreement on Tariff and Trade.

I know something of the economic difficulties which your country has experienced and with which you may be still confronted. We in Canada were much concerned to learn that the problems which you were endeavouring to overcome were aggravated last year by disastrous floods and by declines in some of your food crops. We are also aware of the onerous task with which you have been faced in attempting to re-establish your external trade at an adequate level while you were still deprived of many of your traditional sources of supply for important raw materials and many of your previous markets. I can assure you that in the steps you have taken to deal with the critical conditions which you have experienced during the past year, you have had the active sympathy of the Canadian people. I am confident that, in your efforts to overcome other difficulties and to achieve increasing prosperity for your people, you will find an understanding attitude among the people of Canada.

I am happy to say that a survey of the relations between Japan and Canada show very few outstanding problems. We were happy when it was found possible to conclude a treaty of peace with Japan and to see normal diplomatic relations resumed. Since that time, relations between our countries have developed along what I think are pretty satisfactory lines. Various treaties of mutual benefit have been revived. We hope to sign the commercial agreement to which I have already referred, and we have concluded with Japan and the United States a Convention for the Regulation of the High Seas Fisheries of the North Pacific Ocean.

No review of Canadian-Japanese friendship would be complete without a reference to the visit of your Crown Prince to Canada, on his way to the Coronation of

our Queen in London, in 1953. We in Canada regarded that event as almost a family affair and we were very happy that the Crown Prince of Japan was going to take part in that family rejoicing occasioned by the Coronation of our young sovereign. His Imperial Highness' obvious desire to treat us as friends won the respect and admiration of all those who met him. I think it is fair to say that his visit to Canada did more to make Canadians realize the proximity of Japan, and its importance to Canada, than any other single event since the signing of the Peace Treaty.

I should like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Canadian Government and the Canadian people for the facilities which have been granted to Canadians, as part of the United Nations forces, for their base and leave establishments in Japan. It is pleasing to note that the provision of these useful services has been confirmed by a formal agreement signed in Tokyo on the 19th of February by representatives of our two countries and other countries contributing to the United Nations action in Korea.

I can assure you that the hospitality that has been shown to the Canadian forces visiting Japan - and in the course of the last 3½ or 4 years there have been about 25,000 of them - has done a great deal to promote good will between our two peoples, at least on our side, and I hope their conduct has been such in Japan that it has promoted goodwill here too. Our young men enjoy their visits to this country and, when they return from military service, they carry home with them pleasant memories but also gifts for their people which are spread across the length and breadth of Canada.

Again I say I have been pleased to see Japan resuming her rightful place in world affairs. We would have liked to see that resumption include full membership in the United Nations, but unfortunately, the opposition of the Soviet Union has, up to the present time, prevented this from happening. But we have been heartened to see Japan participating, in spite of this obstruction, in the work of numerous organizations which are associated with the United Nations. We look forward to the day when it will become possible for Japan to assume full membership and add the weight of her experience and her counsels to the work of the United Nations.

Canada and Japan are neighbours - relatively close neighbours - across the North Pacific Ocean, separated by a distance which is dramatically shortened by air communications. Both countries, I am sure, desire the maintenance of international peace and security and to this end both are prepared to give their support to the United Nations.

All of us are very much concerned and impressed with the hope and confidence that peace may be maintained in the world, that conditions can be developed for the expansion of cultural and commercial relations which will promote the well-being of our respective peoples. In pursuing these great objectives, I can assure you of the understanding, the goodwill and the friendship of the people of Canada and I can also assure you that I will take back the conviction that Canadians can count upon the understanding, the goodwill and the continued friendship of the people of Japan.