

VERENIGDE VERGADERING VAN DE BEIDE KAMERS  
OP DONDERDAG DE 13<sup>DE</sup> NOVEMBER 1947, TER ONTVANGST VAN DE  
RIGHT HON. WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE KING, M.P., P.C., C.M.G.,  
EERSTE MINISTER VAN CANADA

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De heer Kranenburg, die het Voorzitterschap bekleedt, opent, nadat de leden der Staten-Generaal zich in de Ridderzaal aan het Binnenhof verenigd hebben, des namiddags te kwart vóór vier uren de vergadering.

De Ministers en de leden van de Raad van State hebben zich mede in de zaal verenigd.

De Voorzitter benoemt de heren Anema en Tilanus tot leden der Commissie, die de Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, M.P., P.C., C.M.G., Eerste Minister van Canada, in het gebouw zal ontvangen en uitleiden.

De Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, M.P., P.C., C.M.G., Eerste Minister van Canada, kort daarna in de Ridderzaal aangekomen, wordt door de Commissie in de vergadering binnengeleid en neemt plaats op de voor hem bestemde zetel.

De Voorzitter houdt de volgende rede: (1)

Mr. Prime Minister,

In the name of the Joint Assembly of the States-General I welcome you in our midst. For us it is a great privilege to be able to greet in you, Sir, the head of the Government of Canada and a great statesman, one of the leaders of our common struggle against cruel aggression. Your country has captured a special place in the hearts of our compatriots. For us Netherlanders, the Canadians are inviolably connected with the hour of our liberation. The cheers are still ringing in our ears with which our people welcomed the indomitable Canadian lads as they drove in their jeeps into our towns and villages, a living testimony that we had at last been freed from the unbearable yoke of our oppressors.

With bated breath we had followed the heroic struggle of your valiant countrymen along the railway embankment of South Beveland, on Walcheren, indeed in so many parts of our country. It is deeply moved that we commemorate the great sacrifices which that heroic battle cost your country, the many brave men whose blood flowed on Netherlands soil. We shall always remember them with deep reverence.

There was a moment this year which I shall never forget. We stood at the graves of your fallen countrymen on the cemetery of Groesbeek, an endless field of simple white crosses lying among the undulating hills in peaceful, beautiful surroundings. There was a signal — our Queen and your Ambassador turned towards the graves and at the same moment the white crosses were covered with flowers, laid on them by the children of Holland: in front of each cross stood a child. A moving tribute of gratitude of the young generation of our country to the sons of your land; also the coming generation will always remember them.

It indeed gives us especially great pleasure that as a personification of your country we have the privilege of welcoming in our country the statesman Mackenzie King. You, Sir, have a record which may well be termed remarkable. Man of learning and publicist of great talent, uncontested leader of your party for wellnigh 30 years, Premier for more than 20 years — to us it sounds almost like a fairy-tale. No Dutch statesman has ever presided over the Cabinet Council for so long a period. You have played a leading part in politics for many a long year. Under your capable and experienced leadership your country has advanced in power, in glory and in prosperity in difficult circumstances; you have devoted your tenacious energy to social legislation and have achieved great things. May I add that we in the Netherlands most particularly appreciated the warm hospitality which you, as head of the Canadian Government and of the Canadian people, so kindly extended during the years of our misfortune to the successor to the Throne, Princess Juliana and Her Family during Her exile. Neither shall we ever forget the tokens of cordiality and of sympathy in our adversity, and in your joy at the birth of a Princess in your country. Therefore we, as the representatives of the people, so sincerely rejoice in being able to stand face to face with and to receive in our midst the great first Minister of your country, the grand old man of Canada. May you take back to your country the message that here in the Netherlands you have found a people inspired by the same

ideals of freedom, justice and self-government which are alive in your young, strong community, a people prepared to suffer and to fight for these ideals, convinced that ultimately justice will be victorious.

Since it is known to me that you are willing to speak in this historical hall, it behoves me to be silent and gratefully to call upon you to address the Assembly.

De Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, M.P., P.C., C.M.G., Eerste Minister van Canada, houdt de volgende rede:

Mr. President, members of the Joint Assembly, the Assembly of the States-General, you will not be surprised, I am sure, that it is with great difficulty that I am able to discover words with which to thank you for the address which you have just so kindly delivered and which expresses the generous sentiments of this country towards my fellow-countrymen. There is so much that I should like to thank the people of the Netherlands for this afternoon that it is difficult to know just where to begin.

May I say first of all how grateful I was when I received an invitation from the Government to visit the Netherlands at the time when I was about to be present at the Royal wedding in London. I have often hoped that I might have the opportunity of visiting the fields of battle where your soldiers and ours fought together so bravely. The opportunity came last year for a visit to the fields of battle of northern France, but I had not the chance to visit other parts of north-western Europe. However, today I am realising in this visit something to which I have looked forward very earnestly ever since the battles of the recent past.

I must thank you in the name of my country for the further honour of being invited to address this Joint Assembly. It is a very great honour indeed. It is one, I am aware, has been accorded only to two leaders of their countries; one, the war-time Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Right Honourable Winston Churchill, and the other Field-Marshal Smuts, the Prime Minister of South Africa. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the three of us should belong to that Commonwealth which has stood in the past, stands today, and will stand for all time, for freedom and liberty, seeing that this country has a like tradition and has been true to it through the centuries. I am proud indeed to be sharing with these two great men the privilege of speaking here, those whom one feels in one's heart to be brothers, as the defenders of freedom and democracy against adversaries, no matter from which quarter of the globe they may come.

You have referred, Mr. President, to many matters that are also in my own mind. I had felt that I should like, above all else, to bring greetings to the citizens of the Netherlands from the people and Government of Canada, and this I do with my whole heart because our two peoples have been so closely associated in so many ways over so many years that I can say quite honestly as I stand here this afternoon that I feel almost as though I might be on Canadian instead of on Dutch soil. There are no end of affinities between us: our love of freedom, love of liberty; the part we have had to play on land, at sea, and in the air; the interchanges we have had between our public men; the numbers that have gone from your country to ours to settle there, and the commerce that is developing rapidly between us. I hope that all these bonds may be increasingly strengthened as I believe they will be the oftener that Canada has the privilege of receiving visitors from your land and that you afford to us the great opportunity of visiting yours.

But I have had mostly in mind, as I am sure you all have today, the sacrifices which were shared in common by your soldiers and ours, the members of your other forces and ours, in the days of great trial through which so many nations have recently passed. Before leaving I had a word with my friend General Crerar, Commander of the Canadian Army, which fought in these parts during the latter part of the war, and who I am happy to say commanded a victorious army — one that, in association with others, helped to liberate this great land. I have here the letter which General Crerar gave me, as I was leaving Canada, to read to the people of the Netherlands when I reached this country. I should like to make it my first pleasure as well as duty to read this letter. It brings with it not only from the

(1) Voor de Nederlandse vertaling zie pag. 3.

soldiers of Canada but from all branches of the armed forces and from the people of Canada the feelings that lie deepest in their hearts towards the people of this country.

"Through our Prime Minister, and on behalf of all those who served in the First Canadian Army, it is my privilege to send warm greetings to our tried and true friends in the Netherlands.

During those grim months of 1944 and 1945, we Canadian soldiers learned to know, and greatly to admire, the staunch qualities of the Dutch people — qualities which stood out so clearly in that national period of suffering and adversity. We learned, also, of their natural kindness and of their capacity for real friendship. Nor shall we Canadians ever forget their continuing thought and care of the graves of our comrades whom we left so far away, buried in Dutch soil.

And so, from all of us to all of you, our heartfelt remembrances and highest regards.

(Signed) H. G. D. Crerar,  
General."

I am sure, Mr. President, no words of my own could add to the depth of feeling and meaning expressed in this communication. It is an expression of the heart of the Canadian people, one that will be enduring in their hearts for all time. This message refers to the care which has been taken of the graves of our comrades. I should like on behalf of my country and particularly on behalf of the mothers and fathers, near relatives, and friends of those who made the supreme sacrifice in this land, to express to you the gratitude which we as Canadians all feel for the reverent and tender care you have given to the graves of those whose memory we shall always hallow and whom we hold in deepest affection in our hearts.

You have referred, Mr. President, to an experience which was, I am sure, a deeply moving one, that of a day when Her Majesty, the Queen, accompanied by our Ambassador, was present at the ceremony in which tribute was being paid to our honoured dead. You referred to the fact that at a moment a signal was given, and as Her Majesty and our Ambassador looked towards the hills they saw before them the graves of a very large number of our men and over each grave was a small cross, and over the crosses were flowers, and in front of the flowers there stood little children of this country, a symbol of their gratitude to our Canadians. I would like to thank the citizens of the Netherlands for that expression of their affection and care, and I take this first opportunity so to do.

Last night I had a similarly moving experience. I had left the Belgian border to be greeted by a number of those who inhabit the little community of Putte which is known so well to you all, just on the border line, and there to be handed by the Burgomaster a beautiful plate bearing on the back of it on a silver shield the names of twelve of my fellow Canadians whose lives were sacrificed at that particular place. The Burgomaster and citizens came with this token of their affection to thank me as the representative of Canada for what it had meant to them that the lives of those whose names were there recorded had helped bring about the liberation of their own. From there I moved on to the cemetery of Bergen op Zoom, which is not far beyond the border line. The darkness of evening was falling. It was a little difficult to see much of the country about, but one could see over the graves of hundreds of Canada's sons the light made bright by the white crosses, and made beautiful by flowers which had been placed there also by the children of that community. I confess I have had many experiences in my public life which have occasioned feelings of deep emotion, but when I thought of what was expressed by these graves, and that they were but a fraction of our men who are buried today on Dutch soil, I appreciated more than ever before what our men had done for the cause of liberty.

You say that the little people who stood in front of these crosses were expressing gratitude. I believe they were and I thank you for it, but I think their appeal was something more than that. I confess that in my mind last night I had an image of it. It was the children of this country speaking on behalf of the children of the world, not merely in terms of gratitude but making an appeal to all nations for their lives and for their future, and asking the nations to look with mercy and tenderness on the future of the children of this world. May I say that as I thought over the significance of that scene there came into my soul the words of One who said: "It were better that a millstone were hung about his neck and he were thrown in the deep than that he should offend one of the least of these."

And so I say from this table of freedom today, to other nations: no nation hereafter will ever dare to menace the freedom of lives existing today or of lives still unborn without facing the united strength, the might and power of all freedom-loving peoples possessing a sense of righteousness in all parts of the world. This is the great effort we have to make. It is the great purpose we have in common. I believe that meetings such as we have here this afternoon, where it is being made manifest to the other nations that the bonds between the free nations are being strengthened will, as the years go

by, be the great deterrent against future attempts at aggression and world domination. If we can hold together all those with ideals possessed in common we will be able to avoid anything of the kind. I do not know any two peoples in the world who are more united in common aims and common ideals and more sympathetic with what is right and just and true than the people of the Netherlands and the people of Canada. So I hope the world will look on this historic gathering this afternoon as an expression of what the free nations of the world themselves feel most deeply and are determined to have carried out.

You have referred, Mr. President, to another matter, one which brings back many happy, very happy, memories in what was one of the darkest hours each of our countries faced. I refer to the days when we in Canada had the great honour of having as a guest in our country Her Royal Highness the Princess Regent. I do not know that any country ever had so splendid an ambassadress, not that one was needed from Holland to Canada. We all, I must use the term, loved Princess Juliana. We have the greatest affection for her not merely in the capital where we saw her from day to day and where she seemed to be almost one of ourselves, but in all parts of Canada where her name and her fame and all that she represents are so well known and will always be gratefully appreciated.

And may I speak too of the visits which we had the honour of having from Her Majesty the Queen? I shall never forget the day when the Queen of the Netherlands arrived in Canada. It seemed to me one of the greatest expressions of human fortitude and of human affection that so great a lady should, at a time of war, think nothing of taking her first journey in an aeroplane, crossing the Atlantic and landing on another continent that she might be, for a short time, with those who are dearest to her. The Canadian people have a great reverence for the Queen of the Netherlands. We recognised in Her Majesty one of the great women not only of today but of all time. I shall never forget the impression the Queen made on my mind when I had the honour of greeting her at the airport and Her Majesty, completely composed, stepped from the plane out on to the open field as though it might have been just a casual flight from one village to another. But what I did notice, what I felt more and more as Her Majesty's visit continued, was that she bore in her countenance the expression of one who had in her heart the feeling of deepest sympathy for her people. I have never seen on a woman's countenance an expression of more profound concern than I saw in the face of Queen Wilhelmina during the days that she visited us on one or two occasions. I am happy, indeed, and here may I say the Canadian people have been greatly relieved and greatly pleased, to know that Her Majesty is at present just taking a much-needed rest and regaining fresh health and strength. I bring to her through this gathering this afternoon the warmest greetings from the people of Canada.

And then I must not forget, though being a bachelor one is apt to forget some of these things, the great event of the arrival of the little Princess in our capital city. At the time, as I had to do with the affairs of the Government, I was among the first to have the privilege to welcome, I cannot say as a little Canadian, because by proclamation we had made the territory where she was born Netherlands soil, but certainly as one who belonged to both countries, the little Princess Margriet. And I think your hearts would have been stirred — all who are present in this Chamber today — could you have seen flying from the Tower of our Parliament Buildings the flag of the Netherlands and could you have heard your National Anthem played upon our carillon different times throughout that memorable day, another link with this country, a link we shall always be happy to recall.

Mr. President, I realise that you are all very busy. I understand that, at the present time, the budget discussion is taking place. I think I know something about budget discussions and how restless most members of Parliament are until they are over. I am not going to interfere in domestic politics. There is, however, one further reference in your address on which I should like to say a word in conclusion.

You have spoken of the gratitude of the people of the Netherlands, the admiration of the people of the Netherlands, for the Canadian people and in particular for the Canadian Army. I accept in full that expression of gratitude and goodwill towards our Army, and towards our people. It will be one of the great moments of my life when, on my return, I tell our Parliament and tell our people, and particularly our Armed Forces, of the remembrance which this country has of them and of their services in time of war.

I am here, however, to express gratitude on behalf of Canada to the people of the Netherlands and to the Armed Forces of the Netherlands. You in this country see from your side as you look across the ocean what it means to have armed forces of the air, sea, and land crossing the sea to help in a time of great need. But you don't see the picture as we see it, and I can speak for those in the Government of Canada who saw it at the time when we asked the Canadian people to rise as one and come forward in the defence of freedom. What we saw was that our freedom was bound up with

yours, that you were our protectors rather than that we were your liberators. We saw that our security, our safety, lay in the success of the forces of freedom on this side of the Atlantic, and it is that thought I would like to leave with all present here, and with the people of this great country. At the time, as we looked at European politics and European problems we could see how much one country after another was depending on some other country to help to protect it. We could see, looking at the map, what it meant that France and Belgium and Holland should all lie between the potential enemy and the British Isles, which we looked upon as a citadel of freedom. But it was not long before we began to see that it was not really one country that had to look to the resistance of others for its protection but that security had become a question of continents. It is so today — it is a difference in scale. Instead of one country hoping that other countries may by their resistance help to preserve its freedom, today it has become a question of one continent being saved from attack and aggression by the resistance of other continents. If you will stop to think of what might have happened if these north-western countries had not resisted in the brave manner in which they did, if the fighting had not met with the success which ultimately came in this and other parts of the world, and of what might have happened had the enemy been able, for example, to cross the Channel and for the time being to occupy the British Isles as he occupied this country, how different the whole story of the world might be today! Especially when we think of all this in the light of aggression across the Pacific, of the forces of Japan attacking the United States at a moment much earlier than they did, it will be seen that the world situation today might have been altogether different. I am glad as one coming from the continent of North America — here I know I can speak for our near neighbours, the United States, as well as for ourselves — to be able to say that the debt which the New World owes to the countries of the Old, to the countries which stood for freedom and resisted aggression is a debt of which the magnitude cannot be measured but happily is one which will never be forgotten.

And so, if I may say to this great assembly, let us realise that all the trials and tribulations through which we have passed in recent years have helped to bring us not merely closer together, but have helped to give a sense of unity among freedom-loving peoples such as was never possessed before. I do not believe that the world is going to be saved from disaster by force. I think force is a necessary part of defence, but the ultimate triumph of peace will come only through the furtherance of goodwill and understanding and co-operation. Never before in the history of the world has there been as much of understanding, as much of goodwill, and as much of co-operation as there is today. While one may be discouraged at the unrest of our times, I believe that if each of us as individuals, and if each of our countries as nations will seek to think of the larger whole, of the interests of humanity, and will press at every turn to have the ideas and ideals which we cherish in common prevail, that in the end we shall see it all come out well. At least, I pray it may be so.

Mr. President, Honourable members of this Joint Assembly of the States-General, I thank you again both personally through my humble person and in the name of Canada for the great honour which you have paid my country today.

**De Voorzitter:** In the name of the Joint Assembly of both Chambers of the States-General I would express my heartfelt thanks for the most interesting views and information you have communicated to it.

Your presence here will be of *lasting* historical value for the Netherlands Representation. (²)

**De Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, M.P., R.C., C.M.G.,** Eerste Minister van Canada, uitgeleide gedaan door de Commissie, verlaat de vergaderzaal.

De Commissie keert daarna in de zaal terug.

De heer **Anema:** Mijnheer de Voorzitter! De Commissie van in- en uitgeleide heeft zich van haar taak gekweten.

**De Voorzitter:** Der Commissie zeg ik dank voor de door haar verrichte arbeid.

De Voorzitter sluit de Verenigde Vergadering.

(¹) Nederlandse vertaling:

Mijnheer de Eerste Minister!

Namens de Verenigde Vergadering der Staten-Generaal heet ik U welkom in ons midden. Wij achten het een groot voorrecht in U de leider der Regering van Canada en tevens een groot Staatsman, één der leiders in onze gemeenschappelijke strijd tegen de wrede agressie, te mogen begroeten. Uw land heeft in de harten van onze landgenoten een zeer bijzondere plaats veroverd. De Canadezen zijn voor ons, Nederlanders, onverbreeklijk verbonden met het uur van onze bevrijding. Nog klinken ons de juichkreten van onze bevolking in de oren, toen Uw landgenoten, de stoere Canadese jongens, in hun jeeps onze steden en dorpen binnenreden, het levend bewijs, dat wij eindelijk van het ondraaglijke juk der wrede bezetters waren bevrijd!

Met ingehouden adem hebben wij de heroïsche worsteling van Uw dappere landslieden langs de spoordijk bij Zuid-Beveland, op Walcheren, ja, waar niet al in ons land, gevolgd. En met diepe weemoed gedenken wij de talrijke offers, die deze heroïsche strijd Uw land heeft gekost, de velen, wier bloed onze Nederlandse bodem heeft gedrenkt. Wij blijven hen in eerbied gedenken.

Er was een ogenblik in dit jaar, dat ik nimmer zal vergeten. Wij stonden bij de graven van Uw gevallen landgenoten op de begraafplaats bij Groesbeek, een eindeloos veld van eenvoudige witte kruisen op de glooiende heuvels in die vredige schone omgeving. Er werd een signaal gegeven; onze Koningin en Uw ambassadeur keerden zich naar de graven en op hetzelfde ogenblik werden de witte kruisen bedolven onder bloemen, die Nederlandse kinderen daarop neerlegden; bij elk kruis stond een kind. Een ontroerend tribuut van dankbaarheid van de jonge generatie van ons land aan de zonen van Uw land; ook de komende geslachten zullen hen blijven gedenken.

Dat wij als verpersoonlijking van Uw land de Staatsman Mackenzie King in ons midden mogen zien, verheugt ons zeer in het bijzonder. Gij hebt een staat van dienst, die wel zeer zeldzaam is. Geleerde en publicist van bijzondere gaven, onbestreden leider van Uw partij gedurende bijna 30 jaren; Eerste Minister gedurende meer 20 jaren, het klinkt voor ons haast als een sprookje; geen Nederlands Staatsman heeft ooit zolang het Voorzitterschap van de Ministerraad bekleed. In het politieke leven hebt Gij lange jaren vooraangestaan. Onder Uw bekwame en ervaren leiding is Uw land onder moeilijke omstandigheden gestegen in kracht, in roem en in welvaart; aan de sociale wetgeving hebt Gij Uw taaie kracht gegeven en grote resultaten bereikt. Laat mij er nog aan toevoegen, dat wij, Nederlanders, zeer in het bijzonder op prijs hebben gesteld de hartelijke gastvrijheid, die Gij als leider der Canadese Regering en van het Canadese volk in de jaren onzer beproefing hebt willen verlenen aan de Troonopvolgster, Prinses Juliana, en Haar gezin in Haar ballingschap. Ook deze hartelijkheid en dit sympathiek meeleven met onze tegenspoed en met onze vreugde over de geboorte van een Prinses in Uw land zullen wij nimmer vergeten.

Zo verheugen wij, leden der Volksvertegenwoordiging, er ons van harte over, dat wij de grote Eerste Minister van Uw land, de „grand old man” van Canada, van aangezicht tot aangezicht mogen zien en in ons midden mogen ontvangen. Neem de boodschap mee naar Uw land, dat Gij hier een volk gevonden hebt, bezielde door dezelfde idealen van vrijheid, recht en zelfregering, die ook in Uw jonge en sterke gemeenschap leven, en bereid om daarvoor te lijden en te strijden, in de overtuiging, dat uiteindelijk de overwinning zal zijn aan het recht.

Waar het mij bekend is, dat U bereid is in deze historische zaal het woord te voeren, voegt het mij verder te zwijgen, om het U met grote erkentelijkheid te verlenen.

(²) Nederlandse vertaling:

Namens de Verenigde Vergadering van de beide Kamers der Staten-Generaal zeg ik U hartgrondig dank voor de zo belangwekkende mededelingen en uiteenzettingen, haar geschonken. Uw optreden hier is voor de Nederlandse Volksvertegenwoordiging van *blijvende* historische waarde.

(²) Voor de Nederlandse vertaling zie 2e kolom.