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THE CHANGING WORLD VIEWED FROM CANADA

An Address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, to the Order of the Sons of Italy, Toronto, November 6, 1971.

...Things have been happening quickly here at home in Canada, and in the world as a whole, and it is this rapid rate of change that contributes much to current unrest. Many of the assumptions we made in the past have to be re-examined. The accepted patterns have been broken. Canada recognizes the People's Republic of China. Other nations, some of them among our oldest friends like Italy, follow. Peking takes the China seat at the United Nations. President Nixon announces a new economic policy and shock waves are felt around the world -- nowhere more than in Canada, the United States' best customer and closest friend and ally.

Within six months, the Prime Ministers of the Soviet Union and Canada pay extended visits to each other's countries, a Protocol on Consultations is signed in Moscow and a General Exchanges Agreement in Ottawa. Britain moves towards the European Common Market. The whole pattern of world trade, so essential to Canadian prosperity, seems to be changing. Signs of hope for an end to hostilities in Indochina are offset by a growing confrontation between India and Pakistan.

All of this and much more within the space of a relatively few months.

Small wonder that there are uncertainties as to the future and the course that Canada should follow both at home and abroad.

First and foremost, I am sure you will agree, is the question of how to protect and strengthen the Canadian economy in this complex situation, and on that point I shall say only two simple things.

First, we are not going to strengthen our economy by anti-American policies. It is our destiny and our good fortune to share the North American continent with the richest nation on the earth's surface. It makes good sense to exploit that advantage for all it is worth. It makes good sense to work with the United States for our mutual benefit.