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MR. SHARP'S VISIT TO EUROPE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, returned recently from an official visit to France and West Germany,

In Paris, where he had discussed bilateral relations with Mr. Maurice Schumann, the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Sharp had opened the new Canadian Cultural Centre. His trip to Bonn was in return for the visit to Canada last year by Mr. Willy Brandt, now Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The following is Mr. Sharp's report to the House of Commons on April 9:

...Our new Cultural Centre in Paris will assist Canadians in France, especially students, and bring to the French people information about Canada, reflecting our bilingual and bicultural character and the many cultural strands that make up the Canadian fabric. The director of the Centre is Mr. Guy Viau, who was assistant director of the National Gallery here before taking up his new responsibilities. Mr. Viau is particularly well qualified for the job and

I am sure that the Centre, under his direction, will forge new ties between Canada and France.

The interest of the French Government and the people in the new Centre and in Canada as a meeting place of two great cultures was well expressed by the French Government's representative at the inaugural ceremonies, Mr. Léo Hamon, who said:

"What makes your country unique is the imbrication and the juxtaposition of its two cultures. This Centre will fully reflect the originality and the wealth of resources of a country intent on retaining its own personality in the New World, notwithstanding the size and power of its southern neighbour, which can be achieved only by preserving its diversity."

CANADA-FRANCE RELATIONS

In Paris I met with the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Maurice Schumann. The principal subject we discussed was our bilateral relations, and the most important part for me was Mr. Schumann's categorical statement that the French Government has absolutely no intention of intervening in the internal affairs of Canada. If there is no misunderstanding between us about this, and I hope there is not, our problems will be easier to deal with in the future.

I explained to Mr. Schumann what I consider to be the three basic elements on which good relations between France and Canada should rest: *first*, that co-operation between France and Quebec, which we regard as being of first importance, must be carried out in consultation with the Canadian Government; *second*, that co-operation between France and Canada must be practical in nature and not confined to expressions of good will; *third*, that France must avoid taking positions contrary to the Canadian Constitution.

As a result of this frank exchange, I feel we have laid a foundation for avoiding in future some of the incidents which have in the past caused unnecessary strain and tension between us.

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