

call the history of mankind — that stumbling, incoherent quest by individuals and by nations for freedom and dignity.

Liberty and the pursuit of happiness have not been theoretical concepts for Americans, nor have they been regarded as elusive goals. You have sought each with vigour, and shared with all mankind the joy and the creativity which are the products of freedom. You have illustrated throughout your history the resiliency, the dedication and the inherent decency of American society.

The United States achievement in recent years of conducting a great social revolution — overcoming difficulties of immense complication and obdurateness, and doing so through the democratic process — is surely a model for all nations devoted to the dignity of the human condition. Freedom-loving men and women everywhere are the beneficiaries of your example. Not the least among them are Canadians, for whom the United States has long been the single most important external influence — the weather only excepted.

We in Canada, facing internal tensions with roots extending back to the seventeenth century, have much to gain from the wisdom and discipline and patience which you, in this country, in this generation, have brought to bear to reduce racial tensions, to broaden legal rights, to provide opportunity to all.

Canadians long ago determined to govern themselves by a parliamentary system which favours the flowering of basic aspirations — for freedom, for justice, for individual dignity. The rule of law, sovereignty of parliament, a broad sharing of power with the provinces, and official support of the pluralistic nature of Canadian society have combined to create in Canada a community where freedom thrives to an extent not exceeded anywhere else, a community where equality of opportunity between people and between regions is a constant goal.

#### Source of Canada's problem

The success of our efforts in the first century following Confederation was promising, but by no means complete. We created a society of individual liberty and of respect for human rights. We produced an economic standard of



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*Waving from the balcony of the White House in Washington on February 21 are (left to right) Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, United States*

*President Jimmy Carter, Mrs. Trudeau and Mrs. Carter. The Trudeaus were in the United States capital on an official visit on February 21 and 22.*

living which approaches your own. We have not, however, created the conditions in which French-speaking Canadians have felt they were fully equal or could fully develop the richness of the culture they had inherited. And therein is the source of our central problem today. That is why a minority of the people of Quebec feel they should leave Canada and strike out in a country of their own. The newly-elected government of that province asserts a policy that reflects that minority view despite the fact that during the election campaign it sought a mandate for good government, and not a mandate for separation from Canada.

The accommodation of two vigorous language groups has been, in varying fashion, the policy of every Canadian government since Confederation. The reason is clear. Within Quebec, over 80 per cent of the population speak French as their first or only language. In Canada as a whole, nearly one-fifth of the people speak no language but French. Thus from generation to generation there has been handed down the belief that a country could be built in freedom and equality with two languages and with a multitude of cultures.

#### Success — but with changes

I am confident it can be done. I say to you with all the certainty I can command that Canada's unity will not be

fractured. Accommodations will be made; revisions will take place. We shall succeed.

There will have to be changes in some of our attitudes; there will have to be a greater comprehension of one another across the barrier of language difference. Both English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians will have to become more aware of the richness that diversity brings and less irritated by the problems it presents. We may have to revise some aspects of our constitution so that the Canadian federation can be seen by six and a half million French-speaking Canadians to be the strongest bulwark against submersion by 220 million English-speaking North Americans.

These very figures illustrate dramatically the sense of insecurity of French Canada. But separation would not alter the arithmetic; it would merely increase the exposure.

Nor would the separation of Quebec contribute in any fashion to the confidence of the many cultural minorities of diverse origin who dwell throughout Canada. These communities have been encouraged for decades to retain their own identities and to preserve their own cultures. They have done so and flourished, nowhere more spectacularly than in the prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The sudden departure of Quebec would signify the tragic failure of our pluralist dream, the fracturing of our cul-