

APPENDIX

ADDRESS

of

MR. NELSON MANDELA,

DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN
NATIONAL CONGRESS

to

Both Houses of Parliament

in the

HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER, OTTAWA

on

Monday, June 18, 1990

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Mandela were welcomed by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, and thanked by the Honourable Guy Charbonneau, Speaker of the Senate and the Honourable John A. Fraser, Speaker of the House of Commons.

[English]

Hon. John A. Fraser (Speaker of the House of Commons): Order, please. The Right Honourable the Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, colleagues, mesdames et messieurs, we meet here today to mark the historic visit to Canada of Nelson Mandela. We know, Sir, that many challenges await you at home and we are honoured that you have come to Canada to speak to this Parliament about the heroic struggle of South Africans to achieve democracy.

For 27 years South Africa had been deprived of the full benefits of your leadership and that of many of your colleagues, such as Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki. But your compatriots Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, Archbishop Tutu, Reverend Boesak and so many others kept up the struggle. And your friends throughout the world kept faith with you and your cherished ideals, as you kept faith with them.

Your steadfast courage nurtured and strengthened everyone's resolve. For all who treasure freedom, your walk through the prison gates last February brought an unforgettable moment of joy and anticipation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Because if Nelson Mandela was liberated, surely South Africa itself could not be far behind. But the celebration was also tinged with sorrow—sorrow

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that so much still needs to be put right, sorrow at the precious time that has been lost and the lives that were broken and wasted. Sorrow, too, that your own children grew to adulthood without the reassuring presence and the gentle guidance of a loving father. No one can ever repay such a deeply personal loss.

Being deprived of the affection and comfort of one's own family day after day, year after year, is another of the inhuman costs of apartheid—perhaps the most brutal one of all. Mrs. Winnie Mandela, then a young wife and mother, showed uncommon courage as she struggled, often alone, in the most dehumanizing of systems to meet both the obligations of her young family and the objectives of her cause. I offer on behalf of all Canadians a special word of welcome to Mrs. Mandela today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Your presence here today, Mr. Mandela, is a tribute to the unbreakable spirit of man, and all Canadians join me in welcoming you warmly to Canada and to this, our own special chamber of freedom.

[Translation]

Canada's involvement in the struggle against apartheid has deep roots, extending far beyond the efforts of this government and this Parliament and encompasses a multitude of Canadians who have assisted the people of South Africa, individually or through churches, trade unions, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

For all Canadians, your visit here is a most gratifying confirmation that they were right to care, that they chose the proper course and that their efforts, so modest in comparison to yours and those of your colleagues, were not, nonetheless, in vain.

The fight against apartheid has long been a central element of Canada's foreign policy, both because the cause is so compelling and because we believe this is one of those issues where Canada can help make a difference.

[English]

I remember, Mr. Mandela, with pride, the stand taken by Canada's Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, at the Commonwealth Conference of 1961 which resulted in South Africa's withdrawal from that body. Prime Minister Diefenbaker brought the Commonwealth to declare unequivocally that racial discrimination was totally contrary to its fundamental principles and that, if South Africa did not change, Mr. Diefenbaker said, then South Africa must leave. He did so against some considerable