

**Privatization
of certain
support
functions**

I have still to tackle the question of whether we in the Department of External Affairs are best suited to, and capable of, executing these policies. You are all aware of the new Government's interest in privatization. I would suggest – and at the same time stress that this is an extremely preliminary and personal suggestion (as its implications have yet to be given consideration either by officials or by Ministers) – that there may indeed be ways in which certain of the international cultural relations programs currently being conducted within the Department of External Affairs might usefully and indeed profitably (though not necessarily in monetary terms) be undertaken by the private sector. I am thinking here principally of the time and effort my Department spends in arranging major international tours (symphonies, ballet and theatre companies and even exhibitions) and of the considerable skill and reputation of Canadian impresarios. Were we to rely more heavily on private planning and organizational facilities for such tours, I believe that we might gain in freshness of approach. New ideas would offset an anticipated loss in cohesiveness throughout the cultural relations program. Of course, my officials more directly concerned with such tours will examine more carefully than I have here today the costs and benefits of such a shift towards private impresarios. In due course, recommendations will be put to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Perhaps a cautionary note is in order. In certain areas of the world, direct assistance from foreign service personnel will always be vital to the success of any such undertakings. I am thinking here particularly of Eastern European countries, China, with whom we have formal agreements, and certain countries in Africa and the Pacific. In most others, however, while our people will always be available to lend a hand with the organization of major tours, the events, once they have been turned over to a private impresario, must indeed remain privately orchestrated at home and abroad.

**Professionalism
at home and
abroad**

I should make it very clear that we have no intention of diminishing our direct Departmental support for such events. Rather, if there are advantages to turning over the bulk of organizational responsibility for these incredibly time-consuming undertakings to the private sector, we will do it. As a result our cultural attachés abroad could devote more time to the tasks of cultural liaison between the academic and cultural communities they represent and to which they are accredited.

A word is perhaps in order regarding the selection and recruitment of these cultural attachés assigned to Canadian embassies and high commissions abroad. Through its own recruitment process the Department of External Affairs has hired over the years a number of officers who are extremely sensitive to the vital importance to Canada of cultural diplomacy, and who have the background and training to do the job properly. As but one example, I need only cite the contribution of a professional Foreign Service Officer, Guy Plamondon, (an acknowledged expert in the Canadian visual arts) at our Consulate General in New York. Nevertheless, the regular recruitment process has not been able to provide the Department with an adequate number of highly trained professionals who enjoy the confidence of the Canadian cultural community. Two years ago we established a procedure whereby a special effort is made to recruit such individuals from the private sector for specific assignments abroad. In this manner we chose Gilles Lefebvre (the founder of Les Jeunesses Musicales), who