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CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH EUROPE

Introductory remarks by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, at the Opening of a Seminar on Relations with Europe in Hull, Quebec, January 3, 1969.

I welcome the opportunity which your chairman has provided to say something about the importance the Government attaches to the discussions about Canadian relations with Europe which you are starting today. We are grateful to academic participants for their willingness to come here at this time. We are grateful also to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, in particular, and to other organizations for the part they have played in making arrangements for this meeting.

When the Government decided, shortly after the last election, to undertake a review of foreign policy, we did so because of the conviction that profound changes have been taking place in Canada and in the world around us in recent years. We want to be sure that our foreign policy is appropriate to the situation in which we find ourselves today and that it serves effectively Canada's current interests, objectives and priorities.

Having taken a decision to review our foreign policy, we had to settle on a method of approach. Foreign policy is, in fact, not a single entity but a collection of policies designed to deal with various aspects of our relations with the rest of the world. We lump these together under the convenient title of "foreign policy", although there is not likely to be any single set of policy decisions which will cover all the situations we encounter in this increasingly complex world. When we set out to review our foreign policy, therefore, we had to break the subject down by some means. We might have started by looking at our own country to determine what kind of people we are, what are our interests and needs, what are our strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, what role we are best suited to play in world affairs. Alternatively, we could begin by looking at the world around us to determine what kind of situation we are living in, what changes are taking place or ought to take place, and what kind of world we should like to see. One cannot separate these two approaches. They are both essential components of any foreign policy. We have chosen to concentrate first on the world in which we find ourselves, rather than begin by an attempt at national self-examination which could prove to be an artificial exercise if it were not related to the actual state of the world.

One of the first steps we took in breaking down the broad subject of foreign policy into areas for intensive study was to set up a Special Task Force on Canada's Relations with Europe. Obviously, there are few parts of the