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PERSPECTIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY

An Address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honorable Mitchell Sharp, to the Junior Chambers of Commerce, Edmonton, January 17, 1970.

... The Federal Government must serve all Canada and the interests of all Canadians. To do this effectively members of the Government must see and know Canada as it is. This isn't easy, Canada is so vast in extent and varies so greatly regionally that no one person can in a lifetime see it all, much less come to know it all. In the weekend I am spending in Alberta ..., I shall be talking to all kinds of people and trying to see Canada in a Western perspective. My own life, spent partly in the West and partly in the East, and my travels throughout the country have made me realize that Canada looks different when seen from different centers. For each of us, the center of Canada and the center of the world is the place where we live and work.

A map of the world printed in London shows the British Isles as the center of the world. The same map published in Toronto or New York has North America at the center. I have never seen a map of the world printed in Tokyo but feel sure that it would show the Japanese islands at the center. Early maps of the world produced in China took this tendency to its logical extreme. They show China as a large land-mass in the center with a number of vague free-form islands on the perimeter labelled England, France, America, Japan and so on. While perhaps this reflects the Chinese outlook on life as much as their geographical concepts, it contains a germ of truth; we now have a better idea of the shape of the world, but, in a very real sense, for each of us his own place is the center of the world and everywhere else is seen in relation to it and in its perspective.

Geographical, Political and Economic Realities

Perhaps you feel I have taken a somewhat roundabout route to come to my subject, "Perspectives in Canadian Foreign Policy". The review of our foreign policy which is now reaching its conclusion has been very much concerned with this whole question of orientation. Until the early years of this century, Canada was oriented towards Europe -- saw itself, perhaps, as a Western extension of Europe. The emergence of the United States as a world power and a pervasive economic influence enlarged our perspective so that in our world-view we came to look southward as well as eastward. The profound and far-reaching changes in the political and economic maps of the world in the last