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CANADA AND BRITAIN IN A CHANGING COMMONWEALTH

Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Commonwealth
Correspondents Association, London, April 21, 1967.

This is the first time I have made a speech in London since I became Secretary of State for External Affairs. It is, I think, appropriate that I should be speaking to an audience drawn from all parts of the Commonwealth. This great city is many things, but its role as centre of our world-wide Commonwealth association is undoubtedly one of the most important.

Over the years, the Commonwealth ability to adapt to changing circumstances has perhaps been its greatest source of continuing strength and usefulness.

The centennial of Canadian Confederation has provided a useful opportunity for Canadians to reflect on our country's future as well as its past. We have become increasingly conscious of the changes taking place both within our country and in our relations with other countries.

In recent years there has been a "great debate" about the development of the Canadian Confederation. We have, of course, an especially complex form of government in our federal system, in which power is divided between the federal and provincial levels. We have also two major languages, and a population drawn from many countries. As our economy grows, and our society evolves, I think it is to be expected that there will be some signs of strain. But I think it would be very wrong to view these strains as more than growing-pains, as Canadians engage in the common effort of building a better and greater country.

In a few days, Expo '67 will be opening in Montreal. Thousands of people from all parts of Canada, from other parts of North America, from Europe and countries throughout the world, will travel to Montreal to see this world exhibition which has risen, almost literally, from the waters of the traditional gateway to Canada, the St. Lawrence River. To Canadians, Expo '67 in our centenary year represents not only a birthday celebration; it is a statement of faith in Canada, and its future.

Preoccupied as we understandably are with our own prospects and problems, we Canadians are aware of the sweeping and far-reaching changes taking place in Britain, and in Britain's relations with the world. We have, of course,