

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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Notes for a Speech by the Secretary of State for
External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin,
to the American Society of Travel Writers,
Ottawa, September 24, 1966.

It is my privilege tonight, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to extend a warm welcome to members of the Society of American Travel Writers meeting here in Canada's capital. I would be glad on any occasion to have you choose our country to hold your conference. As you will already have realized, however, there are particularly good opportunities, on the eve of our centennial celebrations and close to the beginning of the world's fair in Montreal, Expo '67, to learn something of the Canadian nation, its history, its attitudes and its aspirations.

It is not always easy for a Canadian to know where to begin in explaining some of the essential facts about his own country to an American. There are many fields in which we enter into an easy discussion with common knowledge and assumptions and without any need to make distinctions about national differences. There are so many obvious ways in which everyday life in our two countries is similar.

It is, therefore, doubly difficult to turn from what is easily understood and to present Canadian points of view which are not so obvious or expected so far as the visitor is concerned.

I am sure, however, that it is the differences which are of most intriguing interest to those from other countries. The lure of travel is the unfamiliar.

I cannot begin to suggest many of the distinctive features of Canadian life myself. You are visiting several Canadian cities, meeting many people and learning much of the detail about our centennial activities and about the broad Canadian and world vistas of Expo '67.

I am, however, speaking to you here in Ottawa and I am speaking on behalf of the Canadian Government. It was in a building only a few hundred yards from where we are meeting tonight that the first Government of the new Confederation was sworn in.

In a room not far from where I have my own office in the East Block on Parliament Hill, the members of that Government, under the first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, assembled 99 years ago this summer to begin their tasks of consolidating and extending the interests and jurisdiction of a new nation. It was on Parliament Hill that the people of Ottawa, taking their part in the simultaneous festivities of four provinces, assembled on July 1, 1867, to celebrate Confederation.

From this city, successive Canadian Governments have managed the affairs of a nation whose original four provinces have grown to ten. The inscription on our coat of arms "A mari usque ad mare" expresses the perspective from which they have had to view the work done in this capital and, beyond it, the activity of Canada in the world.

It is appropriate, therefore, to say something of Canada from a national and an international perspective.

We have valued unity in broad decisions about the national destiny, based on an acceptance of considerable diversity in the national life. The four provinces of the Atlantic seaboard and of Eastern Canada which came together in 1867 represented two languages and cultures and a great diversity of economic interests and attitudes towards the new political association.

The responsibilities of a fairly small population for a vast territory, with the problems of economic development and communications which this entailed, were already onerous. As the new nation took over from Britain the responsibility for governing great new areas of the West and of the North, these tasks became immense.

But the work was done and a transcontinental nation was created. The lines of communication were established; immigrants came in from many countries with the varied talents and traditions which they were to add to the Canadian mosaic; the riches of the earth were cultivated.

This was done without changing to any considerable extent the nature of the peoples who contributed to the development. Uniformity was not an ideal. Important questions about relations between the two founding groups in the population were not all settled. Questions even of a constitutional nature between Canada and Britain, or concerning our direct entry on the international scene, were left for decision as the new country progressively took over all the attributes of its sovereignty.

There were, of course, unifying forces of considerable importance. The federal system adopted in 1867 provided for significant provincial responsibility but also laid the basis for a strong central government. In the decades which had elapsed before Confederation, during which the gradual steps towards responsible government and independence were taken, there had been some crises and difficulties but there had also been accommodation, experiment and reform. This trend continued after Confederation.

The creation of a nation in 1867 was not an act of revolution, nor did it involve rejection of an imperial power. The closeness of the remaining links in most fields was evident, but so was the inevitability of the march towards complete and formal independence and to the complete equality of status as we see it in the Commonwealth today. Canadians expected the familiar processes of political growth and change to carry them through difficult periods.

The tasks of economic development were a powerful stimulus to unity as well. Half a continent lay before the founders of our country and the exhilaration of the work that had to be done was a powerful force creating national feeling.

In spite of the obstacles it has presented to settlement, development and communications, the land itself, in all its splendour and immensity, has always been a powerful force felt by all. The romance of early exploration cast an aura of future greatness over the land and its inhabitants.

Sir John A. Macdonald was Prime Minister when the first rail-line reached the Pacific in 1885. He took his own first trip there very shortly afterwards and, in the excitement of the passage through the Rocky Mountains, insisted on taking his place out on the cow-catcher to miss nothing of the scenery. This is a feat which few of you, well travelled though you may be, are likely to emulate!

A couple of decades after that, another Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, came back to Canada after telling both the British and French about the virtues of his homeland. He told them "the blood of youth runs in its veins, it has faith in its future". He added "...Paris, with all its beauty, does not speak to my soul like the rock of Quebec".

The confidence which sustained Canadians in their settlement of the land and in its political development has carried the nation forward in many fields of war and foreign policy in the century which has elapsed since Confederation.

Canada did not feel itself divorced from an Empire after Confederation. In the long history of development, from Empire to Commonwealth, Canada has followed its own political traditions of securing independence and equality of status, while preserving the benefits of a close and unique form of association with nations located in all parts of the earth and comprehending many races.

The value of that Commonwealth association and the importance of the role Canada has been able to play in it have been apparent in the conference concluded in London only a week ago.

The Rhodesian problem is a most difficult one. We cannot yet foresee how it will be resolved. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth nations have acted in a vigorous and responsible manner to deal with the situation there and to preserve the principles of social justice and harmony, which are as essential to the survival of the Commonwealth as they are for the United Nations itself.

We have maintained and developed other historical relations of considerable importance to Canada. Although the direct political link between France and its colony on the St. Lawrence ended in the eighteenth century, French-Canadians remained strongly attached to the traditions and way of life which they had established in the New World and have always identified themselves with the world-wide associations of French language and culture.

In recent years, a number of steps have been taken to strengthen the historical links with France and to develop a relationship between that nation and Canada as a whole - not only French-speaking Canada - which will serve the interests of both under present world conditions. Consultations between governments and parliaments, measures to increase trade and technological co-operation, and cultural exchanges have formed part of this programme.

We are sometimes asked whether differences of viewpoint between France and its allies over NATO matters do not impede this strengthening of relations. Our answer is simple. We disagree with the French decision to withdraw from the structure of military integration set up within the alliance. We adhere to the conception of the alliance shared by the majority of its members.

But we must also consider the position and influence of this leading European nation and its capacity to contribute to a general lessening of tension in Europe. These would call for a particular effort to strengthen direct relations and to understand differing viewpoints even if we did not have our own special reasons for interest in France.

Relations with the United States have always been of major concern to Canada. Some people, and especially those who have little knowledge of Canadians or Americans, have insisted on seeing those relations in terms of inevitable antagonism or of the political, economic or cultural subordination of the smaller power to the larger.

Such allegations do an injustice to both Canadians and Americans. Canada of today has its roots, through New France and the Loyalist settlers who left the Thirteen Colonies, deep in the history of this continent. Our former Governor General, Vincent Massey, is a descendant of a Virginian family and our present Governor General, Georges Vanier, is a descendant of the settlers of New France. From the time of the American Revolution on, the northern half of the continent has followed a course of internal political development and eventually of independent national action in the world quite separate from that of the United States and dissimilar in a number of respects.

At the same time, we have shared with our neighbours to the south many of the characteristics of a New World society which were neither specifically American nor Canadian but North American. In these fields it is sometimes necessary to point out to visitors from other parts of the world who find us "Americanized" that it is just as true to say that Americans resemble Canadians as it is to say the reverse.

We have chosen freely, as a result of our independent calculation of our own interests, to seek friendship and co-operation in manifold fields of common interest with the United States. The peoples of our two countries take for granted the peace which they have shared for a century and a half and the multiplicity of personal contacts, institutional links and joint projects which are now commonplace.

The governments have entered into major projects of co-operation in continental defence and economic matters. On the other hand, the very closeness of our relations in the economic field creates some problems - for example, with respect to financial matters and the operations of subsidiaries of American companies in Canada. Sometimes there is surprise that, in these matters and in world affairs, Canada and the United States might adopt different viewpoints.

I do not know of any two countries, even among allies closely associated in many fields in the Western world, which always arrive at the same conclusions. I am impressed more by the fact that our two nations, which are different in many respects, in power, in world roles, in historical background, and in some of our internal political preoccupations, find so many avenues for successful co-operation and for manifestations of deeply-felt friendship.

Canadians respect the spirit in which the United States has assumed heavy obligations of leadership in the world and admire the generosity with which the American people have supported so many great causes. For our part, we have contributed in various ways appropriate to us to the search for peace and welfare in the world.

Since 1945, Canada has given its support to all major United Nations ventures and to none with greater willingness than those of peace keeping. As a medium power able to play both a military and political role in this field, Canada has supported every major peace-keeping undertaking of the United Nations. We have troops in the Middle East and in Cyprus and are now contributing, or have contributed, observers and assistance of various kinds to peace missions in other parts of the world.

Our membership since 1954 in the International Control Commissions in Indochina has been outside the United Nations in a formal sense but closely related to it in spirit. We have sought to exert any influence we could in the region as a whole, and particularly in Vietnam, towards peace. We have tried by other means and in close contact with those nations most directly concerned to explore the possibilities of achieving a negotiated settlement in Vietnam which would lead to permanent peace, to economic reconstruction and development, and to long-term stability in Southeast Asia, based on an accommodation of the interests of all the parties to the present conflict.

These are some of the main themes in Canadian foreign policy, Mr. Chairman, and in our history and national affairs. I hope that our guests will see them as a background to the activities planned for next year. We approach our centennial with thanksgiving for all that we have been able to achieve as a nation.

If you find us engaged also in reflection and debate over the implications of our commitment to biculturalism and bilingualism and over some questions of our constitutional structure, then this is neither new in Canadian history nor inappropriate for such an anniversary. We expect political change and adaptation as well as economic development.

The bells will ring out in communities across the country at the beginning of 1967. A succession of centennial events will take place during the year - exhibitions, military tattoos, a canoe pageant and race, cultural presentations, dedications, special projects and the re-enactment of historical events in pageantry. I hope that these will be seen by all as the outward manifestation of joy in accomplishment, as an assertion of identity and as a sign of confidence in the future.

We are fortunate that, in a national anniversary year, we shall be able to present to the world the latest - and, I hope, one of the most imaginative - of the series of world expositions which have both summed up and stimulated human progress.

The pavilions in Expo '67 expressing the main themes of "Man and His World" will transcend national frontiers to depict the prospects for humanity.

We are glad to be hosts to more governments than have ever participated before in a world exposition. The contribution of so many nations, the visits of heads of states and of governments and the presence of visitors from many lands will be a welcome testimonial to the breadth of Canada's links with the world community today. They will be a fitting culmination to 100 years of history of the Canadian Confederation.

Among the pavilions which are now being made ready for the opening of Expo '67, that of the United States is one of the most prominent, and I am glad to say that there will be representation from two or three States of the Union as well. We have long benefited from our close contact with the arts and sciences and with the generous democratic culture of the United States. To none of our friends do we offer a warmer welcome to join with Canadians in the celebration of a national and a world event.

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