



Statements and Speeches

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THE CONTRACTUAL LINK -- A CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE VOCABULARY OF CO-OPERATION

Remarks by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau at the Mansion House, London, England, on March 13, 1975.

My Lord Mayor, Your Excellencies, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is an eventful day for me, and one of great honour. An hour or so ago I was granted the freedom of the City of London. Now I am given the opportunity to speak to a distinguished audience in this historic chamber, a room that twice heard the voice of one of the great figures in Canadian history, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, shortly before and shortly after the turn of this century.

These are moving events, these appearances at the Guildhall and Mansion House, and of great significance. Not significant because they are happening to me. Nor even, in my view, because of their form or their antiquity. They are significant because they take place here, in Britain. In no other country in the world has the conception of "freedom" been so debated, its meaning so extended, its practice so protected.

To be a free man anywhere is a condition of great moment, but to be a free man in England -- to breathe Lord Mansfield's pure air -- is more; it is an exhilarating experience.

Through the centuries, man's quest for freedom has varied in its focus as tyranny has assumed new forms and threatened from new quarters. On one occasion the tyrant has been the Crown; on another, the Church. At one moment, the threat proceeded from a domestic source; at the next, it came from without the realm.

Throughout this tireless and changing pursuit of freedom, the attainments of the British people have become the standards against which men and women, world-wide, have measured their own accomplishments. The milestones of Magna Carta and Habeas Corpus, the Petition of Right and the Bill of Rights, have become models for societies everywhere; they turned the tide of battle in favour of the classical freedoms -- of speech, of conscience, of association, of assembly. Yet the result has not been permanent social tranquillity, in England or elsewhere. Nor should we be surprised. I doubt that any of those great observers of the English scene -- Bracton or Locke or Burke or Bagehot -- ever believed that

political freedom would not, and should not, be employed to seek the betterment of other aspects of the human condition. And such has been the case. Having established firmly the principle of the positive freedoms -- the freedoms "of" --, we now find ourselves involved in a struggle to establish with equal sanctity the negative freedoms -- the freedoms "from": from want, from hunger, from disease, from nuclear holocaust, from environmental degradation.

And we find that this struggle is more complex, more awkward, and more wide-ranging than we had thought possible. There is no single tyrant here -- no evil King, no zealot of the Church against whom we can focus our energies and direct our strategies. Equally, there is no immediate and identifiable challenge to our well-being that can be laid low with a single outburst of passion and courage -- no St. Crispin's Day, no Trafalgar, no Star Chamber advocacy. What involves us today is a struggle of far greater proportions, yet with far fewer handles for men and women to grasp. It is not the absence from the scene today of a Pitt or a Churchill that causes men and women to wonder in what direction humanity is pointed; it is the nature of the adversary. More than eloquence and more than leadership is required to come to grips with monetary imbalances, nutritional deficiencies and environmental pollution. Not a Shakespeare nor a Wordsworth nor a Kipling could translate into stirring words the requirements for commodity-price stabilization or nuclear non-proliferation. Yet these struggles are the essence of life on this planet today. They are not struggles that can be confined to a law court or a battlefield or a House of Commons; they require institutions and regimes of immense dimensions and novel attributes; they call -- in the final analysis -- for world-wide co-operation, for they demand that we struggle not against other human beings but with other human beings. They demand a common cause of humanity.

In this cause, we all -- Britons and Canadians -- have a vital role to play. We must not assume, however, that that role is dictated by altruism, any more than we should think of it as selfish. It is in our interest, as it is our obligation, to contribute our skills and our experience and our disciplines to the solutions of the immense problems that face mankind today and that threaten freedom in new and unprecedented ways. These problems will require of us decisions no less courageous and no less momentous than those faced by the barons of the early thirteenth century as they drafted Magna Carta. Yet those decisions, if wisely taken, will have an impact on the world no less startling and no less lasting than that of Magna Carta. For now, as in 1215, the world is ready for those decisions.

Professor J.C. Holt has written of Magna Carta: "The barons did not talk of free men out of loftiness of purpose, or make concessions to knights and burgesses out of generosity. They did so because the political situation required it and because the structure of English society and government allowed them to do no other."

It is my submission that now, 760 years after the event at Runnymede, the changes that must be incorporated into the international system can be justified in similar language: "The political situation requires it; the structure of world society and institutions allows us to do no other".

We have, at this moment in time, an opportunity to recognize and arrest the inertia that threatens to plunge all too many societies into a vast labyrinth of confusion and despair. The first step in that process is acceptance of two facts: the interrelationship of all countries, and the interconnection of all phenomena. The acceptance, in brief, of what each of the world's cultures has been proclaiming for centuries -- that we are all brothers.

Only recently has evidence emerged establishing beyond doubt that this brotherhood exists in the realm of actuality as well as in the realm of theology. The evidence is a product of human accomplishment. Man's past successes in removing so many of the great barriers of distance and time and mystery have created a world far different from that known in previous centuries, or in previous decades. It is different because those old barriers hindered more than migration. They defined the natural limitations of conquering armies, of famine and plague, of catastrophes, both natural and man-made.

Today those barriers are gone. There are no bulwarks behind which we can retreat in order to stave off or avoid calamity from abroad. And if there are any who believe otherwise, they are fools. Nations that are told that they can exist and flourish independent of the world are being misinformed. Leaders and opinion-makers who claim the existence of simple solutions to sweeping issues have forfeited their claim to office, be it in Whitehall or Fleet Street or Russell Square. Citizens who accept uncritically such siren songs are not discharging their responsibility as free men and women in democratic societies.

We are one on this earth. Each has the power to injure all others. Each of us must assume the responsibility that that implies. And each must understand that the nature of that injury is not ephemeral and it is not transient. It can be real and it can be

permanent. Co-operation is no longer simply advantageous -- in order to survive, it is an absolute necessity.

Yet ironically, and fortunately, it is this very situation that is so promising, as was a different situation so promising to clear-eyed men in 1215. Fearful though I am of the havoc that will be the inevitable result of continued selfishness and indifference, I am far from despondent, for I believe in the human quality of man's instincts and in the essentially rational behaviour of which he is capable.

Those instincts have lifted him from a solitary hunting animal to an intensely social being, aware of the advantages that flow from co-operation and from the sharing of tasks, aware of the benefits that follow when new structures are set in place to facilitate that co-operation. The history of mankind has been shaped in large measure by men and women who have acted as architects of social organization. Their works remain on view in the simplest villages and in the largest metropolises. Remaining as well for historians to assess are those accomplishments of international organization -- and the equally grand failures -- that have marked the past three decades. In many instances, these institutions are still too new, still not sufficiently formed, to permit final judgment. Even while pursuing the understandable, and altogether proper, desire for evolution and modification, the instinct that lay behind the original plan demands praise. One such example, and one such architect, is the Europe of Jean Monnet. Monnet's instinct, seasoned with his gift of foresight, fired the imagination of a generation of men and women. He gave fresh impetus to the age-old desire to fashion new techniques of co-operation, to erect new structures within which the ever-more-complicated tasks of society could be managed and discharged. The construction is far from complete, as we have seen this week, but the edifice is already so commanding in its presence that society far distant -- of which Canada is one -- cannot disregard it. And so I have come to view it at first hand. On this occasion, as last October, Lord Mayor, I am in Europe to meet with heads of government of member states of the European Economic Community. I have conveyed to each of them, as I did to the European Commission in Brussels, the desire of Canada to enter into a contractual relationship with the Community -- one that would ensure that both the Community and Canada would keep the other informed, would engage regularly and effectively in consultations, would not consciously act to injure the other, would seek to co-operate in trading and any other activities in which the Community might engage.

We have described our goal as the attainment of a contractual link. Because we do not know -- indeed Europe does not know -- how far or how fast its experiment in integration will take it, or what form it will assume on arrival, no overall agreement can be laid in place at this time. But what can be done is to create a mechanism that will provide the means (i.e., the "link") and the obligation (i.e., "contractual") to consult and confer, and to do so with materials sufficiently pliable and elastic to permit the mechanism to adapt in future years to accommodate whatever jurisdiction the European Community from time to time assumes.

In each of the capitals I have visited I have been heartened by the willingness of governments to examine such a conception. Nowhere have I found it necessary to emphasize that Canada is not seeking preferential treatment or special advantages -- for this would be contrary to the GATT -- but only a guarantee of fair treatment at the hands of an economic unit rapidly becoming the most powerful in the world. In the interim since my visit to Europe last autumn, a series of exploratory talks has commenced with the object of constructing a framework within which formal negotiations will take place.

The extension in this fashion of co-operation among industrialized nations and the creation of co-operative institutions are important functions and necessary ones. Yet, however well-designed and sturdily-built, these structures will crumble away and be regarded by historians of the future with the same air of detachment now visited upon archaeological ruins if they are not extended still further and made global in their reach and in the distribution of their benefits. Happily, this very extension is now under way. There has been a step toward redemption of promises extended on several occasions that the European Community would not submit to the temptation and false luxury of looking only inward. In recent days, a historic agreement has been concluded between the community and a number of developing countries. This agreement is an admirable contribution to the resolution of the broad differences that currently exist in the attitudes of many of the developing and industrialized countries toward the international economic structure. The demands of the developing countries have been carefully formulated and powerfully articulated. They reflect a sense of frustration and anger. Those countries seek no piecemeal adjustments but a comprehensive restructuring of all the components -- fiscal, monetary, trade, transport and investment. The response of the industrialized countries can be no less well-prepared and no less comprehensive in scope. But we should be very wrong, and doing ourselves and our children a great

disservice, if we regarded this process as an adversary one. We should be foolish as well, for solutions are not beyond our reach.

The human community is a complex organism linked again and again within itself, and as well with the biosphere upon which it is totally dependent for life. This interdependency demands of us two functions: first, the maintenance of an equilibrium among all our activities, whatever their nature; second, an equitable distribution, world-wide, of resources and opportunities.

The proper discharge of those functions calls for more than tinkering with the present system. The processes required must be global in scope and universal in application. In their magnitude, if not in their conception, they must be new. Of their need none can doubt.

We know in our hearts what has to be done, even if we have not yet found in our minds the way it can be done.

Let us begin the search, and let us do so with boldness and with excitement, not with hesitancy and uncertainty. The past quarter-century of increased political independence, increased industrial development, increased commercial trade, and increased affluence was not the product of timid men. Nor will be the accomplishments of the forthcoming period of total interdependence.

The key, as in all accomplishments of worth, lies within the scope of individual men and women. It is found in their attitudes toward others. The role of leadership today is to encourage the embrace of a global ethic. An ethic that abhors the present imbalance in the basic human condition -- an imbalance in access to health care, to a nutritious diet, to shelter, to education. An ethic that extends to all men, to all space, and through all time. An ethic that is based on confidence in one's fellow man. Confidence that, with imagination and discipline, the operation of the present world economic structure can be revised to reflect more accurately the needs of today and tomorrow. Confidence that those factors that have the effect of discriminating against the developing countries can be removed from the world's trading and monetary systems. Confidence that we can create a trading order that is truly universal and not confined to or favouring groups defined along geographic or linguistic or ideological or religious or any other lines. Confidence that access to liquidity for trade and for development will not be restricted by factors other than those accepted by all as necessary in order to contribute to the health of the entire world system.

In the calculation of this new balance, we must aim for nothing less than an acceptable distribution of the world's wealth. In doing so, the inequities resulting from the accidental location of valuable geological formations should no more be overlooked than should the present unequal acquisition of technological and managerial skills. Nor should we be reluctant in encouraging those willing to help themselves. We must encourage and offer incentives to peoples who -- given the opportunity -- are willing to exercise self-discipline, to demonstrate tolerance, to work industriously.

The attainment of a goal of wealth-distribution does not require the replacement of the present international monetary system, nor does it require a wholesale abandonment of the trading mechanisms employed with such success in the past, which have brought unprecedented levels of prosperity to increasing numbers of persons in all countries in the world. It does require, however, imagination and ingenuity and hard work -- of the kind that brought forward the recent Lomé trade, aid and co-operation agreement between the European Community and 46 developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, providing, among other things, for the stabilization of the foreign-exchange earnings of these 46 countries from 12 key commodities; of the kind that entered into the recent recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank concerning floating exchange-rates, developmental assistance, extension of the decision-making process, enhancement of the role of the Special Drawing Rights, and study of the feasibility of international buffer stocks of primary products; of the kind that will be necessary if Britain and Canada are to discharge their proper responsibilities at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Kingston next month, and in the many other international gatherings in the forthcoming months at which economic issues will be featured.

We shall find ourselves well started on this process through the simple acceptance of several self-evident propositions:

- (1) The need for continuing and intensive consultation and co-ordination of national economic policies;
 - (2) the need for steady movement in the field of multilateral trade negotiations, and early liberalization of tariffs and non-tariff barriers in the GATT;
 - (3) the need for strengthening the political direction of the International Monetary Fund and the governing structures of other international agencies;
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- (4) the need to implement with vigour decisions taken at the Stockholm Environmental Conference and the World Food Conference;
- (5) the need to make progress at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and the next special session of the General Assembly on development.

These needs are all challenges, Lord Mayor, but they should not be regarded as the gloomy prospect of avoiding Doomsday. Properly met, they can be joyous opportunities, permitting the introduction into the world of a dynamic equilibrium between man and nature, between man and man. The challenge is a challenge of sharing -- food, technology, resources, scientific knowledge. None need do without if all will become good stewards of what we have. And, to ensure that, we must concentrate not so much on what we possess but on what we are and what we are capable of becoming.

What I dare to believe is that men and women everywhere will come to understand that no individual, no government, no nation is capable of living in isolation, or of pursuing policies inconsistent with the interests -- both present and future -- of others. That self-respect is not self-perpetuating but depends for its existence on access to social justice. That each of us must do all in his power to extend to all persons an equal measure of human dignity -- to ensure through his efforts that hope and faith in the future are not reserved for a minority of the world's population, but are available to all.

This responsibility rests on each one of us. It is not transferable. Its discharge is not conditional upon the acts or the omissions of others. It demands that we care, that we share, that we be honest.

In this "global village" we are all accountable.

None of us can escape the burden of our responsibility. None of us can escape the tragedy of any failure. Nor, happily, will anyone escape the benefit, the joy, the satisfaction -- the freedom -- that will accompany the discharge of that responsibility.

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