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NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE HONOURABLE ALLAN J. MACEachEN,
TO THE ITALIAN PROFESSIONAL
AND
BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF WINDSOR
WINDSOR, THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 1975 9

Mr. President,
Gentlemen,

Let me say at once how pleased I am to have been invited to join you in celebrating this, your third Annual Civic Night.

Looking around me I can see that I am in the company of very many friends and acquaintances of the Italian Professional and Businessmen's Association of Windsor from outside the Italian community who have come to help in the celebration. This is proof of the kind of organization you are -- outward-looking. I think it significant that your charter calls upon you to direct your efforts not only towards Italian groups but also towards the local community as a whole. Since the founding of your organization in the fall of 1960, your cultural, educational, and charitable endeavours have focussed on this larger objective. You are an example of community broad-mindedness. And it is about the importance of this very characteristic in associations such as yours that I first wish to speak.

In describing the process of nation-building in Canada we often fall back on the term Canadian mosaic. This over-worked phrase is supposed to suggest the idea that each ethnic group, while contributing to the make-up of the whole, retains its own cultural identity. The metaphor is accurate enough as far as it goes. But it fails to take sufficient account of other important aspects of the nation-building process.

It does not, for example, adequately reflect the fact that, for the process to be truly effective, there must be constant inter-play among the various ethnic elements that make up the Canadian community. There cannot be ethnic self-containment. We must avoid the creation of a "Little Italy" which shuts out the influences of its Canadian setting. On the contrary, there must be an openness, and an interaction between ethnic groups and others in their immediate environment so that members can relate to other groups, and can enrich both themselves and the wider Canadian society by drawing upon and giving of their own cultural heritage.

On this matter I am happy to find that I am preaching to the converted. For your Association has fully demonstrated that its opportunities to relate to the wider community in which it finds itself are not limited by its size or character.

However, all of us know that, because of the very fact that the Italian Professional and Businessmen's Association is a good example, there are other groups and organizations which have so far found it difficult to relate to their social context and have sought, instead, to draw in upon themselves out of a misguided sense of self-preservation.

It would be presumptuous of me to try to give the impression that the process of relating to other parts of Canadian society is a simple task. Canadians boast of their open and mobile society in which it is possible to find satisfaction and self-fulfilment. And this claim is true enough -- up to a point. But most Canadians of whatever origin, at one time or another, have come up against barriers to their progress. They can be at times pretty formidable to a first generation Canadian.

At the same time, I think that as Canadians we can legitimately draw satisfaction from the fact that the Canadian community is gradually improving in this respect. It is infinitely better now than it was at the end of World War II. And the improvement has been due, in large measure, to a change in thinking brought about by the very presence of new-comers. Nation-building, unlike a mosaic which is static in time, is a growing, changing thing. The fact is that we have been giving each other a liberal education in the values of a multicultural society. The result is a greater tolerance, a greater understanding of what each has to offer in achieving this goal. There are still barriers along the road but they are getting smaller.

Nation-building is a collective undertaking involving all groups in the community, not just the Europeans, the West Indians, and the Chinese but also those from the founding groups of British and French origin. The liberal

education, of which I spoke, involves us all. It is not a matter of the new Canadian conforming to an established code set by his predecessors in the country. It is not a question of "we" and "they". All of us are involved in the learning and building process, whether we are the descendants of United Empire Loyalists in New Brunswick, the sons of a French family who came with Montcalm to Quebec, or first generation Italians in Windsor. In this sense the whole country is a schoolroom in which each of us is both pupil and teacher.

There can be no doubt that the Italian-Canadians who form one of the more important cultural entities in Canadian society, have played and continue to play a leading part in this whole process of nation-building that I have been describing. The work of your Association, along with that of other organizations within the Italian community, is evidence of this. It is also revealed in the presence of prominent Canadians of Italian background who are making valuable contributions to the diversity and richness of Canadian society in a wide range of fields from the arts and learning to engineering and government. They are helping to enhance the quality of our life, making Canada a better and more attractive place in which to live. During his recent visit to Italy, Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in the warmest terms of the contributions Canadians of Italian origin are making to Canadian society. The rest of us, of course, are not unmindful of the fact that the Italians have had a head start. For it was John Cabot, that hardy Genoese sailor, who first made his mark in Canada by probing the rocky shores of Cape Breton Island, a part of the country with which I have a passing familiarity.

The presence in Canada of a sizeable and active Italo-Canadian community contributes to a broader Canadian awareness of Italy and its role in the world. For the same reason many citizens of Italy also come to know more about our country and our achievements. This, I think, is to the advantage of both countries. It provides a solid, practical basis for the relations which exist between our two countries. To illustrate what I mean, I wish

to touch briefly on some of the ways in which the Governments of Canada and Italy cooperate to mutual advantage.

Reflecting the fact that Canada and Italy both have common interests in the defence and security field, our two countries are active members of NATO, a forum which provides for continuous consultation and cooperation not only on strictly defence matters but also on a host of related political, economic, social and technological subjects. The United Nations provides a framework for useful exchanges of views between Canada and Italy on an even more diverse range of interests. In the context of East-West relations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, popularly known as the CSCE, is an especially significant forum for tangible cooperation between Canada and Italy, because our two countries have made strong commitments to participating in collective efforts to lower the tension-producing barriers between East and West. This very subject figured prominently in the discussions which Prime Minister Trudeau had not only with the Italian Government but also with His Holiness the Pope during his recent visit to Rome.

Indeed, the Prime Minister's visit helped to emphasize just how wide-ranging are Canadian and Italian interests. The topics for discussion were diverse including the dangers of nuclear proliferation, the problems of world food and of development of the third world. The latter problems are of special concern to both the Italian Government and the Vatican. This concern was earlier reflected, for example, in the holding of the World Food Conference in Rome last November which my colleague, Mr. Whelan, and I both attended.

Our bilateral relations reveal a similar growth of interest. In 1974, two-way trade between Canada and Italy was valued at more than three-quarters of a billion dollars. This represented an increase of forty-six percent over the previous year and an increase of more than ninety percent over the past two years. We fully expect our trade cooperation to continue to grow. We also hope that it can be supplemented and reinforced by more extensive industrial cooperation.

For instance, nuclear energy is one particular field which provides much potential for increased cooperation. Italy is greatly interested in the possibility of working together with Canada in the construction of CANDU nuclear reactors as part of Italy's domestic nuclear energy programme and perhaps in co-operating further in the international market in this field. Italy is also interested in acquiring Canadian uranium. Such cooperation has to be based on safeguards which meet Canada's international obligations and its national policy. The Italian Government's intention soon to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a most encouraging indication that such arrangements are in fact desired by both sides.

Cultural affairs form an important element in our bilateral relations. In 1969, Canada established in Rome a Canadian Cultural Institute which assists Canadian artists and scholars in pursuing their studies in Italy. In 1973 our National Arts Centre Orchestra made a highly successful tour of Italy. In September 1974, Canada was the featured country at the famous Sorrento Film Festival, thus enabling the Italian public to become more aware of Canadian accomplishments in the field of cinema. In the same year, a film co-production agreement was ratified by our two governments.

As Prime Minister Trudeau indicated at the State banquet tendered him by President Leone, Canada is deeply conscious of Italy as a well-spring of those cultural values which inform Western civilization. Both Prime Ministers agreed during Mr. Trudeau's visit that Italian-Canadian cultural relations should be broadened and intensified and steps are already being taken to this end.

Immigration is another aspect of our bilateral relations which is of continuing interest. It is a link of long-standing between Canada and Italy. It has a substantial and pervasive effect in shaping Canadian society. It touches so many people in a direct, personal way. In the past three years approximately 5,000 Italian citizens have annually chosen Canada as their new home.

With immigration has come a variety of social questions of concern to our respective governments and to the Canadian of Italian origin including the matter of social security. As Prime Minister Trudeau indicated during his visit to Rome, the latter is a question of considerable technical and jurisdictional complexity in which quick progress is difficult. He also spoke about the Government's Green Paper on Immigration since it, too, came up for discussion. He affirmed that Italians would continue to be welcomed, as always, as immigrants to Canada.

One of the principal objectives of the Prime Minister's recent visit to Rome was to discuss a number of these various multilateral and bilateral matters with the Italian Government, and indeed with the Vatican. As the Prime Minister made clear in his press conference in Rome on March 7, discussions were conducted in a very friendly atmosphere, and on each of the issues -- to use the Prime Minister's words -- "we found that agreement was easy". There was satisfaction on both sides with the results. There is no doubt that bilateral relations between Canada and Italy were further strengthened by the visit.

But the Prime Minister had an additional and very important objective to attain. It had to do with the fact that Italy is one of the major members of the European Economic Community.

Canada is seeking closer relations, not only with individual members of the EEC like Italy, but also with the Community itself. The purpose is to help secure a counter-weight to the overpowering influence of the United States on Canada, and to obtain full appreciation and acceptance of Canada as a separate political, economic and social entity on the North American continent, distinct from the United States. During his visit to Rome the Prime Minister sought and received a sympathetic and positive response from the Italian leaders to Canada's desire to secure contractual links with the Community.

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It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the Prime Minister's visit to Rome was a great success. The objectives of the visit were attained and he was received with the warmth and enthusiastic hospitality for which Italians are so justly renowned.

Consequently, I am happy to report to you that relations between Canada and Italy are in very good shape.

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