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Transcript of Proceedings

CANADIAN EMBASSY

Press Conference

HONORABLE PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU
Prime Minister, Canada

Washington, D.C.
25 March 1969

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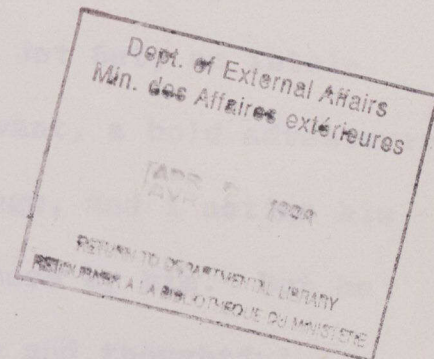
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CANADIAN EMBASSY



Press Conference

THE HONORABLE PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU

Prime Minister of Canada

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National Press Club
Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, March 25, 1968

Ladies and gentlemen, we are more than glad to welcome today a man of tomorrow, Canada's dashing young Prime Minister -- and I would like to stress that "young" because he is not all that much younger than myself. He is pictured by reporters in Canada as a member of the Jet Set, an intellectual, a nonconformist, a French bon vivant, a bold adventurer, a swinger. Well, he may be all these things, and I notice his press clippings don't contain any disclaimers by him. But he is also pictured as a possessor of a tough and thoughtful mind, a pragmatist, and not an arch-radical.

Prime Minister, it has been said that you came on a "get acquainted" visit to President Nixon. I think all of us here have the same approach to the first official visit of a head of government to Washington since the change in Administrations here. We have read a lot about you in the last 12 months since you were elected leader of the Liberal Party in Canada after the comparatively short experience of some three years in national politics. But we would all like to get more about you.

Canadians look to you as a unifying force, one who has stirred their nationalism and their desire to have a greater identity in international affairs. You have promised changes in foreign policy such as recognition of Communist China. You have promised a major effort to advance bilingualism and biculturalism across Canada.

As a French-Canadian you have expressed your major aim to be "One Canada," a Canada in which French-Canadians can feel at home in all parts of the country.

You are, as TIME Magazine has described you, "a fairly unstuffy man who, when asked by a pretty young Trudeau-bopper for a kiss, can respond with, "Why not? It's spring!"

(Laughter) I would like to welcome you, sir, as the man who

You are broadminded and cultured, a lover of canoeing, a diver of mere championship caliber, a practitioner of Yoga, a driver of fast cars, and a bachelor -- one who can command the company of beautiful women.

Summed up TIME, last July, after your overwhelming election in the national elections in Canada: "Whatever else he does, he is certain to give Canada four years of colorful and unpredictable government." (Laughter)

So there is little wonder, Prime Minister, that we here in the United States -- indeed, all of us in the Western world -- are hanging from the rafters to get a glimpse of this most interesting head of government. You are not the first Canadian Prime Minister to speak at this Club, but you are certainly the first one in memory -- at least in my memory -- who has been followed to Washington by a planeload of Canadian reporters and who has, moreover, induced about 200 young ladies to greet you in the lobby of the National Press Club.

(Laughter)

But someone commented to me just prior to this 4
lunch that your first day in Washington yesterday appeared to
stress the formal and, shall we say, the more serious side of
the trip. This is in character, I might say, with the picture
we have of the Prime Minister of one of the staunchest allies
in the Western Alliance.

I would like to welcome you, sir, as the man who
appealed to the Canadian people last year to "Take a bit of
a chance" by electing you with a clear majority.

You are the man to whom the Canadian people have
given their overwhelming confidence and whose success is import-
ant to all of us.

Lastly, sir, if you will forgive me, and if the
fine French-Canadian people will forgive an Englishman trying
to use their tongue, I would like to say this:

(Speaking in French.)

(Laughter and applause.)

I now take great pleasure in introducing the Prime
Minister of Canada, the Right Honorable Pierre Trudeau.

(Standing ovation.)

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Mr. Chairman, distinguished
guests, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
your very warm welcome. Thank you for the invitation to
speak to such a distinguished gathering.

The description you made of some of my activities

is getting more and more difficult to live up to. I will tell you one aspect of it that comes rather easily, the bit about "It is spring!"

And I thank you for doing, as perhaps the Canadian people did a year ago, taking a chance on me, taking a chance on inviting me, to be patient with some of the ideas I want to express to you. They are meant essentially to indicate some of my approaches to the problem of government. They are not very original, as you will see, but as Winston Churchill said about another Prime Minister, "He is the only one we have."

(Laughter)

The relations I have with the Press are always very warm. I feel very close to members of the Press, and especially abroad I feel they are very close -- perhaps sometimes a little too close.

But one of the real pleasures of being here is really due to the fact that, being a Canadian, one knows that one always has a warm welcome in the United States.

There must be few countries in the world where individuals on either side of a border feel so much at home on the other. I hasten to add, however, that at times in our history we have paused to wonder whether your friendly invitations "to come and stay awhile" have not been aimed at Canada as a political unit rather than at Canadians as individuals.

Many of you will recall, I am sure, that your

Articles of Confederation, as ratified in 1781, contained a clause which was an open invitation, and an exclusive one to Canada. And I read Article IV:

"Canada acceding to this confederation, and joining in the measures of the United States, shall be admitted into, and entitled to all the advantages of this union; but no other colony shall be admitted into the same unless such admission be agreed to by nine states."

So, we have always had a favored position. In any event, we did not join, and history has recorded our differences.

Two hundred years later, the results of our separate and distinct political existence are evident for all the world to see: Professional hockey is a major spectator sport from New York to Los Angeles, and "Peanuts" is one of the most popular comic strips from Halifax to Vancouver.

But Americans should never underestimate the constant pressure on Canada which the mere presence of the United States has produced. We are a different people from you. We are a different people partly because of you.

Our two countries have pushed against one another from time to time, perhaps more courteously in recent years than previously, when your invitation and your republicanism

appeared more intimidating to us.

Canadians still smart when they recall President Theodore Roosevelt's tough instructions to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., on the occasion of the Alaska-Yukon boundary arbitration. But how many of your historians have ever noted what Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald was at one time contemplating as your fate?

In 1867 that gentleman wrote to a correspondent in Calcutta:

"War will come some day between England and the United States, and India can do us yeoman's service by sending an army of Sikhs, Ghoorkas and Beluchees across the Pacific to San Francisco, and holding that beautiful and immoral city with the surrounding California as security for Montreal and Canada."

(Laughter)

You see, Mr. Chairman, that although Canadians may not always be able to follow through, we should never be sold short on imaginative proposals.

Indeed, a question which some of your Canadian newspaper colleagues are now beginning to ask about my government is whether our ideas are capable of implementation. It's a valid question.

Imaginative and original approaches to problem solving are always welcome, but they must be practical and,

even more important, they must be effective.

Some of our policies may be of interest to this audience, and with your permission, I should like to speak about several of them in a few minutes.

But first, let me say that it should not be surprising if these policies in many instances either reflect or take into account the proximity of the United States. Living next to you is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant: No matter how friendly and even-tempered is the beast, one is affected by every twitch and grunt. (Laughter)

There is in Canada at the present time a growing sense of unease that in a nation as rich as ours there is a problem of widespread poverty; that among people as dispassionate and understanding as are Canadians there is linguistic apprehensiveness and inequality; that in a world possessed of the technological means to journey to the planets, there exist terrifying threats to our environment and to our very existence.

Canada, by itself, cannot solve all these problems, and perhaps not even some of them. But we firmly believe that we can and must apply our talents and our resources in such a fashion as to seek solutions and, where appropriate, to persuade other states to cooperate with us in seeking these solutions. We have some qualifications for these tasks, and we have had considerable valuable experience which might

prove to be of assistance to other states afflicted with similar problems. This is so partly because these qualifications, this experience, and the conditions which have spawned them, are similar in many respects to the differences and the difficulties which are found in the larger world community. And I wish to list some of them.

Canada is a federal state, the same as the U.S.A. Yet, two of our Provinces -- Ontario and Quebec -- are so populous in comparison with the other eight as to give to them an immensely influential position.

Nor is wealth in our country any more equitably distributed. The per capita income of the richest Province is about twice that of the poorest, and we have elaborate arrangements for redistribution of tax revenues among the Provinces of Canada.

Only one-third of all Canadians are of a stock that had English as its mother tongue, although two-thirds of the population live and work in English; the other third speak French daily as their normal means of communication -- socially, in commerce and with government.

Within Canada there are French-speaking universities, radio and television networks, newspapers and labor unions. There is a complete language community.

Another item: Our economy is founded largely upon foreign trade. In this respect I should pause to point out that

we sell more to the United States, and buy more from the United States, than any other country in the world. The immense size of this trade bears out this emphasis. Canada's purchases from the United States each year exceed in value the total purchases of your four next largest trading partners: Japan, Britain, Germany, and France combined -- more than your total sales to all of Latin America.

So it is this pattern of uneven economic development, this heritage of linguistic diversity, and this dependence upon continued international intercourse that leads us to think that perhaps by way of some example we may be of benefit to a world which is so desperately seeking solutions to pressing problems.

As I say this, I hope that we Canadians do not have an exaggerated view of our own importance. We prefer to think that our place in the world is such that we can occasionally experiment with good ideas without risking a complete upset of the whole international order.

We are as pleased as is any country when our views are sought or our assistance requested. But we may be excused, I hope, if we fail to take too seriously the suggestion of some of our friends from time to time that our acts -- or our failure to act -- this or that way will have profound international consequences or will lead to widescale undesirable results.

But as an example to others we hope that we are able on occasion to serve a beneficial purpose. Our close relationship with the United States is an important illustration of what I mean. The fact that Canada has lived and flourished for more than a century as the closest neighbor to what is now the greatest economic and military power in the history of the world is evidence to all countries of the basic decency of United States foreign policy.

And I add in all seriousness that every occasion on which our policies differ from yours in an important fashion, that difference -- if of course it is founded on good faith and sound evidence, as we hope is always the case -- contributes to your international reputation as a good citizen as much as it does to ours.

When Canada continues to trade in non-strategic goods with Cuba, or proposes the recognition of the Peoples' Republic of China, or -- as sometimes happens -- finds itself supporting a point of view different from yours in the United Nations, the world is given evidence of your basic qualities of understanding and tolerance.

Because a state's foreign policies are in substantial part a reflection of its domestic scene, I wish to mention to you some of our basic programs.

What we are trying to do in Canada is to ensure to every individual the dignity to which he as a human being is

entitled. Much of the unrest and turbulence now becoming evident in Western societies originates in the belief by the young, by the poor, by the minorities, that the massive socioeconomic machines that we have developed in our countries are incapable of recognizing them as persons, and of catering to their individual needs.

My government has stated again and again that it is dedicated to preserving the right of every individual to do his own thing.

We have proposed to the Provinces the amendment of the Constitution to include a far-sweeping charter of human liberties, a charter that will protect not only the classical political and legal rights which your Constitution has done here, but as well egalitarian and linguistic rights.

We have amended our criminal laws to permit more freedom to individuals to engage in acts which, sinful though they may be or appear to many, are not possessed of that injurious quality that we normally associate with criminal conduct.

We are examining with increased vigor such debilitating side-effects of an urbanized, technological society as environmental pollution, urban housing and transportation, the protection of spaces in which to play, to think, to be free from the pressures of noise and fumes.

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We are attempting to find some lasting and just solution to the problems of our native peoples -- the Indians and Eskimos.

We have introduced new concepts aimed at rehabilitating the economy of entire regions by supplying tailor-made programs designed to improve the quality of education, increase the efficiency of agriculture and industry, upgrade transportation facilities and strengthen social services and incentives.

All this is being done against the background of a federal political system and a bilingual society, as I mentioned earlier. If in these circumstances we are able to accomplish our goals, providing we do, it will be to achieve a better life for all Canadians, and if we manage to do it, we will demonstrate to our citizens that the social structure is capable of change, that it is sensitive to the needs and demands of individuals, that orderly processes do exist inside society able to act as a vehicle for the protestations and the challenges of the aggrieved, then we shall have succeeded not only for ourselves, but I believe we shall have illustrated that tribalism and withdrawal are not the answer, that diversity and nonconformity contribute to a more satisfying and culturally enriched life.

And, especially, Mr. Chairman, I think we will have demonstrated to the citizens that their government is capable of solving problems and of meeting crises when they arise, and

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demonstrated to the citizens that their government is capable

of solving problems and of meeting crises when they arise, and

perhaps preventing onsofar as possible the arising of such crises.

Most of our advanced societies are now in the position where they practically have to reassure their citizens and demonstrate palpably that these crises can be met, that government, in short, can govern; and we have to do this by steering a mid-course between too much authority and too much liberty, and it is a great challenge for all of us.

It should not therefore be expected that this kind of nation -- this Canada that I am describing -- should project itself onto the international scene as a mirror image of the United States. Much as our two countries are alike, much as they have in common -- both with one another and towards other nations -- we are different. And each of us is healthier as a result of that difference.

It cannot be expected that a country which is so deeply involved in social changes within its own boundaries should not be examining as well its foreign policies. Canada is, as you know, now reaching the conclusion of the first methodical and total review of our foreign policy and our defense policy since the end of World War II. We have gone back to first principles in doing so, and we are questioning the continuing validity of many assumptions.

Some policies will, without question, be found wanting for the conditions of today and be changed. Others will

be retained. I want to emphasize that this review is not an excuse to prove our independence; that independence needs no proving. Nor is it an exercise intended to illustrate to the United States our potential for irritation. We have no desire, and no surplus energy, for that kind of activity.

We are building a new society in Canada. It should not be surprising that the external manifestations of this society may be somewhat different than has been the case in the past. But just as one of the invariable principles of that domestic society is the primacy of the individual, so is one of the invariables of our foreign policy genuine friendship with the United States.

The usual way of stating this fact is to refer in somewhat grandiloquent terms to our 4,000-mile unguarded border, to our lengthy history of amity and harmony, and to the many projects in which we are jointly engaged. It could also be illustrated by proving how interdependent our two nations are in economic, in resource, in geographic, and in environmental terms.

I prefer, however, to express all this more on the level of hockey and Charlie Brown, however. One of our better known humorists, Stephen Leacock, put things in their proper perspective. Writing as an English-speaking person in a bilingual society, he said:

"In Canada we have enough to do keeping up with two spoken languages without trying to invent slang, so we just go right ahead and use English for literature, Scotch for sermons, and American for conversation." (Laughter)

Mr. Chairman, so long as we continue to behave like this, I think the warmth with which Canadians and Americans regard each other will protect us all from any sins our governments might in error commit.

(Applause.)

MR. HEFFERNAN: Prime Minister, perhaps I should explain that I only ask the questions as they are sent up from the floor.

The first one: After hearing Mr. Nixon's argument, are you now in favor of an ABM system?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Well, you know, in Canada we have a Cabinet system of government. We do not have the Presidential system. This really means, in effect, that all I can do now is go back to my Cabinet colleagues, report to them the new information we have received, report to them the new technological information that has been imparted to us, and we will have to assess the impact of this on our own approach to foreign affairs, and we will have to announce a decision. I could not say, therefore, if Mr. Nixon's arguments have changed my mind, because I don't believe any of

you or anyone knows what my mind was before. (Laughter)

MR. HEFFERNAN: We have a question in French, and the Prime Minister has kindly consented to read it himself and to reply in French.

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: If you know Quebec at all, you can be sure this is not a friendly question, or it is not put up by someone friendly. It is certainly bona fide. I can read French, but I cannot read everyone's writing.

(Speaking in French.)

In a few words, this really means that though we were down here to meet the President and his Administration, we are aware of what the critics made of the decision on the ABM, and we did meet some of these critics socially yesterday, but that any formal discussion with them could not properly take place.

Fortunately, thanks to gentlemen and ladies like yourselves, we are made aware in a very immediate though direct way of what these criticisms are.

As I entered this building, I found one of these persons making an argument, a man with a picket sign telling us what we should tell your government to do.

MR. HEFFERNAN: A two-part question, sir, which represents many which have been passed up to me: What are the reasons for the seeming lack of progress on your proposal to recognize Communist China -- that is, the lack of progress

in the Stockholm talks? Do you think it is possible to have a two-China or one-China/one-Formosa arrangement?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Well, on the lack of progress, our Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Sharp, has indicated to Parliament that we were prepared to be very patient. I do not know how patient this really means.

One person has calculated that the Chinese intend to take as long in exchanging recognition as was taken by the country who delayed recognition, which would mean it would mean waiting 20 years. But this would be a frightening prospect. But there are more frightening ones: If we do decide to recognize the Vatican, we are 2,000 years late. (Laughter)

But, seriously, we do not think that there has been any undue delay. It is only two months now I believe since we made our first approach to the Peoples' Republic of China representative in Stockholm, and we have put to them our desire to enter into talks with a view to exchanging representation.

There has been, I believe, one meeting since, and there is really nothing more to report at this time. But it does not distress us at all. I think the important step has been made -- that is our indication that we were prepared to embark upon diplomatic representations, and we were prepared -- perhaps that is also by way of answering the other part of the question -- to recognize Peking as the legitimate

Government of China. This, in itself, is an answer to what we would do, or what we consider, to Formosa to be the legitimate Government of China. It is that we cannot recognize two governments. Therefore, we are indicating to Peking and to the world that we are now prepared to recognize it as the legitimate government.

What consequences will flow or not out of our determination, I suppose it would be even unwise to speculate too widely on them, and, as it were, to show all of our hand before reaching agreement with Peking.

But Formosa's claim to be the government of all China is one, of course, which we reject, once we recognize Peking as the government. What will follow, whether there will be one Formosa and one China, is really for these two countries to determine, more than ourselves.

As you know, the act of recognition of a country does not carry with it necessarily a recognition of that country's territorial claims. We can recognize the Argentine without recognizing its territorial claims over the Falkland Islands. Therefore, the fate of Formosa is really one which will be determined by the Taipei Government itself.

As to whether it will wish to continue asserting its claim of being the government of all China, or whether it will embark on some other course of being a sovereign state of its own, I cannot speculate on what course they wish to

follow, nor what course Peking will wish to follow in its relations with it.

MR. HEFFERNAN: There are a number of questions on the question of Canada joining the Organization of American States. The most direct of them:

Why doesn't Canada join the Organization of American States?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Well, as you know, we have been considering this for a long while. I think what has held us back most in the past is, as in the present, the sense that if we join the Organization of American States, we would be a pale reflection of the American image, and we did not find this useful.

To be quite blunt, we have never evolved a very coherent and organic policy towards Latin America. We have been turned towards Europe, other parts of the world, much more than we have towards South America and Central America. And, not having a clear, coherent policy, had we entered the OAS, I am afraid we would have brought no new knowledge and no new resolve, and the danger of that would have been that either we would have reflected the State Department's views in all matters, and this would have been, I believe, not only detrimental to ourselves, but it would have been detrimental to the kind of relationship that we hoped to establish with Latin American countries. Or, on the other hand, we would have

necessarily felt obliged in many cases to disagree with the State Department just to prove our independence, but without any logical or consistent background or policy toward it.

So what we have done in this new administration is to send a high-level delegation to South America, a ministerial level, which toured most of the countries of Latin America and Central America, and which is now embarked upon defining for ourselves a policy as regards these nations.

The question of the OAS is really only secondary. I think we all feel we would like to be part of it, but only if we can be a useful part. And if we find that our policy is one on which we can make a clear statement, one on which we can seek clear guidelines and principles which we would follow, then I think a normal step would be to ask for admittance to the OAS.

I might only point out in passing that I believe that many of the Latin Americans -- most of them -- feel very much as we do in this, and it was rarely the first or the second question they asked us, whether we would join the OAS. They were more interested in knowing where we were going in relation to them. And we indicated to them we wanted to establish much tighter links with this vast land mass which will have some half-million people by the turn of the century and which, if we do not consider it as one of the important parts of the world, can become obviously a very

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serious source of disturbance to world order.

Because of this, we want to increase our relations with South America and with Central America. We want to do it in the areas of trade, in the areas of culture, of exchanges of many kinds -- of people, of students, of ideas. And as a next step we will consider the OAS.

I would say that our inclination is towards asking admittance, but with the timing to be determined.

MR. HEFFERNAN: In the same field, Prime Minister, a nice easy one:

Why does Canada support Cuban intervention in Latin America by trading with Cuba?

And along with it:

What should Uncle Sam do about Fidel Castro?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Well, I suppose a long dissertation on Cuba would be repetition of one that you have heard and read many times.

I would perhaps reject the premises of the question that we do support Castro's activities in South America merely because we are trading with them. Because if that were the principle on which we were to base ourselves, we could argue that the United States does trade with a lot of governments -- most countries in the world trade with a lot of governments with policies of which they do not approve. And I believe that one of the best vehicles of understanding and

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I believe that one of the best vehicles of understanding and

closer relationships between countries is trade. The missionaries come first, and the traders come next.

I think that the Canadian approach to these problems -- and it has not been an original one -- is that in our relations with other countries we should not try and intermingle the two types of issues. Short of being at the state of war with another nation, we do not believe that curtailment of trade is in any sense conducive to a lessening of tensions between countries. On the contrary. We trade with Communist China. We trade with Cuba. The United States trades with many countries, the policies of which I am sure your people disagree.

Therefore, what should the United States do with Fidel Castro? I suppose anyone in this room now would say the thing you shouldn't do is ask the FBI.

I think it is important to realize that the force of nationalism, the force of independence, the feelings of independence of a nation are pretty hard to stifle, and that in international relations -- as in domestic relations -- the catchword, the key word is communication. The key word is dialogue, in the same sense that we are beginning to discover within our societies that you cannot repress sources of discontent and hope that you will have a peaceful society. But the only way is to talk about the values which the discontented groups feel. Talk about bridging this gap, whether it be a

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generation gap or color gap or geographical gap within a society or a rich-poor gap. The only way to prevent two societies developing within the nation, each with its own set of values which reflects the other person's set of values, is to discuss these values, to meet, to exchange, as you try to do in your politics -- as we try to do in ours. And if this is true within societies where tensions are mounting, it is certainly true in international society. And that is why we have the United Nations. That is why we have forums where we discuss the other person's values.

And we think that in the case of Cuba this applies just as much as it applies in the case of Red China. It is once again only by discussion and communication that you can perhaps not convince the other person that your values are the right ones, but convince him that he has had a chance to make his point, and that the discussion is based on reason and appeal to thought rather than to emotion.

(Applause.)

MR. HEFFERNAN: On oil, Prime Minister, what is your position for or against the continental oil policy for the United States and Canada? And are you here to discuss it now?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Yes, we are. We did discuss it, both the President and myself, and then our Ministers and officials. We have a continental oil policy of sorts. It was set up in the past, and it worked reasonably well.

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The technical details of it are perhaps a bit elaborate, but essentially it means that Canadian oil producers sell to Western Canada and sell to the United States an amount roughly equivalent to the amount of oil that Eastern Canada purchases overseas and, notably, from the Venezuelan producers. It is a deal between the American Government and the Canadian Government which is cost-saving for both parties.

The new oil discoveries and the implementation of this past policy is creating problems. We did discuss them and we are announcing in a press release that there will be further meetings on the 2nd of April with a view to looking at this continental oil policy and discovering the new avenues that might want to be followed.

I think we have arguments for the United States in the sense that our oil is not only cheaper, but it is more secure in terms of defense in any future conflict. It is continental oil. It is more easy of access. And if we do not continue exploring and discovering new sources of oil, there might come a time when there will be an oil gap that we won't be able to fill on this continent.

Discoveries at Prudhoe Bay perhaps retarded for some years the development of such a gap, but I think it is very present in our mind, both the American and Canadian Government, and we will now be seeking to establish new guidelines for a policy which will be in the mutual interests of both

countries to permit the encouragement and development of oil resources in Canada, and at the same time not disrupting your internal markets.

We find that the discussions went very well, that there was a great deal of understanding between our government on the over-all aims, and we are very optimistic that there will be emerging a renewed oil policy which will be satisfactory to both governments.

It is an irrelevant question from the point of view of our policy, and because it is not a relevant question, we do not have statistics on it. We do not know how many draft-dodgers have been admitted to Canada and have stayed there. I believe it is a policy which is similar to that practiced by the United States to require draft-dodgers. We do know that a number of Americans come to Canada on a visa. We also know that a number, perhaps a superior number, of Canadians come to the United States to join the United States Army. We do not have statistics. Some of them are even fighting in Vietnam.

But what effect does draft-dodging have on our economy is a question which, of course, I do not know.

MR. HEFFERNAN: A bank of questions on the question of draft evaders. What is the attitude of your government in regard to Americans who travel to Canada to evade the draft? Has their entry noticeably affected the thoughts or policy of Canadians? And is there a limit to the number you will admit?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: When a question is restricted to draft-dodgers, the answer is a very simple one. The status of being a draft-dodger does not enter at all into our immigration policy. You can have your draft card in your pocket. If you are dodging the draft, you are not even asked about it and you are admitted to the Canadian border.

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But what effect these draft-bodgers have on our students is a question which, of course, I am not informed

on than you might be, sir. Their presence has been felt. They have aroused a great deal of sympathy on the Canadian campuses. By and large they have proved to be good students, orderly students, and much of their attitude, I believe, is dictated by reasons of conscience rather than by any desire to upset a particular order of things.

If the question were to go on and ask about deserters, I might be in a more delicate situation. Our policy as to deserters is not as clear as that regarding draft evaders. In general, we do have statistics on this and, in general, Canadian policy has been, shall we say, a little less free towards deserters than to draft evaders, on the basis that immigration does consider whether a prospective immigrant has any moral or legal commitment in the country of origin. And this applies, of course, not only to American immigrants but to immigrants from all countries. We do have statistics on this. I believe that we admitted 56 deserters in Canada last year and this, as you see, is a very small number. There may be others in Canada but who have not asked for immigrant status and, therefore, on which we cannot report.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Another question: Do you really think you can unify the French-English tradition in the Dominion? And how serious today is the threat of French Canada seceding from the commonwealth?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Well, this is a question on

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status. We say there are in Canada many ethnic groups, as in the United States of America. And on the basis of history, we cannot say that English and French Canadians are the first or the best and that their languages should be the only official ones because if it were an historical basis, we would find that there were other people here before the English and French, the Eskimos and Indians and so on.

Therefore, we tend to look at this problem from a pragmatic point of view. We say, in fact, there are two large linguistic communities in Canada: the English-speaking and the French-speaking. And because of this, it will be important for members of those two communities to be able to communicate with the state in the official language of their choice. And this can be done. It can be legislated. We cannot legislate equality of two groups in the nation. It is not possible. I mean, you can say that the citizen of Guatemala is equal to the citizen of Germany. You can talk of an equation in international law, but within a society you cannot say the blacks will be equal to the white, or the English will be equal to the French. This is not an operational concept. You cannot say there will be as many stores on Main Street of the French language as there is per capita French in the country. You cannot say there will be as many students in your school as there is a proportion of that group to the overall total. It is not an operational concept. But the

which there is no real answer except that many politicians have staked their political future on the hypothesis that there was no lasting danger of secession and, more important, that we could unify, as the question puts it, Canadians in spite of their linguistic differences.

I think the key to this -- and it might be worth a word of explanation -- is that we as a government -- and it was the position of our party in the elections which, as you know, also scored resounding victories in the French part of Canada, which was an overwhelming return. Our approach is that there are not two nations in Canada, because if you are going to talk of two nations there is a danger that you will go towards two political nations and two distinct legal entities either called "states" or "countries" or "peoples."

Our approach to it is that language is merely a vehicle; it is a tool. We have one nation. We have one political nation and we want to remain one political nation. But in this nation we have taken the position that there will be two vehicles of communication. There will not be the French-Canadian and the English-Canadian. There will be French-speaking Canadians, which might include a lot of people of Italian, of Hungarian, of Rumanian ancestry, and there will be English-speaking Canadians which in fact include Canadians of all ethnic origins. Therefore, we do not try to distinguish two ethnic groups or say one ethnic group has a privileged

status. We say there are in Canada many ethnic groups, as in the United States of America. And on the basis of history, we cannot say that English and French Canadians are the first or the best and that their languages should be the only official ones because if it were an historical basis, we would find that there were other people here before the English and French, the Eskimos and Indians and so on.

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language concept is an operational concept. It has worked in many other countries more or less well.

(Speaking in French.)

It works in Switzerland where they have three and even four recognized languages. It works in South Africa; it works in Ireland; it works in Belgium. Not perfectly. It does not work perfectly in Canada, too, but we believe that the approach to the world of tomorrow is a pluralistic one, not based on ethnicity any more than it should be based on religion. And we reject any approach which tends to say that the state is the protector of an ethnic group -- the French-Canadians in this particular instance. The state must be the servant of all citizens regardless of not only color and creed but of ethnic origin.

By rejecting this approach we do not reject, as I say, the legal declaration that the tools of communication shall be the English and the French language. This is once again not because they are superior or intrinsically better than any other language. It is because, as a pragmatic fact, we see that these are the tools of communication; that if the country is to hold together, each citizen of that linguistic community must feel that he can plug into his organs of government. And this is our approach.

(Applause.)

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(Applause.)

MR. HARTKEIMAN: Perhaps following that up, sir: Do

many Canadians feel that the British-North American Act of 1867 is outdated? What would you propose to update it?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: We have been embarked upon constitutional negotiations in the past year a little bit. Our approach for some years was that there were very few important problems in Canada that could not be solved under the BNA Act, 100 years old as it was. But the urgent priorities for government were at all levels. They were questions of poverty, questions of urban growth, questions of environmental control, questions of law and order, questions of economic development and the correction of regional disparities. All these problems are top priority, and we fear that too much of our mental energies and time would be diverted into constitutional debates.

We feel that by and large the citizen in our country, as I suppose in many countries, is not so much interested in arbitrating quarrels between one level of government and the other, not so much interested in the results of competitions between, in our case, the central government and the provincial governments as to who should have power over what. The citizen is interested in being well governed from all levels of government. And that is why our approach to the constitution has been that first we must state that which unites us, those principles which we hold in common, all Canadians, rather than begin by opening the debate on a division of power, on the

respective jurisdictions of the federal and provincial governments which, as I say, appear only secondary to the citizen. We have tried to define those values common to all. One of them, as I just said in answer to the previous question, being the linguistic beliefs; and that is why we have brought before the Provinces this approach to the constitution which, as I said in my remarks earlier, is the belief in a charter of fundamental human liberties. If we can state that in the constitution, if we can protect the citizen from governmental invasion of these rights, then we would have gone a long way to establish the community of feeling and of thought in Canada which is essential to any consensus of any government.

That is the first step. We have gone well beyond that. I don't want to bore at least the Canadian people in the audience by summing up what we have proposed, but beginning February of last year, until the present day, we have had many, many, many discussions on the most vital parts of the constitution. They go all the way from a charter of fundamental liberties to the institutions of federalism themselves; the role of the Senate in the federal form of government; the role of the Supreme Court; how it should be set up; the role of the national capital and the desirability of having it reflect the bilingual and multi-cultural character of our society.

These are all propositions which we have put to the Provinces, upon which debate and negotiation is going on at the

present time.

There has been in recent months an emphasis put on by some Provinces on the fiscal aspects of it, on the use of the spending power by the federal government. This aspect is being debated, too, and my government's feeling on what the constitution might be could be best gathered by reading a fairly lengthy booklet on it which our Ambassador would be delighted to hand to you.

This is our general approach.

MR. HEFFERNAN: There are many question which we will not have the time to ask. But maybe one we should deal with is: Did you and President Nixon have a meeting of the minds on the future of an international grains agreement; and more specifically, the world price of wheat; and do you think that price is too high?

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Well, we did have a meeting of the minds at least on our approach to it. We did feel that this international agreement, which was drafted after considerable pain by producing, exporting and importing nations, it would be desirable if it could be respected.

We realize that beyond this pious wish there is much work to be done. One of the large and important exporters is, of course, the Government of Australia. The Prime Minister of Australia will be in this country and in our country in some days' time, and we have agreed that we should try and

involve the Government of Australia in our approach to re-establishing respect for the international grains agreement. To this extent there has been a meeting of the minds.

We have not found out how we could get the world community to accept our point of view, but there has been called a meeting early in April of the exporting nations. They are to examine this problem. They will then examine the problem that was asked, sir, about whether the price has been set too high.

Our Canadian answer to this is that the price was set after a great deal of discussion and debate. It is perhaps easy or tempting now to say the price was too high because of the current situation of the producing nations and the surpluses in grain. But this is the basis of all commodity agreements. If we didn't have an agreement, we might be able to probably say the price is too high now; but in years of shortage, then the price would probably appear too low to us and we would be tempted, all of us exporters, to up the price considerably to the consuming nations. And that is why a balance must be established in all these international commodities, commodities which are internationally traded, and that is why we have this approach.

It is no longer the individual farmer who is selling his wheat or his sugar or his cocoa or whatever the other commodity is which is covered or should be covered by inter-

national agreements. It is the state itself which is involved. And we know that all of these policies, if they are not guided by an agreement, will tend to beggar each other, and the result will not be favorable.

In times of overproduction, it will be advantageous to the consuming nation; but in times of underproduction, it will be disastrous to them. And it is to average this out, sir, that we have these agreements. And on these general principles the President and his Administration agree very much with ours.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Prime Minister, we are very indebted to you for coming here today and answering so many questions. And in acknowledgment of this we would like to present this Certificate of Appreciation from the National Press Club.

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. HEFFERNAN: Also, sir, we have a little gift -- the official tie for the National Press Club. And we would implore you not to try to hang yourself with it, just to wear it.

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. HEFFERNAN: One final question -- I don't know whether we are going to get this into air time. When is General de Gaulle coming for a return visit? (Laughter.)

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MR. HEPBURN: One final question -- I don't know whether we are going to get this into air time. When is General de Gaulle coming for a return visit? (Laughter.)

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: I believe you have invited him to visit your country. We will see what he does if he goes to Louisiana, and then we will report.

(Laughter and applause.)

(Whereupon, at 2:00 o'clock p.m., the conference was concluded.)

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