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NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS, THE HONOURABLE MITCHELL  
SHARP, HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE,  
TORONTO, NOVEMBER 26, 1971

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It is an honour for me to address this great congregation from the pulpit of the Sanctuary in Holy Blossom Temple. In its essence a place of worship, this Temple also serves the people of Toronto as an intellectual centre and a centre for social action. It exemplifies the way in which one of our great communities maintains its particular faith, traditions and culture while at the same time making its distinctive contribution to the life of the metropolis and the nation as a whole.

I would first like to congratulate those responsible, and particularly Mr. Milton Cadsby, for the initiative shown in arranging this seminar to discuss one of the most central and most demanding questions we face, the continued life, health and unity of our beloved country. I would also like, at the very beginning, to say to you frankly that the title given your seminar "Canada and Quebec a Year Later" presents certain difficulties for me. One cannot speak of Canada on the one hand and Quebec on the other. Without Quebec there is no Canada. Quebec is an essential element in the Canadian reality. It was the Indian word Canada that was adopted as the name for this part of North America by the original French colonisers. Our French-speaking fellow-citizens were Canadien for two centuries before the term Québécois took on its present meaning. Today, the overwhelming majority of the people of Quebec are still Canadien, then Québécois. On Sunday M. René Lévesque may see fit to challenge that simple, basic assumption. I suggest to you that you listen carefully and make up your own minds about the extent to which his argument is based upon observable fact, and the extent to which it flows from his own passionate involvement in his chosen cause.

The last of the first things that I have to say to you is that my personal faith in the continued life and health of a united Canada is unshaken, and my personal commitment to a united Canada will not be shaken. In saying this I speak not only for myself but for the Government of which I am part and for the Liberal Party that I support. Were this not the case, I could not be a member of the Government nor a supporter of my party.

In political discussions today the so-called "scenarios" are very much in vogue. I prefer to call them the "what ifs?" You know the sort of thing I mean - Can you devise a scenario by which John Lindsay would become the next President of the United States? - What if the British legislation for entry into the Common Market were defeated at Westminster? This kind of thing amounts to a highly-sophisticated and intellectually stimulating parlour game but, except when practiced by profes-

sionals, it does not replace the careful study, thorough research and disciplined thinking needed to make sensible and effective plans for a country's future.

So tonight I will not answer the question - what if Quebec were to separate? - except to say this, that there is no way for Quebec to separate from Canada. For what would be left would not be Canada. Canada itself would be destroyed. Would it be Canada without the Gulf of St. Lawrence, without the Rock of Quebec, without Montreal, without most of its French-speaking population? With the Atlantic Provinces separated from Ontario and the West by a new and different country? Not in my mind, nor, I think, in yours. What you are here to discuss, I suggest, is "Quebec's place in Canada", not "Canada and Quebec". This will be your pre-occupation as your seminar proceeds, tonight my task is to share with you some of my thoughts about the state of the nation, about the Canadian unity in its broadest sense.

It has become a cliché that the United States is a melting-pot and Canada a mosaic. People also talk of the Canadian tapestry wherein many different coloured threads make up a coherent pattern. While I take no exception to that particular image sometimes I think that today we have turned the tapestry to the wall and are all staring at the confusion of knots and ganglia trying to deduce from them the pattern that is clearly to be seen when we look at it from the proper angle. Sir Wilfrid Laurier likened Canada to a cathedral which presents its essential unity although stone remains stone, wood remains wood and stained glass retains its colours.

A mosaic, a tapestry, a cathedral. None of these symbols quite suits our condition because none is a product of organic growth. They are works of vision, imagination, skill, disciplined effort, even of faith, but not living, growing and changing as is Canada. No one generation owns Canada, each succeeding generation must see itself as the trustee at once for what has been handed down from the past and for what is to be handed on to the next generation. Canada came into being as an act of political will, it has grown and prospered by the will of Canadians. More than ever before its survival in identity and purpose relies equally upon the will of us all.

The giants of the past, MacDonald, Laurier - dare I add Mackenzie King? - will not come to our rescue. For giants are only of the past. There are never giants of the present. In their time MacDonald, Laurier and King were as fallible and as widely and bitterly criticized as a Diefenbaker, a Pearson or a Trudeau. Leaders we have and must have. They leave their stamp upon their times but more often in a free society, they give direction and effect to the expressed will of the people,

do their part to meet the needs and satisfy the aspirations of the people they lead. In the true sense of the word - and I need not labour the point before this audience - the leader is the scapegoat for the people - if they do not like the outcome of the will they have expressed they take out their frustration on the leader that has given it effect.

Canada is what we have made it, all of us. It will be what we want it to be, neither more nor less.

I have said that Canada came into being as an act of political will. It is also true to say that it came into being by way of a political process, a process of clear choices, of negotiation. A number of British colonies in North America, each with its own measure of autonomy perceived their interest to be in the formation of a confederation, the framework for building a nation. The entities that came together in 1867 were far from homogenous in language, culture or economy. To make the Confederation the leaders of the time faced the same dilemma Canada faces today, how to give the central government the essential instruments for nation-building while reserving to what were to become the provinces the necessary powers to safeguard the particular interests of each.

From the beginning Canada has been a plural society, with all the richness and all the difficulties that plurality entails. The constitutional history of Canada has been a process of re-definition of the relationships between the political units, the varying cultural communities and the different interest groups that make up the nation. I suggest to you that this process of re-definition of rights and privileges far from being a sign of weakness in the Canadian unity is lively evidence of its underlying strength and vitality. Canada is not a set-piece, embalmed forever like a fly in amber but a living, pulsating being bearing the scars of old wounds, suffering today as in the past from passing illnesses and injuries but basically strong, resilient and well able to meet the challenges and crises of the present as it has overcome those of the past.

There are many aspects to the Canadian plurality and many approaches to its definition. For my purpose tonight, I will confine myself to three aspects - political, cultural and regional, which is to say economic. The political aspect presents no problems of definition, it can be seen at a glance on the map - one country comprising ten provinces and two territories. We all have some understanding of the way jurisdiction is shared between the federal and provincial governments. The law is set out in the British North America Act and has been interpreted by the courts over the past century -

at times, some of us think somewhat eccentrically by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London in the period 1890-1935. What the Act does not provide for nor the courts resolve is the continuing struggle for advantage between the two levels of government.

The pendulum swings, in times of peace and prosperity the provinces tend to come to the fore, in times of war the provincial governments recede as the nation draws itself together to meet and overcome crisis. Tension between the two levels of government is healthy, creative and stimulating, when it represents competition aimed at giving the Canadian people the best possible service. When it deteriorates into a mere scramble for political or fiscal advantage unrelated to the needs of the people it becomes unhealthy and destructive.

As a member of both the Pearson and Trudeau administrations, I have played an active part in the development of regular and much more frequent federal-provincial conferences and consultations at both ministerial and official levels. These must and should continue. At the same time, I find myself plagued by a certain unease by one of the apparent by-products of these meetings, a nagging suggestion that the provincial governments somehow represent the people of their provinces in the negotiations while the federal government is cast in the role of a hostile outside power that must be placated or overcome.

I believe this is more a matter of appearance than reality, but appearance matters a great deal, more than ever in the television age.

It is well to remind ourselves from time to time that in our federal system the people of Canada are represented by their elected members of Parliament and their federal government as well as by their elected members of provincial legislatures and their provincial governments. The people of Ontario and Quebec exercise their influence upon Canadian policy more directly through their elected representatives in Parliament than through federal-provincial conferences of first ministers.

In July 1963, as I need not remind you, the Government set up a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The work of this Commission and the Government action it has stimulated are changing the face of the nation. It represents, perhaps, a turning point in what I have called the continuing process of re-definition, in this case, a negotiated re-definition. Its very title emphasizes this process. If the Commission were to be set up today it would undoubtedly be called the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. Its work has sharpened the focus in which we see ourselves.

Bilingual we are and must continue since a multilingual state, a modern Tower of Babel, would be hopelessly unwieldy, impossibly expensive and altogether inoperable. In social terms we now clearly recognize that we are multicultural rather than bicultural.

Essential to the Canadian plurality is the interaction of different cultures, indigenous, European and many others. Each of these cultural groups contains in itself much that is of great value, that must be preserved. Each has much to offer to the enrichment of our national life. In giving recognition to Canada's cultural diversity, the Government is not confining itself to words and good intentions, the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State disposes of growing financial resources available to our many cultural minorities to maintain and strengthen their cultural life.

Differing regional interests and problems contribute to the Canadian plurality. Despite the best efforts of the Federal and Provincial Governments working together, regional disparities in opportunity and standard of living continue to plague us. This is one of the most difficult problems we are facing, and one to which adequate solutions have yet to be found. A measure of social justice is achieved by equalization payments to the provincial governments, a number of co-ordinated projects at the federal and provincial levels are being used to stimulate investment and employment in areas suffering from chronic stagnation. More and better co-ordination is needed, and this is one area where federal-provincial co-operation is an essential and federal-provincial competition a nonsense.

Regional disparity is only one facet of the problem. There are very real conflicts of interest between regions, conflicts that can only be resolved at the federal level. Problems arise and they have to be resolved, again by a continuing process of negotiation. Economically, Canada is five regions each with its own particular characteristics and interests. This is one of the reasons why Canadian political parties with any pretension to being national seem to differ so little in their general programmes. By the time the national parties have worked out compromises among their own representatives from British Columbia, the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, they look very much alike. The only political parties that appear to offer radically different programmes are those with a narrow base that have little hope of attaining power in Ottawa, and it is observable that no political party has any chance of retaining office in Ottawa that does not elect substantial numbers of members from both English and French-speaking regions.

Political, cultural, regional - just three aspects of the Canadian plurality, the plurality that I define as one of great opportunity, and as a major factor contributing to Canadian unity and to Canadian identity. Why, I sometimes ask myself do we Canadians so often agonize about our bilingualism, our multiculturalism, our regional differences, when we should be rejoicing at our good fortune? I must make very clear, however, that particular interests, political, cultural or regional, cannot be pursued to the detriment of basic national aims. The Canadian plurality can only thrive within a wider Canadian unity.

In its recent series "Foreign Policy for Canadians", the Government stated that our basic national aims, however described, embrace three essential ideas:

- that Canada will continue secure as an independent political entity;
- that Canada and all Canadians will enjoy enlarging prosperity in the widest possible sense;
- that all Canadians will see in the life they have and the contribution they make to humanity something worthwhile preserving in identity and purpose.

If these ideas are correctly identified, and if they have the same meaning for us all, I for one have no fears for the continuance and increasing strength of the Canadian unity. This is not to say that Canadian unity can be taken for granted. There is some dispute about who first said "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance". Whoever did say it, it means that anything worth having must be striven for incessantly, for we are always plagued on the one hand by those who seek only to destroy what others have built and on the other by those with little minds who, unable to grasp the essential ideas and fundamental concepts that underlie civilization, are ready to see them watered down and wasted away.

While I do not for a moment question altruism as a motive in human behaviour, it must be assumed that individuals, like nations generally, act in their own best interest as they perceive it. I believe the same to be true of the many disparate groups that make up the Canadian plurality. Canada will continue united, and continue to be more than the sum of its parts as long as the varied elements in its plurality see in Canada their best chance for material and spiritual fulfillment.

This is nowhere more clearly to be seen than in Quebec. Quebec became part of Confederation in 1867 in pursuit of its own best interests as seen by its leaders of the time. It

remains a lively and integral part of Canada today for the same reason. The clearest and truest message coming to the rest of us from Quebec today is a new claim, a new insistence upon the Quebec presence in Canada. After a century of turning inward, of being an enclave, a sort of state within the state, Quebec is turning outward toward Canada and the whole world. Canada must now come to terms with itself as a country with two majorities, one national, the other regional. Our French-speaking fellow-citizens no longer see themselves as a French-speaking minority in an English-speaking Canada but as an integral part of the great, universal French culture sharing Canada on a basis of equality with those of English expression.

There is no longer any question of "doing something for" Quebec, or "giving something to" Quebec. That very phraseology betrays a basic misunderstanding of what has happened and what is happening. It is the sort of misunderstanding that gives rise to the fatal question that so rightly infuriates Quebecers - What does Quebec want? The right question is: What kind of Canada do we want?

If this is the question that is put, the problems that arose out of the concept of a "special status" for Quebec can be seen in perspective. Such widely differing men as Bob Stanfield, Tommy Douglas and Claude Ryan seized upon "special status" as a kind of sovereign specific for all the ills of Quebec. They all dropped it very quickly, in part because it proved to be incapable of definition but, I think, in essence because "special status" was a return to the mistaken idea that something had to be "done for" or "given to" Quebec.

I have expressed my confidence in the survival of the Canadian unity, but if it is to survive there are certain requirements that must be met, by Quebec and by the rest of us. We must all subscribe fully to the national aims I quoted earlier. Quebec must pursue its special aims and aspirations within the disciplines that life in a federal state imposes upon all its constituent parts. There is room to spare for this if the will is there. The rest of us must learn to adapt ourselves to the new Canadian reality, to living in a country with two majorities.

As your discussions proceed you will be dealing in depth with separatism in Quebec. What I want to suggest to you tonight is that Quebec separatism will be easier to understand if it is clearly recognized to have two different expressions. There is the political movement which is a highly-visible threat, though not the only threat, to the Canadian unity. There is also a kind of spiritual separatism in Quebec. Every Canadien is at heart un peu séparatiste. This arises, quite naturally, I believe, from a sense of particularism, the



shared language, culture and history of a group not without its own internal stresses, but vis-à-vis the rest of North America relatively close-knit. The same sense of particularism is to be found in other communities within the Canadian unity, including, no doubt, the Jewish community.

A sympathetic understanding of this inward separatism is important if we are to adapt successfully to the paradox of the two majorities. What I am saying is a little more than Vive la difference!, I am suggesting that we will fail to adapt if we expect that the French majority will ever have exactly the same view of Canada and the world as the English-speaking majority. I think too that this kind of spiritual separatism may have been a factor in the 24% of the popular vote racked up by René Levesque in the last Quebec election. Part of the vote came from convinced separatists, part was the familiar "a plague on both your houses" protest. Part was attracted by the party's avowed socialism. But another element was this spiritual separatism, expressed in a vote for René since he wasn't going to win anyway. I do not want to exaggerate this factor but it was there.

For a government to function effectively it must have the consent of the great majority of the people, and a considerable measure of support. I believe this rule to be of near-universal application regardless of constitutional forms. In the age of instant communications, the systematic use of terror is no longer possible except perhaps in small, isolated states which have remained immune to the immense and growing weight of world opinion. While we reject the repressiveness of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet Union or China and many of their political ideas and aims, we must assume that they suit the Soviet and Chinese people well enough to keep the rulers in office by consent, whether express or implied.

In free and open societies like our own, something more than a general consent and a reasonable measure of support is required to put a government in office and keep it there. Enough people must be convinced of the good faith and competence of a political leader and his party to give him a majority in the House of Commons, or at the least more seats than anyone else. Once the leader has gained the confidence of the House of Commons he has, in effect, been given a contract to govern the country for a period of four years, more or less, as long as he retains the confidence of the House.

This at least, is how it used to be. A leader and his party were given a four year contract, the terms of which required the administration to govern wisely and well, and

required the electorate to leave the business of government to the administration unless, of course, something ghastly happened.

This is no longer the case in our society. For some time now we have been passing through a difficult and often confusing period of searching for a new kind of contract between the government and the governed. I suggest to you that there are two main reasons for this. First, the communications explosion has produced an electorate that has immediate and easy access to more information about public affairs than anyone can possibly absorb. Secondly, there is a growing disenchantment in Canada and elsewhere with the new society ushered in by the technological revolution.

We talk of a communications explosion. If there was an explosion it had a long fuse. It was the culmination of a long process that started with universal education and a high literacy rate, moved through the era of the penny newspaper and penny postal rate, of the electric telegraph and radio into the present day of television and world-wide instantaneous communications.

The business of Government is now carried out in the full glare of publicity. Contrast, if you like, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 which drew the map of Europe that was to last for a century with the General Assembly of the United Nations. Only a tiny proportion of the population of Europe even knew that the Congress of Vienna was taking place. Millions whose lives would be affected by its outcome had no inkling of its deliberations and no true representation in them. And it isn't necessary to go back that far. The statesmen at Versailles in 1919 redrew the map of Europe without much, if any, consideration of the views of whole peoples. Harold Nicolson, a British diplomat who took part in the Peace Conference reports the feeling of unease he had when he realized that Lloyd George, Clémenceau and Wilson were happily setting up the state of Yugoslavia without any basic knowledge or understanding of where it was or what kind of people were living there.

Access to abundant if not always totally reliable information about public affairs has profoundly changed Canadians' expectations of their governments. Accountability is now demanded on a day-to-day basis, not only at election time. Consultation with the people is now expected on a continuing basis. Above all, people are demanding the right to be heard. None of this is very surprising, it should be

and is welcome to the Government. But it presents formidable difficulties. Institutions are slow to change, and so are attitudes. We in the Government at Ottawa are trying to find ways to meet the demands for accountability, for consultation, for the right to be heard. The experience to date has not always been happy, and the success to date could at best be called modest.

Take for example the White Paper on Taxation. The Government made clear that it was not a draft tax bill, but a paper intended to stimulate wide discussion among the public and to bring forward the expression of all kinds of views, opinions and suggestions. To this extent it could only be called a resounding success. Nevertheless, each time the Government dropped a proposal in response to cogent points made, this was hailed as a Government defeat. Each time a proposal was added, this was regarded as a victory at the Government's expense.

My colleague, Ron Basford, recently introduced a Competition Bill to regulate certain business practices. After it had been widely discussed in the business community the Government decided that it should be withdrawn and brought back in a different form. An excellent example of consultation, yet the response has been that here is another example of Government ineptitude.

I do not suggest that all the fault lies on one side. As we feel our way toward a new kind of contract between Government and people the principal onus is on the Government to devise means to give effect to the new accountability, new forms of consultation and new opportunities for the people to be heard as Government goes about its business. I can fairly say that we are trying very hard and you will forgive me if I add that in what we are trying we are taking very considerable political risks.

The second reason for the urgent search for a new contract between Government and people is the growing disenchantment with economic growth - sometimes equated with progress - for its own sake. A few years ago this disillusionment was largely confined to the youth culture and disadvantaged groups in our society. I believe it is now affecting the whole of our society. President Nixon - not noted as a negative thinker - said in his State of the Union address last year:

"Never has a nation seemed to have more and enjoyed it less".

For Canada that might be an overstatement, but it contains a truth that is very obvious to us all. Professor Ezra Mishan of the London School of Economics, and an economist of world stature had this to say in his book "Technology and Growth: The Price we Pay":

"As the carpet of 'increased choice' is being unrolled before us by the foot, it is simultaneously being rolled up behind us by the yard....In all that contributes in trivial ways to his ultimate satisfaction, the things at which modern business excels, new models of cars and transistors, prepared foodstuffs and plastic objets d'art, man has ample choice. In all that destroys his enjoyment of life, he had none."

Life-destroying things Professor Mishan has in mind include, of course, the pollution of our environment in the widest sense - not only the poisoning of earth, air and water but the destruction of the human environment by the soul-destroying proliferation of urban sprawl, the systematic rape of the countryside within reach of our cities, the filling of our homes and our lives with the cheap and ugly. The process has not gone as far in Canada as elsewhere, but this is a function of our relatively low population density rather than our imagination or vision.

To state the problem is not to solve it. We have much to learn, and little time in which to learn it. The same people that decry growth for growth's sake expect to have well-paid jobs with annual increases in salary. They may protest against pollution but they insist upon driving their own cars. It is a commonplace for people to say that to regain a harmonious natural environment and enhance the quality of life we may have to accept a drop in our material standard of living. But do they mean it? Are they ready to embrace the implications of what they are saying?

Professor Mishan suggests that we may not have much choice. He points out that we have consistently underestimated prices in the technological age by ignoring the costs of environmental pollution, costs for which the bills are now coming in.

It is not necessary for me this evening to get into a long discussion of the environmental question, I use it only as an example of the crisis of confidence that has overtaken Western society. Even as governments are called upon for day-to-day accountability and urged to share their responsibilities with the people on a continuing basis so are some of the

fundamental values of society being questioned. We are at the stage where a large and growing element in society, perhaps approaching a majority at least among the reasonably well-informed, are dissatisfied with what we have but as yet undecided about what kind of changes should be made, or how best to bring them about.

So as we feel our way toward a new contract between Government and people we necessarily find ourselves in a period of uncertainty. We have not come to terms with the new society brought about by the technological revolution. Very similar difficulties accompanied the industrial revolution in late 18th Century Britain. Looking back at those days it is easy for us to say that the modern age ushered in by that revolution brought to the common people a measure of freedom, prosperity and fulfillment they had not enjoyed before.

At the time, things looked very different. The Luddites, organized bands of English rioters, went about smashing the new machinery in the spinning and weaving mills of the North of England. They were protesting unemployment, and also the shoddy quality of many of the machine-made products. For my part, I believe that they were also protesting against the disruption of the society they had known. It is interesting, and perhaps instructive to note that the movement was brought to an end less by the harsh repressive measures applied by the Government than by the reviving prosperity that accompanied the adjustment of society to the changed situation.

It is reasonable to assume that in their day the Luddites represented the tip of the iceberg, the extreme element that always appears in times of uncertainty and disruption of accepted ideas. I suggest to you that much of the violence that so deeply troubles Western societies is caused by new bands of Luddites, again an extreme element that betrays a basic malaise in our society. Wise in their time, they realize that their ends will not be achieved by the destruction of plant and equipment, but rather by pressure upon the institutions of democracy. Repression which proved to be ineffective in England 150 years ago is no likelier to succeed now, and appeals for law and order may be ineffective. I believe it is up to all of us who hold responsible positions in the new, technological society to seek out the deep-seated concerns shared by so many of our people that sometimes result in violence among the more volatile fringes.

It is in this light that violence in Quebec over the last ten years can be viewed. Rather than the leading edge of Quebec separatism, it is an extremist distortion of a basic

dissatisfaction with the terms of our life, felt for good reasons more deeply in Quebec than in other parts of Canada. As for the FLQ terrorists, they can now be seen very clearly for what they really are, - nothing more nor less than criminals.

Violence must be controlled, with the use of reasonable force if necessary. It is a sickness in any society, but more a symptom than a disease in itself. Urgently but thoughtfully and carefully we must seek out the true nature of the disease and find means for a cure.

There is no justification for violence in Canada, where there are democratic and peaceful alternatives for expressing protest and achieving social change. If not controlled, violence replaces the will of the peaceful majority by the will of the violent few. This we cannot and will not tolerate.

All that I have said has profound implications for the continued unity of Canada. A nation is more than an outline on a map, more than a complex of institutions by which men manage to live together in dignity and harmony. It is an act of faith. Canada will remain strong, united and free as long as we all, Canadians and Canadiens alike, respond affirmatively to the third of the basic national aims I quoted earlier:

- that all Canadians will see in the life they have and the contribution they make to humanity something worthwhile preserving in identity and purpose.