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PEACE AND WELFARE IN THE HEMISPHERE

Speech by the Acting Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, at the Opening Session of the Eighth American Regional Conference of the International Labour Organization, Ottawa, September 12, 1966.

Mr. Chairman,

I am honoured and pleased, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to extend a welcome to you and to other representatives of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office and to representatives of North, Central and South America participating in the Eighth American Regional Conference. The Prime Minister regrets that the necessity of attending the conference of Commonwealth prime ministers in London has made it impossible for him to greet you this morning.

The presence of the Director-General of the ILO, the Director-General of the Organization of American States and of governmental, labour and employer representatives, eminent in their respective fields in their own countries, makes this a noteworthy occasion for Canadians.

The holding of a major ILO conference in Canada is an event which will lead many of us in this country to reflect on earlier episodes in the history of this great international organization. It is 20 years since an ILO conference has been held in our country. We recall the years during the Second World War when the International Labour Office was located in Montreal.

I have reported to Members of this House of Commons on the proceedings of the Philadelphia conference in 1944. It was my opinion then, and time has confirmed my opinion, that the declaration adopted in Philadelphia at a critical point in the life of the Organization was "one of the historic pronouncements of civilized men". In setting forth the right of all human beings to employment, economic security and equal opportunity, it helped to set new goals for humanity in the era following the Second World War.

It seemed to us then that the principles set forth in Philadelphia would have been labelled revolutionary earlier in the century. I recall reflecting then on the "immense influence of time and knowledge on our ideas"

The processes of change have been gathering momentum since that time. Three years ago the present Director-General pointed out that "international organization is still in its earliest childhood. The needs, the problems and the achievements of today would have astounded the pioneers of a generation ago".

He pointed out also that: "Those responsible for the direction and guidance of the world bodies can never forget the fragility of these organizations, the need to build up world confidence by moving from sure precedent to sure precedent, reinforcing agreed norms with well-conceived action, conforming scrupulously to the gradually elaborating law and principles of the world community".

The growth towards a genuine world community whose members could both live in peace and assert their diverse characteristics in freedom is a slow one. Nevertheless, the development of an international conscience about welfare and peace, stimulated to such an important extent by the work of the ILO itself, has led to a flowering of international institutions. Each of these has its particular mandate and each relates its work to the general task of promoting peace and economic and social development in the world.

It is correct, therefore, to stress the fact, as Mr. Morse has done, that the first general characteristic of the ILO is a commitment to peace. The Organization has always manifested its concern both for the most modest technical improvements in the working conditions of daily life and for the ultimate issues of war and peace.

In this conference we shall be studying social policy and economic development in the Americas. The prospects for peace in the world generally and in this Hemisphere will determine how rapidly this development can proceed.

Canada intends to make its contribution to the achievement of political stability and to the increase in economic welfare in this part of the world

- a) by working through any channels open to us towards the lessening of world tensions which threaten all regions;
- b) by strengthening the friendly relations already existing between Canada and the other nations of this region; and
- c) by participating in economic projects which will assist developing nations in the Caribbean and Latin America.

World Tensions

In spite of some serious problems, there are not as many barriers to peaceful change and economic development arising out of international political tensions in this part of the world as in other regions. Canada has not known armed conflict with its nearest neighbour since the early nineteenth century. Our developing relations with nations farther away in the Hemisphere have proceeded always in the ways of peace.

These relations with all independent nations in North, Central and South America have a solid basis in political interests, co-operation within the United Nations, trade and, to an increasing extent, economic assistance. I welcome the steady growth of mutual respect and understanding.

There has been increased understanding, I believe, of some of the unique features of our history. Until the Commonwealth Caribbean nations began to achieve independence, we were alone as an independent monarchy in the Western Hemisphere among republics. Canada had been a colony which evolved gradually towards independence, a nation which emerged fully in international affairs in its own right only after the First World War. It has a bicultural society with distinctive attitudes towards European motherlands.

Our history has not, however, led us to look only to the North Atlantic and Europe. We have long recognized that the republics of North and South America, acting through regional political institutions, have contributed to the preservation of order and to the promotion of peaceful change. Their actions have benefited many other nations and we have realized the need to support their efforts in the ways appropriate to us.

We have also felt, of course, that the degree of international stability which could be achieved by such arrangements in this Hemisphere has always been dependent, in the long run, on the maintenance of stability in other regions as well. This is a feeling which has been deeply rooted in Canadian minds and has influenced some of our greatest decisions as a nation.

I make this point, however, not in order to discuss the past but by way of preface to remarks about some of the main current concerns of Canada - and of many other nations too - in world affairs. The situation in Rhodesia, where our concern is shared by other Commonwealth countries in this region, the conflict in Vietnam and the internal problems in NATO resulting from the French withdrawal from the integrated military structure of the alliance earlier this year have all loomed large in our external policy discussions.

At times some of these problems may appear remote to people in parts of this Hemisphere, compared with local political and economic problems. And yet can it be doubted that the problem of relations between races and of political justice in Rhodesia, with which our Prime Minister is very directly concerned in London, has very wide implications?

In Vietnam, Canada has served for 12 years as a member of the International Control Commission. We hope that, even under present conditions there, the Commission will be able to exert some influence in limiting the conflict. We have taken direct initiatives to explore the possibility that there might be some common ground between the protagonists that could lead to negotiation. Who can doubt that, beyond a certain point, the conflict in Southeast Asia could create an even greater political and military crisis with the most profound dangers for the whole world?

In the affairs of the North Atlantic alliance, we have worked with other members to preserve the unity and military effectiveness of the alliance in the face of major readjustments required by the French action. Canada has been particularly concerned, however, both to maintain conditions under which France could continue to make an important contribution to the alliance and to explore any ways of reducing East-West tension and achieving a European settlement. We believe that the experience of recent years has indicated the great importance for this Hemisphere also of working towards these objectives.

We have accepted the obligation as an economically-developed nation to extend economic assistance both by direct action and through world-wide or regional programmes carried out by the United Nations, the ILO and other agencies.

Canada is carrying out at present a programme of economic co-operation involving the allocation of about \$300 million. In the last four years, approximately, our appropriations have almost tripled. We are working towards levels of aid activity which will take fully into account the recommendation of competent international agencies concerning the allocation by developed nations of 1 per cent of their gross national product to these purposes. Our allocations must, however, take into account what is sometimes overlooked, that Canada is a net importer of capital.

Our major assistance programmes in Colombo Plan countries in Asia after 1950 and then in other Commonwealth and in French-speaking countries after 1960 have, of course, arisen from Commonwealth associations and other traditional interests. Considerations of language have been of operational significance, particularly in technical assistance projects.

It is important to note, however, that in this Hemisphere the programme for Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean area began in 1958 and that bilateral assistance to developing countries in Latin America began in 1964 with the establishment of a development-loan programme to be carried out in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank.

It is also important to note that Canada contributes substantially to multilateral aid programmes benefiting developing countries throughout the world. We have, for example, quadrupled the sum pledged to the allocation of food stuff and currency to the World Food Programme. In this field, we are the second highest contributor among the nations. Our food-aid programme will reach a new high of \$75 million this year.

Since the inception of the United Nations Programme for Technical Assistance, Canada has been among the leading contributors. In various fields of United Nations activity and in the work of the Specialized Agencies (among them, of course, the ILO), we have participated by financial contributions to work being done in this Hemisphere as in other parts of the world.

Relations with the United States

Our second aim has been to strengthen friendly relations with the nations of the Americas.

I scarcely need to discuss the closeness of our relations with the United States in detail. As neighbours sharing a transcontinental border and possessing a great many common beliefs and practices, we are engaged in many joint projects and come into contact in very many ways. The recent meeting of President Johnson and Prime Minister Pearson for a day's discussion of world, continental and even domestic topics in one country or the other indicates the intimacy of our relations.

There is, of course, a great disparity of power and there are some fundamental differences in our respective positions in the world. Friendly as our relations are, we do not necessarily always reach the same conclusions about world affairs. We do, however, have the greatest respect for the high sense of duty with which the American people have taken on heavy obligations of world leadership.

Perhaps the heart of the matter is we have no reason to fear our Southern neighbour, no desire to flatter her and every expectation that by contributing our own independent viewpoints we shall continue to work constructively with her for the welfare of the Canadian and American peoples and in many good causes throughout the world.

Commonwealth Caribbean Countries

With the Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean we have traditionally had a special relationship, which is now assuming new and greater significance. The Commonwealth Caribbean-Canada Conference which was held in Ottawa in July at heads-of-government level represented an important step towards the establishment of a process of closer consultation and practical co-operation among the Commonwealth countries of this Hemisphere.

The conference provided an opportunity for discussions over a very wide range of subjects: trade, development assistance, transport and communications, migration and cultural relations. A Protocol to the Canada-West Indies Trade Agreement in 1925 was signed and various ways of strengthening our trade ties were examined. Measures were announced which it is hoped will enable Canada, through its programme of aid, to assist more effectively in the efforts the Commonwealth Caribbean countries are making to develop their economies.

At the Commonwealth Caribbean-Canada Conference, the nations participating affirmed that "Commonwealth countries in the Western Hemisphere emphasize the great value they attach to their relations to the United States and the many countries of Latin America which make up the membership of the Organization of American States".

The special relationship which links the Commonwealth countries of this Hemisphere, like the Commonwealth relationship itself, is not to be regarded as exclusive or as an obstacle to the establishment and maintenance of close relations with other countries. We attach great importance to consultation and co-operation as exemplified by the Commonwealth Caribbean-Canada Conference and we anticipate that there will be further valuable meetings of this sort. It is not our intention, however, that the positions of the various Commonwealth nations with respect to the broad range of hemispheric matters should necessarily be the same.

Latin America

There has, of course, been public debate over whether Canada might enter into the particular political relationship with the United States and with Latin American states which membership in the Organization of American States would entail. This debate has sometimes led people to overlook the extent to which our relations with Latin American states in all fields have steadily developed.

Soon after we began to establish our own direct diplomatic relations with other nations, we opened missions in the larger Latin American capitals. We now maintain diplomatic relations with all these nations. Well before that, however, we had trade representatives in Latin American countries - in Buenos Aires in the last century, for example, and in several other capitals before the First World War. Trade has expanded very considerably. In the past 20 years, it has trebled both in sales to the area and purchases from Latin American countries. Last year Canada exported \$315-million worth of goods to Latin America and imported \$411-million worth.

We have, of course, been associated with Latin American nations in specialized fields of interest to the United Nations. In addition to accepting United Nations commitments, however, we have, in the past, tended to pursue regional interests chiefly in terms of Commonwealth and Atlantic-European associations. In recent years we have balanced these with a new interest in organizations of this Hemisphere.

We have become members, for example, of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, the Inter-American Statistical Institute and the Inter-American Radio Office. Canada was represented by an official observer - for the first time - at the conference of the Organization of American States last November. We have good working relationships with the Secretariat of the Organization of American States and with specialized agencies of which we are not members.

Canada has been closely concerned with disarmament efforts and has had a long experience in the application of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes. We have followed with particular interest developments towards a nuclear-free zone in Latin America. Our officials in other fields, too, keep in touch with developments in Latin America. Many of you will recall the presence of representatives of our Department of Labour at the second conference of ministers of labour of the OAS in Venezuela last May.

There are many examples of contacts by private institutions. The churches have engaged in fruitful measures for co-operation - often in the welfare and educational fields - for over a century. Volunteers from the Canadian University Service Overseas are working in several South American countries.

Economic Assistance - Latin America

Since 1964 a new dimension has been added to our relations with Latin American nations in a field which will be, I am sure, of increasing significance. Canada's bilateral economic assistance for developing nations in Latin America began in that year, when development loan funds were allocated for that purpose. Since then, further allocations were made to help finance vital economic projects in Latin America. Only two months ago, in signing the latest exchange of letters concerning the allocation of funds, I assured President Herrera of the Inter-American Development Bank that "it would be our intention - subject to economic and other relevant circumstances - to make still further amounts of soft Canadian loan funds available...".

The programme is being carried out in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank. Various loan projects are under consideration. We have already approved a loan to improve the port facilities in Acajutla, El Salvador, and are about to name a consultant for this project. We have signed an agreement with Ecuador for a pre-investment study of the Guayas River basin. Under a loan to Paraguay, Canadian engineers will be making feasibility studies for an improvement to that country's highway system.

In co-operation with the Inter-American Development Bank, which is acting as administrator of loan funds on our behalf, Canada is initiating a programme of loans to finance pre-feasibility and pre-investment studies in Latin America. I can now announce that the Canadian Government has given approval in principle to the first of such loans to Argentina and Peru. These loans are subject to final investigation now being carried out by the Inter-American Development Bank.

These different projects will involve Canadians in the actual work being done in the various locations involved in Latin America. I expect that, in some cases at least, they will involve the visit to Canada of individuals from the countries concerned. We may expect, therefore, to have new contacts between individuals and agencies in various technical fields as a result of this loan programme.

I believe that, in spite of these expanding contacts, there is general agreement in Canada that we still need to know more of Latin America. Greater political involvement must proceed hand in hand with contacts in other spheres and increasing mutual awareness of the distinctive features of our traditional outlook.

I am not simply repeating a well-intentioned cliché, therefore, when I say that we do not know enough of one another. That is why I welcome the occasion provided by this ILO conference for persons representing important interests in Latin America to see something of Canada. I think that you will find current developments and ideas of interest to you in different spheres. Within this country, I have always encouraged the developing interest in Latin America reflected in press, radio, television, schools, universities and private associations of various types.

In the current categories of international economics, Canada is listed as a "developed country". We may, however, have some experience in the field of economic development different from that of the older and larger industrial states and more immediately relevant to the problems of some Latin American developing countries. We have learned much from others and we offer whatever may be of value in information about our economic and social institutions and procedures to our friends anywhere in the Hemisphere. I am sure that this conference and the associated visits in Canada will lead to useful discussions of common problems now and to fruitful contacts in the future.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for the success of the conference, and for mutually-beneficial relations between Canada and the nations of the Americas whose representatives are assembled here today. Our interests and responsibilities are wide and diverse, but I think that we meet here with some common convictions.

The first Secretary-General of the ILO, Albert Thomas, once said, with justified pride: "We have taught the world to speak something like the same language on labour questions". I would say that all of us who help to carry forward the work of the ILO, its sister agencies and the United Nations itself are teaching the world to speak the same language about civilized international relations, about goodwill between races and cultures and about peace.

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