

Statement

Discours

Department of  
External  
Affairs



Ministère des  
Affaires  
extérieures

89/39

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS

BY THE HONOURABLE MONIQUE LANDRY,

MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE

FIRST CONGRESS OF WORLD UNION OF LIBERAL PROFESSIONS

MONTREAL

August 30, 1989.

Secretary of State  
for  
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État  
aux  
Affaires extérieures

Canada

MR. PRESIDENT  
(MR. MINISTER)  
MR. MAYOR  
MR. AMBASSADOR  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I WOULD FIRST LIKE TO EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

I WAS VERY PLEASED TO ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION TO THIS FIRST CONGRESS OF THE WORLD UNION OF LIBERAL PROFESSIONS.

I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF MONTREAL TO HOLD THE MEETING INAUGURATING YOUR UNION.

I WILL NOT DWELL ON THIS POINT, BECAUSE I AM SURE THAT THE MAYOR'S ENTHUSIASM ABOUT THE APPROPRIATENESS OF MONTREAL WILL EXCEED MINE.

IF YOU WILL ALLOW ME, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CANADA.

LAST SEPTEMBER, I TOOK PART IN A CANADIAN FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL MINISTERS' MEETING ON HUMAN RIGHTS, HELD IN TORONTO.

THIS CONFERENCE WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN THAT IT TOOK PLACE JUST BEFORE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THIS CONFERENCE HAS GIVEN THE MINISTERS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS PORTFOLIOS WITHIN THE VARIOUS JURISDICTIONS, NAMELY THE FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS, AN OPPORTUNITY

- TO CONSIDER THE PRINCIPLES OUTLINED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION,
- TO LOOK AT CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS IN THIS AREA,
- TO STUDY THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED BY CANADA IN THE PROMOTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS, AND
- TO INITIATE NEW ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AFFORDED BY OUR SOCIETY.

THE CONFERENCE HAS ALSO BEEN A TIME TO EXAMINE THE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AND THE PROGRAM THAT AFFORDS CANADIANS LEGAL RECOURSE WHEN THEY FEEL THAT THEIR RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED. DURING THIS MEETING, THE MINISTERS HAVE CONSIDERED SPECIFIC MATTERS SUCH AS THE PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE, HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, THE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF CERTAIN MEDICAL QUESTIONS, AND THE STRUGGLE TO COMBAT RACISM.

THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS ONE OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES GOVERNING LIFE IN CANADIAN SOCIETY.

OVER THE CENTURIES, CANADA HAS BEEN BUILT ON SUCCESSIVE WAVES OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD WHO COME HERE WITH HOPES OF IMPROVING THEIR ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OR IN SEARCH OF FREEDOM AND SECURITY.

THE CANADIAN PEOPLE HAVE WANTED TO HAVE THESE VALUES RELATED TO RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, REFLECTED IN OUR INSTITUTIONS.

OUR GOVERNMENT HAS RESPONDED TO THIS DESIRE. THE DEFENCE AND PROMOTING OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS.

IN THIS REGARD, CANADIANS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONS NOT ONLY HAVE RIGHTS, BUT ARE UNDER CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS.

LIKE ALL CITIZENS, THEY MUST RESPECT THE STANDARDS SET BY THE GOVERNMENTS AND THE COURTS.

THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED. BUT SOME PROFESSIONS PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE LEGAL PROFESSION, FOR EXAMPLE, IS ON THE FRONT LINES IN THE DEFENCE AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IN OTHER CASES - AND HERE I AM REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO THE DISEASE OF AIDS - THE MEDICAL PROFESSION PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS. BUT THESE ARE NOT THE ONLY PROFESSIONS INVOLVED IN HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY ARE ONLY TWO EXAMPLES.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAN BE PROMOTED PROPERLY ONLY WHEN THERE IS SUFFICIENT EDUCATION AND INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE ABOUT THEM. EVEN TODAY, THERE ARE MANY WHO DO NOT HAVE AN ADEQUATE AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. TEACHERS MUST PREPARE THEIR STUDENTS TO FULLY ASSUME BOTH THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN SOCIETY.

THOSE IN THE MEDIA ALSO PLAY A FORMATIVE ROLE WHEN THEY DENOUNCE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND INFORM PEOPLE OF THEIR RIGHTS.

IN FACT, ALL THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ARE INVOLVED IN THIS WORK, SINCE IT IS THEIR DUTY, NOT ONLY TO INFORM THEIR MEMBERS OF THEIR RIGHTS, BUT ALSO THOSE OF THEIR CLIENTS.

IN A WORLD CHARACTERIZED BY A GROWING INTERDEPENDENCY, PEOPLE ARE INEVITABLY AFFECTED BY EACH OTHER'S SITUATIONS.

THIS ALSO HOLDS TRUE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST IN YOUR DELIBERATIONS OVER THE COMING DAYS.

WELCOME TO CANADA, AND WELCOME TO MONTREAL.