

Ottawa. March 3, 1975

Notes for speech to Toronto Canadian Club, Royal York Hotel,  
March 3, by Charles Lynch, Chief of Southam News Services.

Toronto is the focal point of our current wave of ultra-nationalism in Canada, and from here it radiates across the country, through such instruments as the CBC, Maclean's magazine and the book publishing industry.

The message is being hammered at the Canadian people, and it is getting to them, and to the Canadian government.

To me, much of the message is negative, and here in the heartland of the Canada Firsters, and what I call the Committee on Un-Canadian Activities, I want to state my misgivings, and suggest that many of our strongest nationalist voices have a self-interest in protectionism, and that their patriotism comes wrapped in Canadian dollar bills.

Four points:

1. I do not think it is in Canada's best interest for our External Affairs Minister, Allan MacEachen, to proclaim the end of the special relationship between Canada and the United States. The fact that we have a \$70-billion annual trade with the United States is reason enough for a special relationship, and I argue ~~xyz~~ that the American connection has been beneficial to Canada, not harmful. In saying this, I include the social and cultural association, as well as the economic, and the political. In all these areas at the moment, ~~we~~ Canada is in a more fortunate position than the United States; I do not feel that we should pull away from them on that account.

2. Nor do I feel that we should foster anti-Americanism in order to promote national unity in Canada, seeking the "huddling effect", casting Uncle Sam in the role of the mythical invasion from Mars. (more)

2.

I lament that Mr. Trudeau, last week, compared Canadian attitudes to the United States with the attitudes of Netherlanders toward Germany. The United States has not ravaged us as Germany ravaged Holland three decades ago; we have had no Seyss-Inquharts, no Anne Franks; our only bloodshed has been in the pages of General Richard Rohmer's bad books, *Ultimatum* and *Exxoneration*, which have been promoted to best-seller status in Canada.

Despite all our advantages, we face problems in keeping our country together, and the cause of national unity can exercise a call on the patriotism of our people. But to work on the anti-American nerve in order to achieve this is wrong.

3. I am suspicious of the growing use of the buzzword "equalization" as the main *raison d'etre* for Canadian nationhood, with the implication that this is what Canada has been all about from its beginnings. Canada is about many more things than that, and while sharing the wealth is part of our national commitment, it is a will-o'-the-wisp to promise an equal standard of living to people from sea to sea, based on the highest common denominator. Even the Marxian principle of "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" doesn't promise equality. In Canada's case, I would argue that unequal prosperity, based on resources and population, has been to the national benefit, and that a prosperous southern Ontario has been to Canada's advantage. The same is true today about a prosperous Alberta and a prosperous British Columbia, and the more prosperous our more favored regions become, the better it will be for all Canadians.

(more)

3.

My fourth objection is to the thesis that increased provincial or regional authority will wreck Canada, Balkanizing the country and causing it to fly apart. I believed this until quite recently, and accepted the companionpiece <sup>requirement</sup> ~~doctrines~~ of a dominant central government.

Several factors brought about my change of mind, and my present conviction that increased provincial and regional authority are not only tolerable for Canada's future, but may indeed be essential.

Chief among these factors is the present attitude of the government of Quebec, particularly as manifest in provincial Bill 22, making French the official language of the province. Mr. Trudeau finds this measure distasteful, but not unconstitutional, and says we can live with it. The only way I have found to do that is to adjust my thinking about the amount of control that provincial governments should have over important affairs within their boundaries, including some affairs that had been thought to fall within federal jurisdiction.

And if we are going to do that vis-a-vis Quebec, then we must do it vis-a-vis the other provinces as well, and loosen the national belt a notch. The risk is that if you loosen it a notch it won't stop there, as the performance of successive Quebec governments have indicated over the last 15 years. But it is a risk that we should be prepared to take, unless we are prepared to spend the rest of this century in incessant federal-provincial haggling that seems to lead nowhere, and heightens our tensions and alienations, which are just as strong today in Western Canada as they are in Quebec.

(more)

Western voices are just as entitled to be heard as Quebec voices -- it is an unfortunate accident of history that at the moment the West is virtually unrepresented in our federal cabinet, whereas Quebec has a full, if not a dominant, voice. If increased ~~rather~~ autonomy is acceptable for Quebec, why not for the other provinces, including Alberta and British Columbia? And if people in those regions feel, as they keep insisting they do, that they are Canadians first and provincials second, what have we to fear?

This is not the counsel of despair, but of hope. Decentralization and with it even the slightest diminution of the central authority, be it in the field of immigration, or resource development, or taxation, or communications, could be the beginning of the end, but I am convinced it would be a new beginning, and that a looser Confederation would be to the advantage of all Canadians.

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