

NOTES FOR SPEECH BY THE

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TO THE

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CANADA: ONE COUNTRY -- ONE PEOPLE

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I welcome your invitation today, because I want to speak about Canada, and I don't know of any assembly where that is more appropriate than at the Canadian Club in Toronto.

It is now more than two years since I resigned from the Federal Cabinet and almost a year since I crossed the floor of the House of Commons to sit as an Independent Member of Parliament in opposition to the Trudeau Government.

On both occasions, my decision was motivated by the conviction that Prime Minister Trudeau's policies, instead of helping to achieve unity, were themselves a central cause of disunity.

It is a paradox of some kind that Prime Minister Trudeau and I both believe in a united Canada. He has been campaigning on what he calls a united Canada for more than ten years and I believe, with all my heart, in One Canada -- in a Canada that includes all our provinces in a united Canada from sea to sea. So why is there a difference between us?

Our difference is not in the goal of national unity, which we share. Our profound difference is in the means by which Canada can become a truly united nation.

What I would like to do today is to explain how I believe we have been led in the wrong direction, and then to state, as clearly as I can, what we must do to get ourselves back on the road to national unity and to national greatness once again.

To understand what has gone wrong, we must begin by looking at our history. For the first 100 years we were more or less on the right track. We were working together as Canadians. We were building on the grand design of One Canada set out by the Fathers of Confederation. From 1867 to Expo, Canada showed every evidence of becoming the model nation of the world.

- we opened our western and northern frontiers,
- we increased our population and our productivity,
- we created industrial capacity on top of our great agricultural and energy base,
- we helped to win two world wars in the cause of freedom.

In these, and in other ways

- we continuously increased the respect in which Canadians were held by other peoples around the world.

At the end of our first hundred years Canada was standing on the threshold of greatness. What went wrong?

I believe that the verdict of history will show that, starting in the mid 1960's, Canadians were taken off the track by well-intentioned, but totally misguided political leadership.

If we are to identify one day, one point in time and place where Canada took the wrong turn, that day would be July 19, 1963. It was on that day the government established the terms of reference of the Bilingual and Bicultural Commission.

For the first time Canadians were told by their government that they were not One People. In the terms of reference, the government instructed the commissioners to recommend the steps to be taken to develop the Canadian confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races. Canadians should realize that the concept of two founding races is a myth. All Canadians are builders and founders of Canada and Canada's unity must be based on the equal partnership of all Canadians, not on the partnership of two races.

Unfortunately, the B & B Commission was only the first of what has become a long series of Liberal federal government documents, policy statements and legislation, all of which have been

essentially on the same theme, all of which emphasize our duality instead of our unity, and all of which are proving to be more divisive than unifying. I am referring

- to the Official Languages Act in 1969,
- to the Government's policy papers surrounding the Victoria Conference of 1971,
- to the Government's White Paper called "A Time for Action", which led towards
- the introduction of the Constitutional Amendment Bill last year.

And, finally, we have

- the Pepin-Robarts Task Force Report

which is the most recent and, in my judgment, the worst - the most divisive - document in this long series.

The Pepin-Robarts report identifies duality and regionalism as the problems, and then proceeds to recommend that the answer to these problems is for Canada to emphasize duality and strengthen regionalism!

This Task Force report is really a "two-nation" document. In a sense it could be described as a separatist document because it would provide almost the same degree of separation to Quebec under the Constitution, as Quebec could achieve as a separate country with a constitution of its own.

All of these statements and documents over a 15-year period reflect an elitist, academic view of Canada, and all of them have failed to express the central fact of Canadian unity, because of their preoccupation with the concept of duality and diversity.

As a result of this kind of thinking, Canada has been taken off the track. The track that we were on for our first 100 years. And I want to emphasize that we are not just a little bit off the track, requiring some minor adjustment, we are completely off the track, heading in the wrong direction.

It is important for all of us who are concerned about Canadian unity to try to understand that the so-called "accommodations" usually called for in the name of unity, tend to deepen the division in Canada. If accommodations in the form of increased language rights or in the form of more powers for the Quebec government would really lead to national unity, I would be the first person calling for action of this kind. But all our experience to date, and the evidence everywhere around us today, points to the fact that instead of creating unity, the immediate and the continuing result of increased rights and increased powers is to increase disunity. The final effect is always to strengthen Quebec nationalism, instead of strengthening Canadian nationalism.

In our attempt to understand what has happened to Canada, it is vital to understand that language and nationality are very close to being the same thing -- so close, in fact, that it is not

possible to strengthen a second language without helping to create a second nation.

The paradox that is the most difficult for any of us to grasp is that when we increase language rights, or when we increase the strength of the government of Quebec, in the name of unity, the result is the opposite of unity. The more we strengthen the minority language at the national level and the more we increase the powers of the provincial government, the more we build a nation within a nation. Those who believe they can achieve unity by going down this road are deluding themselves and deceiving the Canadian people.

If confirmation of what I am saying is necessary, it was provided by Premier Levesque when he was speaking in Washington last January. He said, "We have an old French proverb that says "appetite grows with eating", and he went on to say "you get a semi-special status and watch the appetite grow".

I have referred a moment ago to the series of government inspired documents and legislation, all of which have the common theme of duality and diversity instead of unity, and all of which are doing more to divide Canada than to unite Canada. Let us look at the actual consequences of just one of these documents -- the Official Languages Act. Let us look first at the hope and the idealism that surrounded its enactment and then, 10 years later, let us look at the results.

When Prime Minister Trudeau was speaking in 1968 on the resolution to introduce the Official Languages Bill, these were his words:

"I believe that there will be widespread agreement among members and their constituents in all parts of Canada that this Bill is of the greatest importance in promoting national unity."

There is no doubt about what Trudeau thought the Official Languages Act would do. But what, in fact, has it done?

Today we find the once highly renowned Canadian civil service in a morass of confusion and bickering. We find personnel in the Canadian Armed Forces and in our crown corporations divided and unhappy because of language policy.

We find the cost to the taxpayer increasing, but the measureless and mounting cost to Canada of the government's bilingual policy is not, as some believe, primarily in dollars. The crippling cost to Canada of official bilingualism is in the loss of efficiency, in the lowering of morale, and in the disappearance of a sense of "team spirit" from the centre of our national life.

Worst of all, we find that over the ten year period separatism in Quebec has not declined, but increased. When the Official Languages Act was passed, to prevent separatism, there

wasn't one separatist member of the Quebec Legislature. Now, there are 71 separatist members supporting a Separatist Government.

Despite all that is wrong with the Official Languages Act, my purpose has not been primarily to criticize this Act. I believe that time and commonsense will do that. The much more urgent message, and in fact my central message, is that at a time when the Official Languages Act is clearly not uniting Canada, it would be a serious mistake to lock the principle of this Act into the Constitution of Canada. At the very least there should be more evidence that the Official Languages Act is taking Canada in the right direction, and helping to achieve national unity, before we lock the principle of language equality into our fundamental law.

I believe, as I think almost all Canadians do, that the British North America Act should be brought to Canada. But that is not the real issue. The real issue is that Trudeau must not be allowed to use the moment of patriation as a kind of smokescreen to conceal the fundamental and permanent changes that he would like to make to the Constitution of Canada -- changes that would alter the very nature of our country.

It is important for all of us to understand the difference between Statutory Law -- such as the Official Languages Act, which is amendable by Parliament -- and entrenched Constitutional Law, which is beyond the reach of Parliament and is not amendable, except with an inflexible amending procedure.

My message has always been that it would be wise for Canada to keep our serious problem of language difference at the level of Statutory Law, which is amendable, and not at the level of Constitutional Law, which is not amendable except by a rigid amending formula.

But still today in the Government policy paper "A Time for Action", and in the Constitutional Amendment Bill that the Government brought into the House last June, we have the Prime Minister insisting that the principles of the Official Languages Act be placed beyond the reach of Parliament by entrenching these principles and language guarantees in the Constitution of Canada.

The Prime Minister knows that legislation passed through Parliament by his majority can be amended or changed by parliamentarians in the future. He is not prepared to leave this judgment to future Parliaments. He wants to entrench his vision of Canada, his concept of appropriate language rights, in the Constitution. He seems determined to place these rights beyond the reach of Parliament -- beyond the democratic process.

My warning to all Canadians continues to be -- in the name of future generations, do not give up the flexibility of Statutory law for the inflexibility of Constitutional Law. Do not give up the supremacy of a democratically elected Parliament in exchange for the supremacy of a Trudeau-written Constitution.

As we seek to find our way back onto the right road, there is an encouraging source of inspiration to be found in a rapidly growing organization called Canadians for One Canada. This organization already has more than 20,000 members with representation in every province of Canada, including more than 2,500 members from Quebec.

It is my hope that Canadians for One Canada will become, not a political party, but a political force dedicated to the revival of the national spirit -- a political force that will gather with it all who believe in a truly united Canada.

It is not for me, or for the One Canada group, to tell Quebecers or anyone else what they should do. But it is for me and for all of us to speak clearly about the kind of Canada we believe in, and the kind of Canada we would like to see all Canadians helping to build.

What, then, is the answer for Canada that I see, and the answer that is now being expressed by Canadians for One Canada?

- The answer is for all of us to see Canada as an equal partnership of all Canadians and not as a partnership of two founding races -- to think of ourselves again as the Fathers of Confederation did -- as One People in One Great Country. The Fathers of Confederation did not talk about duality, or about two founding races or even about two official languages. They designed One Canada, and their British North America Act does not require any major alteration.

- The answer is to stop trying to legislate language at the federal level and, above all, that means ending all attempts to entrench language rights in the Constitution. It is also vital to national unity that amendments to the Constitution of Canada can not be controlled by the veto of any single province. It should be obvious that fundamental changes must always be a reflection of the national will.

- The answer is for all Canadians outside Quebec to assist in every way possible to bring to Quebec the same level of economic prosperity enjoyed by all of Canada. This can be done, and is being done, by equalization payments, oil and gas subsidies, tariff policy and by whatever other ways are necessary to achieve an equal standard of living for all Canadians.

- The answer is to recognize that Canada's two large linguistic minorities -- the English-speaking minority in Quebec and the French-speaking minority in Canada -- both live in the same province, which means that the problem of language difference is essentially a regional problem requiring a regional solution.

It is not Canada's linguistic majority that can save Canada, it is Canada's two linguistic minorities that can save the Canadian union by both minorities becoming increasingly bilingual.

The central goal that Canada must work towards, with a sense of team spirit, is the growth and development of a vibrant bilingual Quebec within a common-language Canada.

It is in this sense that it is essential for us to understand the all-important difference between individual bilingualism and national bilingualism, because one creates unity and the other causes division.

Individual bilingualism is not only accepted, it is welcomed and sought after and is, in fact, essential to the achievement of national unity. But national bilingualism (official bilingualism, imposed bilingualism, legislated bilingualism) is unnatural and unwelcome and is, without doubt, the central cause of national disunity.

The answer to Canadian unity is not a bilingual Canada. The answer is a bilingual Quebec. A bilingual Quebec creates a common-language Canada and, at the same time, provides the "best of both worlds" to Quebecers.

The great answer, the commonsense answer, the answer that is equitable for all,

The answer that does not take anything that now exists away from anyone,

The only answer that can achieve Canadian unity is ..

A bilingual Quebec in a common-language Canada.

Fortunately for Canada, the figures recently published by the Economic Council of Canada show that the unifying linguistic principle that "minorities become bilingual" is already working in Canada.

The studies show that between 1971 and 1978 the percentage of Montrealers of English origin who described themselves as bilingual increased from 48% to 74%. In the same seven-year period, the percentage of Montrealers of French origin who described themselves as bilingual increased from 62% to 69%.

Over the years, but particularly since I resigned on the issue of national unity, I have received thousands of letters from Canadians in every part of Canada who are deeply concerned about their country's future and very supportive of the One Canada concept. And I can say, with conviction based on these letters and conversations, that by far the greatest source of hope for unity

is to be found in the hearts and minds of Canadians -- to be found in the love for Canada that has been expressed by the overwhelming majority of Canadians in all 10 provinces.

Despite the failure of political leadership at the highest level, I believe it is still not too late for Canadians to build a united Canada. Our potential, as a nation, is so great that Canada can still become the model nation of the world and the 20th century can still belong to Canada!

I began today by saying that I wanted to speak about Canada. I would like to conclude by saying that, for a change, Canada would like to speak to us! A few days ago Canadians for One Canada received a remarkable letter from a man who said he felt like the very conscience of our nation.

He said that instead of all of us talking about Canada, he was writing his letter as if Canada was talking to us.

And this is what Canada said:

I was born in 1867 and I have just passed my one hundred and eleventh birthday. It was not the happiest of birthdays for the glorious and the free.

If I am to survive as a nation, within God's universe, I must now speak out for the first time in my history.

The situation is very serious. My Fathers of Confederation and I wonder at times where "true patriot love" has gone.

Millions of citizens live within my boundaries. Background origin is secondary, as all of them are first and foremost, Canadians.

I am disturbed and annoyed with talk of break up, and going alone. To Where?

I have been embarrassed in front of other nations.

The Prime Minister's plan for unity is my nightmare.

I refuse to be placed in the position of a floundering ship, at sea.

Remember, my shores are the longest in the world and as I stand alone, my three oceans guide my destiny.

When I glance at the mountainous range of ice, and snow-capped peaks on my northern frontiers, I ponder my inheritance in awe and yet I have tremendous pride in my very own magnificence, from sea to shining sea.

The Constitution is my very own heartbeat. It may be modified by the people only, for this is their home, and native land.

As my Fathers of Confederation said, when I was a much younger nation; they served and loved the people. In turn, I know, that the people love me.

Mr. Chairman,

That was Canada speaking through the voice of an inspired Canadian.

My hope is that many more Canadians will begin to listen to the voice of Canada -- listen to the Canada that is inside each one of us; because when we do that Canada will be back on the road to national unity and to national greatness.

When all of us listen to the spirit of Canada that is inside each one of us, we will know in our hearts that Canada is One Country and that Canadians are One People -- from sea to shining sea.