

SPEECH NOTES BY THE  
CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER  
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. J. ALAN BEESLEY, QC

AT THE LAUNCHING OF "THE CANADIANS"  
CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION, CANBERRA  
TUESDAY 27 MAY 1980

THE HONOURABLE MR. ELLICOTT, HONOURED GUESTS:

WE THANK YOU ALL, AND YOU IN PARTICULAR MR. MINISTER, FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE LAUNCHING OF THE BOOK THE CANADIANS BY GEORGE WOODCOCK, A CANADIAN POLITICAL-SCIENTIST TURNED AUTHOR FOR THE PAST 15 OR MORE YEARS.

IN YOUR PRESENT AND PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT CAPACITIES, I KNOW YOU HAVE HAD CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT, INCLUDING SEVERAL VISITS TO CANADA, IN THE VAST INTERCHANGE OF IDEAS AND CONSULTATION WHICH TAKES PLACE BETWEEN US.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN A FEDERAL SYSTEM ARE BUT A FEW OF THE MAJOR TOPICS IN WHICH I KNOW THAT AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVES CONVEYED BY YOU HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY APPRECIATED BY YOUR CANADIAN COUNTERPARTS.

TODAY'S EVENTS MARK AN IMPORTANT OCCASION IN CANADIAN-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS. INDEED IT IS AN HISTORIC EVENT IN THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR INCREASINGLY CLOSE CULTURAL TIES -- THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE JOINED TOGETHER TO PUBLICLY LAUNCH A CANADIAN BOOK IN AUSTRALIA. IT IS, MOREOVER, THE FIRST BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF CANADA WHICH HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN AUSTRALIA BY AN AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHER.

SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO I HAVE HAD MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE COMMON INTERESTS AND VALUES AND TO THE SIMILAR PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY CANADIANS AND AUSTRALIANS. THE BOOK WE ARE LAUNCHING TODAY DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO DISCUSS AUSTRALIA OR AUSTRALIANS BUT

IN ITS AUTHOR'S DESCRIPTION OF CANADA AND ITS PEOPLE I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT AUSTRALIANS WILL PERCEIVE SOMETHING OF THEMSELVES IN IT.

GEORGE WOODCOCK'S BOOK PRESENTS HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEW OF CANADIANS AND SOME CANADIANS MIGHT NOT AGREE WITH ALL OF HIS CONCLUSIONS. HOWEVER, THE BROAD CANVAS ON WHICH HE DEPICTS CANADA'S EXPLORATION, SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE PRESENT DAY, BRINGING OUT BOTH THE PROBLEMS AND STRENGTH OF THE COUNTRY, WILL, I HOPE, BE READ BY ALL AUSTRALIANS INTERESTED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY AS WELL AS IN CANADA.

THE ENDEAVOUR REPRESENTED BY THIS CEREMONY TODAY IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE CULTURAL LINKS AND THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THAT ACCOMPANIES THEM, WHICH HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN VERY RECENT YEARS. THE CANADIAN-AUSTRALIAN LITERARY AWARD INAUGURATED IN 1976 IS ONE EXCELLENT EXAMPLE.

THE FIRST CANADIAN WINNER, ALICE MUNRO, FOUND SUCH AN EXCELLENT RAPPORT WITH HER LITERARY COLLEAGUES IN AUSTRALIA THAT SHE RETURNS LATER THIS YEAR TO BE WRITER IN RESIDENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND. THESE ARE THE MULTIPLIER EFFECTS, WHICH I KNOW MR. MINISTER, WE HAVE EVERY EXPECTATION WILL FLOW FROM THE MODEST GOVERNMENT FUNDING ON WHICH THEY DEPEND.

MY COLLEAGUES AND I ARE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS FOR SELECTING THIS BOOK FOR PUBLICATION IN AUSTRALIA, AND FOR MAKING THE DIRECT ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL CANADIAN PUBLISHER, FITZHENRY & WHITESIDE, AND THEMSELVES, WHICH, IN ITSELF, CONSTITUTES A FIRST OF SORTS, I UNDERSTAND.

IT WILL MAKE OUR OWN WORK AT THE MISSION EASIER THAT AUSTRALIAN READERS HAVE SUCH AN EXCELLENT BOOK TO DRAW UPON FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CANADA.

GEORGE WOODCOCK DESCRIBES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE EARLIEST ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN EUROPEANS AND CANADA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES -- THE CANADIAN INDIANS AND ESKIMOS (OR INUIT, MEANING "THE PEOPLE" AS THEY PREFER TO CALL THEMSELVES). HE DESCRIBES HOW THE PEOPLE OF CANADA HAVE HAD FROM THE OUTSET OF CANADA'S HISTORY AND PRE-HISTORY TO GRAPPLE WITH AN OFTEN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT IN WIDELY DIVERSE REGIONS AND IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROCESS OF NATION BUILDING. HE DISCUSSES THE CANADIAN CONCEPT OF THE "MOSAIC OF RACES" BY DEVELOPING THE THEME, DEAR ALSO TO VARIOUS PARTS OF AUSTRALIA, OF THE INDIVIDUALITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE DIVERSE REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, HE EXPLAINS SOMETHING OF THE WAYS IN WHICH AUSTRALIANS AND CANADIANS DIFFER, IN DESCRIBING, FOR EXAMPLE, THE GREAT CONTRIBUTION WHICH THE FRENCH LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND PEOPLE HAVE MADE AND CONTINUE TO MAKE TO CANADA. HE DENYS, HOWEVER, IN A WAY PARTICULARLY TIMELY TODAY, THAT CANADA CONSISTS OF "TWO SOLITUDES", ENGLISH AND FRENCH, AND SUGGESTS INSTEAD THAT THE COUNTRY COMPRISES A MULTIPLICITY OF ORIGINS, IN CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH CANADA'S TWO FOUNDING PEOPLES, EACH WITH ITS OWN SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO CANADA AS A WHOLE.

I CAN THINK OF NO MORE APPROPRIATE PERSON TO LAUNCH THIS BOOK AT THIS TIME AND AT THIS PLACE THAN THE HON. BOB ELLICOTT, WHO HAS BEEN MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND THE CAPITAL TERRITORY

SINCE SHORTLY AFTER MY ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA. HE INCLUDES AMONGST HIS MANY DIVERSE AND CHALLENGING RESPONSIBILITIES THAT OF THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF AUSTRALIAN ARTS AND CULTURE. HE IS ALSO THE AUSTRALIAN CABINET MINISTER WHO HAS MOST RECENTLY BEEN IN CANADA. THUS HE IS NOT ONLY THE RELEVANT MINISTER BUT THE ONE WITH THE CANADIAN CONNECTION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I GIVE YOU THE HON. BOB ELLICOTT.