



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER • CABINET DU PREMIER MINISTRE

O t t a w a (4)
February 19, 1970

Miss Jeanne Mikita,
1075 Stratford Avenue,
Burnaby 2, B. C.

Dear Jeanne:

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your message urging that the government take all possible measures to help combat further pollution of our environment.

I think that the attached transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister will give you some indication of the priority and importance being attached by the government to this vital question; it will also give you an indication of the specific measures now being planned by the government, as well as some indication of the enormity and the complexity of the task which lies ahead.

Two of the legislative measures referred to by Mr. Trudeau - the Canada Water Bill which will have far-reaching effects in the realm of water pollution, and the Motor Vehicle Safety Bill which will enable regulation of harmful exhaust emissions from motor vehicles - are already before Parliament. An outline of additional federal government activities in the field of environmental protection is contained in the other document which I am sending you.

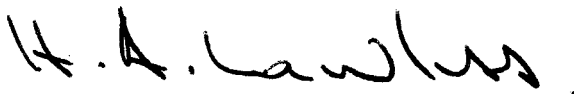
Referring to the harm to our environment which has already occurred, Mr. Trudeau has stated that the government is "determined these acts of folly will not be permitted to continue unchecked and uncontrolled".

....

Your own support of this determination, and of measures required to implement it, is thus warmly welcomed.

On Mr. Trudeau's behalf, thank you again for having written.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "H. A. Lawless." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Henry Alan Lawless,
Secretary.

SOME REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON

P O L L U T I O N

- 1) Federal government concern; proposed legislation; environmental preservation in the Arctic; initiative for international pollution control.
 - 2) Comments on some of the constitutional difficulties involved in pollution control in Canada.
 - 3) Some necessary limitations to pollution control.
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- 1) (Excerpts from Prime Minister's speech during the Throne Speech Debate, October 24, 1969).

Excerpt No. 1 (translation)

"Let me repeat this government's concern for what it regards as Canada's two most valuable assets, Mr. Speaker: its human resources and its natural resources. It is in terms of husbanding and nourishing those resources that this government views every problem. What we do, or fail to do, in the course of this administration will, I hope, be measured in that light. I invite honourable members to regard the current legislative programme in the same terms. This invitation is issued because I am conscious of the fact that day-to-day decisions concerning day-to-day crises may often appear to be unpopular. It is inevitable in a country as vast as Canada, with interests as manifold as ours', that all Canadians will not always agree on assessments, on responses, or on priorities. Nevertheless, those assessments, those responses, and those priorities will, I pledge, always be consistent in the long run with certain principles:

- we will not barter a clean and wholesome environment for industrial or commercial growth and call it progress;
- we will not substitute privacy and other individual freedoms with a ubiquitous government and call it either efficiency or social welfare;
- we will not in this country permit bigotry to replace tolerance, violence to replace dialogue, or discrimination to replace moderation, and excuse it all in the name of freedom of expression.

We plan to deal with the human environment not just in the far north but in all parts of Canada, concentrating on the two major sources of pollution - urbanization, and new and

expanded technology. Urbanization is not in itself damaging to the environment, but improper planning and administration can lead to that result, and through it, to unwholesome habitation. This government is very conscious of the costs and the burdens which society now bears as a result of a lack of progress in the past in overcoming the problems of urban expansion. We are committed to an easing of those hardships, and to a solution to those problems. The amendments proposed to the National Housing Act are another step in that direction.

The continued growth of our large cities is not a passing phenomenon which will soon disappear, nor is it something about which we should despair. Cities are capable of providing attractive settings in which to work, play and live. There is no reason why any Canadian centre should fall victim to, or remain in the grips of, the paralysis suffered in some countries where the very word "city" raises the spectre of overcrowded slums, noise, disease, crime, and a lack of educational and recreational facilities. It is our determination that Canadian cities be healthy centres of human activity.

The same technology that has produced miracles of communication and transportation, of advances in the application of all the sciences, nevertheless remains as the most formidable opponent to a wholesome biosphere. We can no longer retreat from the health hazards which are the consequence of imperfect disposal of industrial and human wastes, and from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. There is in nature a fantastic capacity for adaptation and regeneration but it is not limitless. In the course of evolution, most species of life have disappeared because of their own, or their environment's, failure to cope with challenges to their survival. The adaptive processes of biological growth have simply not operated rapidly enough to meet the challenges in time. Man's ingenuity and preeminence, however, create an illusion of invulnerability to these laws. Yet there is no reason to exempt man from the possibility of extinction. All too often he has used his ingenuity and his capabilities not to meet the challenges he faces, but instead to challenge his own survival. In doing so he threatens not only himself but as well all species of life on this planet.

This government is determined, Mr. Speaker, that, in Canada at least, these acts of folly will not be permitted to continue unchecked and uncontrolled. In addition to the legislation that I have mentioned concerning protection for the Arctic areas, there will be introduced in this session a new Canada Water Bill designed to prevent pollution of lakes and streams, and a bill to control the operation of devices emitting radiation. Studies relating to the hazards, and the techniques of control, of exhaust fumes from automobiles and trucks is continuing as announced earlier in the year.

All these measures are designed to enhance the environment in which Canadians live and work."

Excerpt No. 2:

"Membership in a community, Mr. Speaker, imposes - and properly - certain limitations on the activities of all members. For this reason, while not lowering our guard or abandoning our proper interests, Canada must not appear to live by a double standard. We cannot at the same time that we are urging other countries to adhere to régimes designed for the orderly conduct of international activities, pursue policies inconsistent with that order simply because to do so in a given instance appears to be to our brief advantage. Law, be it municipal or international, is composed of restraints. If wisely construed they contribute to the freedom and the well-being of individuals and of states. Neither states nor individuals should feel free to pick and choose, to accept or reject, the laws that may for the moment be attractive to them.

In the Canadian Arctic are found the breeding grounds, sometimes the only breeding grounds, of many species of migratory birds. Bylot Island is the site of the nesting ground of the total population of the Greater Snow Goose. It is the site as well of the nesting colonies of some 6 million sea birds. Along 12 miles of the coast of Somerset Island are the nesting grounds of 4 million birds. Large numbers of air breathing mammals - whales, seals, walrus - inhabit the waters lying throughout the Canadian archipelago. The existence of these and other animals and birds is dependant upon an uncontaminated environment; an environment which only Canada can take the lead in protecting. The beneficiaries of this natural life are not only Canadians; they are all the peoples of the world.

For those reasons, I say in this place, Mr. Speaker, that Canada regards herself as trustee to all mankind for the peculiar ecological balance that now exists so precariously in the water, ice and land areas of the Arctic archipelago. We do not doubt for a moment that the rest of the world would find us at fault, and hold us liable, should we fail to ensure adequate protection of that environment from pollution or artificial deterioration. Canada will not permit this to happen, Mr. Speaker. It will not permit this to happen either in the name of freedom of the seas, or in the interests of economic development. We have viewed with dismay the abuse elsewhere of both these laudable principles and are determined not to bow in the Arctic to the pressures of any state. In saying this, we are aware of the difficulties faced in the past by other countries in controlling water pollution and marine destruction within their own jurisdiction.

Part of the heritage of this country, a part that is of increasing importance and value to us, is the purity of our water, the freshness of our air, and the extent of our living resources. For ourselves and for the world we must jealously guard these benefits. To do so is not chauvinism, it is an act

of sanity in an increasingly irresponsible world. Canada will propose a policy of use of the Arctic waters which will be designed for environmental preservation, Mr. Speaker. This will not be an intolerable interference with the activities of others; it will not be a restriction upon progress. This legislation we regard, and invite the world to regard, as a contribution to the long-term and sustained development of resources for economic and social progress.

We do this not in defiance of the world but in the interests of all men. We invite the international community to join with us and support our initiative for a new concept, an international legal régime designed to ensure to human beings the right to live in a wholesome natural environment. In pursuit of this concept I shall be holding discussions shortly about this and other matters with the Secretary General of the United Nations. A combination of an international régime and the exercise by the Canadian Government of its own authority in the Canadian Arctic will go some considerable distance to ensure that irreparable harm will not occur as a result of negligent or intentional conduct."

2)

(Excerpt from Press Conference held by the Prime Minister in Ottawa, October 15, 1969):

Q: Sir, a general question on pollution. Do you see the day when Ottawa will take the lead, the initiative, in coordinating an attack on pollution, in all forms of pollution, water pollution, air pollution, pollution of crops, car exhaust, noise pollution, all these forms that are now spread through about four different levels of government and umpteen departments?

A: We have taken the lead, if I can answer that way. This summer the Minister without Portfolio from Saskatchewan, Mr. Lang, went to all the provinces and indicated how we intended to prevent water pollution through the Canada Water Act, which Mr. Greene will bring in in the next session. Many of the provinces answered, "fine, it's a good idea. We'll work with you", and others said, "never, we won't cooperate with you. Pollution is our business. You let us handle pollution of the waters and don't use criminal power of your authority to try to impose standards on us". The waters of Canada, except those that are in the Territories, are all in some of our provinces.

You talk of taking the lead, which we are doing. If you are indicating that we should have the power to coerce, then you are suggesting perhaps that we change the Constitution, which, as you know, we have been in the process of discussing now for many many months. It's all very well to say, "oh, well, the federal government is hiding behind the Constitution in order to not deal with the problems". I think this is a very shallow criticism of many of the things in effect which we can't do, because they are illegal for the federal government to do. The Constitution, I was saying earlier, in reply to an earlier question, doesn't permit the provinces to have independent foreign

policies and it doesn't permit the federal government to have laws regarding property and civil rights. If there's a chimney stack in a city which is polluting the air, this has to do with property and civil rights, it has to do with the health within the province. You can always say, "you can use the criminal power to prevent them from polluting the air". But what you're really saying is that the federal government should use its power over criminal law in order to regulate all manner of activities within the provinces. We say, "you must do this only carefully". And this is what we are doing with the Canada Water Act. We are going to the provinces and saying, "we hope we will do this through cooperation. If you don't cooperate, you're going to force us to make certain things illegal", which is not the best way of doing things. We prefer cooperation. Taking the lead means convincing people; it doesn't mean bullying them.

3) (Excerpt from the Prime Minister's question-and-answer period, Halifax, October 26, 1968)

Q: Mr. Prime Minister, I have a question of interest to all of Canada. We have a beautiful country, yet all around our boundaries pollution continues to ravage our nature. Realizing, sir, the provincial responsibilities in this field, perhaps you could elaborate briefly where your government stands on this important, as I see it, national issue.

A: The short answer, of course, is that we are very concerned. The problem itself is one I'm sure you comprehend, but which many Canadians perhaps don't. There is no one hundred per cent guarantee against pollution. If we wanted not to pollute any river or lake at all, or any air or any ground, we wouldn't have any industrial production. We would have to spend more per year preventing pollution than all the total earnings of all Canadians. So, there is no total solution to this. There are planned improvements. You try and have a situation where you don't have all the fumes of the chimneys blocked but you try and filter out say - fifty per cent of the worst; same thing with automobile pollution; same thing with people smoking. You try and put a filter there, and not to pollute other people's air or your own. There is no one hundred per cent solution.