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REMARKS BY
HONOURABLE JEANNE SAUVE
AT THE
WHITE OWL CONSERVATION AWARDS PRESENTATION
QUEEN ELIZABETH HOTEL
MONTREAL, QUEBEC
DECEMBER 6, 1974

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MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FELLOW ENVIRONMENTALISTS:

I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH ENERGETIC PEOPLE WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR DEEDS, THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO HONOUR ARE WHAT YOUNGER PEOPLE OF A FEW YEARS AGO USED TO CALL "RELEVANT". THEY IMPINGE ON THE VERY CORE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM.

THE WORLD EXPERIENCED DURING THE '60'S A SUDDEN, HEALTHY AND LONG OVERDUE ABANDONMENT OF FANTASY - A RECONNECTION WITH REALITY. CONCEPTUALLY SPEAKING THE LIGHTS CAME ON - REVEALING SOME FORGOTTEN TRUTHS, AND ALSO SOME MORTAL AND UNSUSPECTED DANGERS. THE RESPONSES THAT FOLLOWED CAME ABOUT, TO A MOST SIGNIFICANT EXTENT, AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC AWAKENING. AND THE AWAKENING ITSELF, AS WE KNOW, WAS ACCOMPLISHED VERY LARGELY BY THE WORK OF DEDICATED PRIVATE CITIZENS WRITING, SPEAKING, WORKING INDEPENDENTLY TO SPREAD THE WORD. AS A RESULT OF THEIR PIONEERING WORK, THE CONCEPT OF BASIC BIOSPHERIC UNITY BECAME RECOGNIZED NOT ONLY IN RESTRICTED SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES BUT THROUGHOUT SOCIETY. THE FIRST ESSENTIAL STEP WAS THE CLOSING OF A CONCEPTUAL GAP.

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THE GROWTH OF INDUSTRIALIZATION MADE IT PERHAPS INEVITABLE FOR THE GAP TO OPEN IN THE FIRST PLACE. IT IS EASY TO BECOME SEALED OFF FROM THE TRUE NATURE OF THINGS BY WALLS OF CONCRETE STEEL AND PLASTIC. MANY CHILDREN OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD GREW TO MATURITY AND PASSED INTO OLD AGE NEVER SEEING A COUNTRY FIELD - FOR MANY, THEIR ONLY KNOWLEDGE OF WILDLIFE CAME FROM BOOKS OR PICTURES OR VISITS TO THE ZOO. TO GENERATIONS THUS INSULATED A BELCHING SMOKE STACK OR A POLLUTED STREAM MIGHT WELL COME TO BE SEEN AS PART OF THE NATURAL SCHEME OF THINGS. SO MIGHT THE IDEA THAT THE HUMAN PART OF THE BIOSPHERIC CHARM COULD SURVIVE APART FROM THE OTHER LINKS.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, A SECOND-GENERATION CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGE - AN OFFSPRING OF THE ENERGY, FOOD AND POPULATION CRISES HAS EMERGED TO BE FACED. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE AND RESIST ANY TENDENCY TO REGRESS - TO RETURN TO A WORLD OF FANTASY IN WHICH THE VARIOUS SECTORS AND INTERESTS OF SOCIETY CAN HAPPILY GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS. WE MUST, IN PARTICULAR, RESIST THE HUMAN PROPENSITY FOR LINING UP IN TEAMS - FOR INSTANCE THE ENERGY TEAM VERSUS THE ENVIRONMENTAL ONE - ONE WITH A BLACK "E" ON THE SWEATER, THE OTHER WITH A GREEN. IN SUCH A GAME, TOTAL VICTORY FOR ONE SIDE MEANS DISASTER FOR BOTH.

WE NEED TO KEEP ON REDISCOVERING THAT THE WORLD IS ONE - THAT THE IDEA OF SEPARATE PROBLEM AREAS - ISOLATED CRISES - IS UNREAL. IN COMMUNICATING THIS FUNDAMENTAL

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TRUTH WE ARE GETTING SOME HELP FROM UNFOLDING EVENTS. WE ARE FINDING, FOR INSTANCE, THAT BURNING FUELS, AS IF THERE WILL BE NO TOMORROW, MAKES NEITHER ECONOMIC NOR ECOLOGICAL SENSE. WE RECOGNIZE, CONSERVATIONISTS AND, I TRUST, INDUSTRIALISTS ALIKE, THAT NEWER, CLEANER ENERGY SOURCES MUST BE DEVELOPED, AND SOON.

SOME ELOQUENT MESSAGES ARE REACHING INDIVIDUALS IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD IN VERY PERSONAL WAYS. A SMALLER, LIGHTER AUTOMOBILE, WHICH IS EASIER IN TERMS OF RAW MATERIALS THAT GO INTO ITS CONSTRUCTION, IS ALSO EASIER ON GASOLINE. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TESTS IN OTTAWA HAVE SHOWN THAT ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE NOT INEVITABLY IN COLLISION. THE 1975 EMISSION STANDARDS FOR CANADIAN CARS ARE 20% MORE STRINGENT THAN FOR 1974. YET SOME MANUFACTURERS TELL US THEY CAN ACHIEVE THESE STANDARDS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME IMPROVING FUEL ECONOMY. THIS IS MUCH BETTER NEWS THAN WE HEARD A YEAR OR SO AGO WHEN SOME WERE DECLARING THAT OUR CHOICES WERE LIMITED TO POLLUTION OR HIGH CONSUMPTION.

THE OUTCOME OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS WILL DEPEND ON OUR EFFECTIVE USE OF A NON-POLLUTING FORM OF POWER - HUMAN ENERGY. HUMAN INITIATIVE, "PEOPLE POWER" APPLIED IN THE CLEAR LIGHT OF A RATIONAL PERCEPTION OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD AND ITS LIMITS, IS THE CRUCIAL FACTOR.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF THIS KIND OF ENERGY. THE TASK AT HAND IS TO IGNITE IT - TO FOCUS IT.

IN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE WAYS THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN NAMED WINNERS OF THE WHITE OWL CONSERVATION AWARDS FOR THIS YEAR, HAVE ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO THIS TASK. BEFORE I NAME THEM LET ME ADD THAT THE SPONSORS OF THE AWARDS THEMSELVES HAVE ALSO PERFORMED A PUBLIC SERVICE. BY GIVING PUBLIC RECOGNITION TO ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS FIELD, THEY INTENSIFY THE FOCUS.

THE WINNER OF THE INDIVIDUAL AWARD HAS BEEN WORKING IN THE INTEREST OF THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS: HE WAS TAKING PART IN WILDLIFE PROPAGATION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS WHILE STILL A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT. ALTHOUGH HIS CHOSEN PROFESSION WAS ENGINEERING, HE WAS ONE OF THOSE PIONEERS I MENTIONED WHO SAW THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF EVERY ACTIVITY.

THE WINNER OF THE INDIVIDUAL AWARD HAS BEEN A COMMUNICATOR, PAR EXCELLENCE, OF THE CONSERVATION MESSAGE. HE HAS SPREAD THE MESSAGE IN IMAGINATIVE WORDS, IN LECTURES, ON TELEVISION AND RADIO, IN ARTICLES AND WITH PHOTOGRAPHS. AS A LEADER OF ONE OF CANADA'S MAJOR CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS SINCE 1955, HE HAS SPONSORED A FORMIDABLE SERIES OF PROJECTS - INCLUDING PROGRAMS TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES, AND DIRECTION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR SPORTSMEN. HE WAS A KEY FIGURE IN THE FORMATION OF THE CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION AND A LEADER IN EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE NORTHERN ENVIRONMENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM PROUD TO PRESENT THIS YEAR'S INDIVIDUAL WHITE OWL AWARD TO MR. JACK O'DETTE OF

KINGSTON, ONTARIO.

AND NOW, THE WINNER OF THE WHITE OWL CONSERVATION AWARD FOR GROUP ACTIVITY.

THIS YEAR'S WINNER UNDERTOOK THE FORMIDABLE TASK OF COMMUNICATING TO LAY PEOPLE AND OTHERS, THE INTRICACIES AND IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TO DEFINE THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LAW IN DETERMINING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL DESTINY.

A REMARKABLE FEATURE OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENT IS THAT THEY HAVE MANAGED TO TRANSMIT THIS INFORMATION, NOT IN THE FORBIDDING TERMINOLOGY OF LEGAL OR OTHER SPECIALISMS, BUT IN LAYPEOPLE'S TERMS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE WINNER OF THE GROUP AWARD IS THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW RESEARCH FOUNDATION, PUBLISHERS OF THE BOOK "ENVIRONMENT ON TRIAL: A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO ONTARIO ENVIRONMENTAL LAW".

I AM TOLD THAT THE DECISION TO FOCUS ON ONE PROVINCE WAS MADE BECAUSE THIS WAS THE MOST PRACTICAL WAY TO AVOID DILUTION OF THE SUBJECT. A HAPPY ADDITIONAL PIECE OF INFORMATION: THE BOOK HAS BEEN A SUCCESS, REACHING WIDE AUDIENCES, PUBLIC AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL, ACROSS CANADA.

I CONGRATULATE MR. O'DETTE AND THE FOUNDATION FOR IMPORTANT WORK, WELL DONE.