

The Ottawa Citizen

An independent newspaper, founded in 1844

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Published by the proprietor, Southam Press Limited
at 136 Sparks Street, Ottawa 4, Ontario

Thursday, June 6, 1968

JOHNSON'S PLEA

'Let us purge ... our hearts'

President Johnson expressed these thoughts last night in an address to the American people on the shooting of Senator Robert Kennedy.

Tonight, our nation faces, once again, the consequences of lawlessness, hatred and unreason in its midst.

It would be wrong — it would be self-deceptive — to ignore the connection between that lawlessness and hatred, and this act of violence.

It would be just as wrong — just as self-deceptive — to conclude from this act that our country itself is sick — that it has lost its balance, its sense of direction, even its common decency.

Two hundred million Americans did not strike down Robert Kennedy last night — any more than they struck down President John F. Kennedy in 1963 or Martin Luther King in April of this year.

But those awful events gave us ample warning.

—That in a climate of extremism, of disrespect for law, of contempt for the rights of others — violence may bring down the very best among us.

And a nation that tolerates violence in any form cannot expect to be able to confine it to minor outbursts.

My fellow citizens: We can not, we must not tolerate the sway of violent men among us.

We must not permit men filled with hatred, and careless of innocent lives, to dominate our

streets and fill our homes with fear.

We cannot sanction the appeals of violence, no matter what its cause, no matter what the grievance from which it springs.

There is never — never any justification for the violence that tears at the fabric of our national life:

—That inspires such fear in peaceful citizens that they arm themselves with deadly weapons;

—That sets citizen against citizen or group against group.

A great nation can guarantee freedom for its people, and the hope of progressive change only under the rule of law.

Let us — for God's sake — resolve to live under the law.

Let us put an end to violence — and to the preaching of violence.

Let us purge the hostility from our hearts — and practice moderation with our tongues. Let us begin — in the aftermath of this tragedy, to find a way to reverence life, to protect it, to extend its promise to all our people.

We need gun law too

Security arrangements for Prime Minister Trudeau have been tightened as a result of the attempted assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy.

But makeshift arrangements for a few days or weeks for one individual will hardly suffice. Much more adequate action is required.

In Canada, as in the United States, our society is free and open. Elections here, indeed the very political system is based on close and frequent contact between the masses and those seeking or occupying seats of power.

Here, as in the U.S., it is easy for anyone to buy a gun. This may have been a factor in boosting crime, such as bank holdups.

There can obviously be no change from an open, free society to a closed one, where those seeking or occupying office are shielded from the masses, who are the repositories of power in our system.

But there can and should be better control over hand guns and automatic weapons which today are within easy reach of all citizens.