

I mentioned earlier the full support we gave to the efforts of French-speaking countries to assure the French language its full rights at the United Nations.

The whole federal administration is involved, not only one or two departments. Last year, the Government initiated a daring policy of promoting bilingualism on a large scale — even among the highest echelons — in the public service. As a result, we are presented with the rather pleasing picture of ministers, department heads and high officials dutifully attending French classes or spending a whole year in Quebec with their families in an exclusively French-speaking environment. The distance to cover is considerable; however, the effort which has been made is also considerable, and will become even more so.

For a long time, many people considered Canada almost exclusively an English-speaking country. This time has passed. Today, at the national level and abroad, Canada is emerging more and more as a country whose French roots and English origins inspire policies and direct action.

Canada, a North American Country

Canadians are North Americans. This is a self-evident fact, but also a significant one. The currents of North American economy, science and technology sweep across our country. The immensity of our surroundings has penetrated our art, our literature, our very souls. From these surroundings we have acquired a taste for vast undertakings: the daring construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which cuts to the very heart of the continent; mammoth mining and power projects; everything that Expo 67 symbolized. Our geopolitical horizon is on the same scale — two gigantic neighbours, the United States and the U.S.S.R. Canada, from sea to sea, joined by the Atlantic to a friendly Europe, also looks towards the Pacific and Asia. In a world very different from millennial Europe, Canada wishes to remain faithful to its two great European cultures, to represent all Europe on North American soil.

This is not easy. How can one retain one's identity so close to an extremely powerful neighbour, ten times wealthier and more populous? The United States certainly provides an indispensable contribution to our economic and cultural development. The press, broadcasting and visitors, inundating us with a popular culture which is often rather turbid, also bring us all the advanced and daring developments in science, the humanities and technology. However, this contribution presents serious problems to us.

In the cultural sphere, Canada can find the elements for a solution to this problem in its own vital forces. In the first place, there is the French "fact", which is at the very heart of Canadian identity. In its resolution to grow and spread, French culture in Canada gives Canadian life a powerful impetus and an indomitable element of originality. English-speaking Canadians, more subject to American influence because of a common language, are the first to recognize this fact. On the other hand, they are no less deeply attached to the culture of their origin. The Canadian Government gives strong encouragement to this