

I chaired a meeting Friday of representatives of industries, unions and governments interested in the United States countervail case. The meeting was in Vancouver, and Adam Zimmerman, Chairman of the Canadian Forest Industries Council, said he assumed that location was chosen because it was as close as I could get to High River. He was only half right. One of the changes we are introducing deliberately is to have more of the nation's business done around the country, not just in Ottawa.

That is why the Foreign Ministers of NATO, whose spring meetings are in Canada every sixteen years, just met in Halifax. The Commonwealth Conference will be in Vancouver. The Francophone Summit will be in Quebec City. The formal conferences of First Ministers were held first in Regina, then in Halifax. George Shultz and I had our regular fall meeting last year in Calgary, not Ottawa.

That is a deliberate step, of treating the country as being greater than its capital. One of the problems we were elected to address was the sense of regional division in Canada. It is worth remembering that, when Prime Minister Mulroney met then Premier Levesque in Quebec in November 1984, that was the first time in nearly eight years that the flag of Canada flew over the National Assembly of Quebec. Similarly, while the National Energy Program was simply regarded as bad policy in Toronto, it was seen here as proof of Ottawa's obvious antagonism to Western Canada. Those divisions were deep. Healing them required a steady demonstration that we are one country, working together. That is as important in the symbolism of where national events occur, as it is in the more substantial accomplishment, of eleven First Ministers agreeing on ways to pursue together the trade initiative with the United States.

I begin my remarks this way to make the point that our government was elected to change the direction of national policy, not just its details. That is what we are doing, in relations with the provinces, in deficit reduction, in privatization, in the Neilsen Task Force, and, of course, in trade. We suffer some set backs, of course, and sometimes we do that spectacularly. But we are making real and steady progress in changing old habits and attitudes which no longer serve the interests of this country.