

with me that someone has to play that role. To be cohesive, to be effective, the federal responsibility for the conduct of foreign policy must continue to be pre-eminent. On that, there can be no doubt. I am not saying we have always done it perfectly and satisfied all the provinces. Who could do that? We are dealing with the real world not in the realm of the abstract. We are, however, constantly looking at ways of doing more and better in our effort to promote and protect the interest of all Canadians coherently and effectively. My Department is studying a number of questions related specifically to the international dimension of federal-provincial relation:

- (i) What are the real priorities of provincial governments as they relate to their international interests? Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario are beginning to articulate these priorities. This a necessary precondition to effective action;
- (ii) What obstacles to fulfilling these interests exist in the Canadian federal system? If there are obstacles, do they relate to substance or to form?
- (iii) How can we improve federal-provincial consultative mechanisms? In that context, how do we draw on the extensive experience of the private sector?
- (iv) Specifically how we can involve provinces more directly in key economic development policies we envisage vis-a-vis Europe and Japan? I am told that a federal/provincial meeting to do just that is, as a matter of fact, scheduled for March 14.
- (v) Should the Department of External Affairs have a greater regional presence in Canada?
- (vi) How can we reflect our distinct identity and unity?

Whatever the answers we find to these, and other questions, I believe Canada has shown great dynamism and imagination in the field of international relations to accommodate and advance the interests of governments and the diversity of Canadian collectivities. This country has a genius for compromise in the appropriate sense of the word. It has enabled us to weather many storms and it will, I am sure, enable us to cope with the present one. But even the most flexible federal government cannot do it all. Attitudes are important, attitudes of people such as yourselves who are prominent in their communities are fundamental in bringing about necessary changes and avoiding alienation by certain segments of our population. People like you can take a lead in asserting, from east to west, the confidence, pride and the strong sense of identity which we all share. I am confident about the future, about what it holds for Canada and for Canada in the world. I trust that you are.