

I grew up in the Western foothills of Alberta, a decade after the party called Social Credit had swept to office in our province, campaigning against the "gnomes of Zurich" and the "fifty big shots". I worked with the Farm Union Movement in that province, one of whose youth leaders had confided to me that the leader of the international Communist conspiracy in Canada, in 1960, was the then Minister of Finance in the federal Conservative government, Donald Fleming. My informant told me that Mr. Fleming was well disguised, because the Communists were devilishly clever. And it was in that sophisticated atmosphere that I first heard of the Trilateral Commission. In our lore, you ranked with the most ominous of the international conspiracies.

Today, the economy of those Western foothills depends upon coal sales to Japan, gas and lumber sales to the United States, and investment from Europe - indeed, upon trade with the Soviet Union - and the region plans its future on a growing involvement in international trade development. The point is that an internationalism that aroused the most elemental suspicions mere decades ago is now accepted as the only sensible basis of national policy and, indeed, personal or corporate plans. However, if a recognition of interdependence is more widespread now, making it work is no easier.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak to you today, as the Foreign Minister of a pragmatic internationalist country, about how we might make things work.

Since 1945, the nations represented here have undergone an extraordinary economic transformation. But beyond that, these nations constitute a civilization, based on shared values of liberal democracy and individual initiative. The contemporary West, in the broad sense that includes Japan, is an unprecedented experiment in democratic community-building on a great scale. The challenge now is to stay united in the pursuit of positive goals.

Few countries understand this imperative better than Canada. Through our origins and national character, by vocation, and of necessity. Canada is a community of communities, a democracy that holds together across its vast expanse a remarkably small population. Given the great diversity within Canada -- ethnic, linguistic, regional and economic diversity -- it has been absolutely critical for us to pull together as a nation.