

Perhaps the Ottawa Chapter of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs has an unfair advantage over those of other cities in Canada. Since your Chapter is located in the country's capital, you are naturally closer to decision-making centres in foreign affairs; you have access to the considerable expertise in this field which exists in the Department of External Affairs and other federal agencies involved in the conduct of Canada's international relations; you can draw upon the insights of the numerous foreign diplomats and other representatives who are either accredited in Ottawa or come here on official visits; and you can expect that the Secretary of State for External Affairs will always be pleased to accept invitations such as the one that brings me here this evening.

But there must be a limit to partiality. As a Maritimer, I feel strongly that even if Ottawa deserves much, the federal government must spread the wealth a little across the country. My colleagues from Quebec, for some reason or other, always tend to agree with me when I speak this way; and my friends from the western provinces -- for, believe it or not, we Liberals still have many friends in the Prairies -- are almost incredulous when I tell them that this doctrine applies equally to them! Still it was in Winnipeg, soon after my appointment to External Affairs and before another Chapter of the CIIA, that I delivered my first major speech on foreign policy, which dealt with the important issue of U.S./Canada relations. In March, I had an opportunity to speak in Quebec City before your sister institute, the Centre des relations internationales du Québec. In fact, as long as I hold this portfolio, I plan to maintain a very close relationship with the CIIA.

I sometimes hear my colleagues, especially those holding economic portfolios, complain about all the lobbies and sectional interests to which they must cater. But I have no such complaint; I can only hope that Canadians will take a more active interest - sectional or otherwise - in the Government's foreign policy and more generally in Canada's involvement in the world. I sometimes wish, for example, that the business community in Canada would be more bothersome; for this would mean that they are more fully aware of those policies - such as trade diversification, the negotiation of a contractual link with the European community, the strengthening of our economic relations with Japan - which afford them great opportunities and which indeed cannot be implemented without the aggressive participation of Canadian industry.