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must work with business to create the public goods that make a country cohere. Finally, a people with two languages and a rich heritage of aboriginal and immigrant tongues, knows that we are held together not by common myths of origin or shared ethnic or religious roots, but by political institutions—Parliaments, provincial legislatures, courts, political parties and a free press—and by the political creed enshrined in our Charter.

What then is distinctive about the Canadian political tradition is the idea that the state creates the nation, that government action is a precondition both for economic development and the creation of a political community. At the same time as we believe in government, we are a free enterprise country. Social democracy has had a huge influence on our politics, and so has the history of free trade unionism, but we have never been socialist. We believe in markets because we know that they are better at allocating capital and labour than government, and because free markets make for free peoples. We also know that markets alone cannot distribute equitably between classes and regions. Hence a political community cannot cohere if it is not sustained by public provision of health care, unemployment insurance and social security, along with federal redistribution of revenues from rich provinces to poorer ones.

These values are not the property of any particular political party, though some parties have embodied them more successfully than others. They are the property of all our parties, and their operative role in holding our country together explains why our politics is ever so slightly, but decisively, to the left of center of our neighbours to the south.

When we look for distinctive Canadian values, in other words, we should look at the history of our institutions and register the enduring commitments they represent. When we look at our values and our institutions, we have reason to be proud. Their vitality gives us reason to be patriotic. Yet patriotism of the heart should never still the patriotism of the head. It is important to look the failings of our tradition squarely in the eye. While peace, order and good government meant that Western settlement proceeded under the aegis of the Mounties and we avoided massacre in our encounter with aboriginal peoples, it did not stop the federal government executing Louis Riel. It