

Let us be clear. There will be use of the North. It is not a museum, or some unreachable part of outer space. Many countries - some friendly, some not - already possess the means to live and move on ice, through it, above it and below. There will be increasing commerce there, increasing interest, increasing strategic importance. The question is not whether the North will be used. The question for Canadians is whether the use of our North will be on our terms. This Government believes our interest in that area has been too sporadic, more vision than vigilance. The vision is essential, but so is the vigilance, and that is the process we have begun.

One element is to establish rules for use. We intend this Parliament to pass the Canadian Laws Offshore Application Act, to extend the application of Canadian Law in the Arctic and other offshore areas. We are engaged in talks with the Americans to establish rules to govern the voyage of vessels like the Polar Sea, rules that reflect, to quote the words President Reagan added to his recent speech in our Parliament, "Mutual respect for sovereignty".

These actions are all designed to advance the major issue of sovereignty before us now. Obviously, in the process of asserting sovereignty, we also affirm Canadian identity. But identity is different from sovereignty; it relates to who we are as a people, rather than what we are in law. The judgements are inevitably personal, and I have my own view that we are steadily becoming a nation more sure of itself, more distinct from others. Certainly, if some Canadians aren't sure who we are, there is no doubt about our identity in the wider world - no doubt in the Commonwealth; no doubt in the GATT, nor in refugee camps, nor United Nations agencies, nor among the populations who remember, directly or in folklore, Dieppe or Vimy Ridge.

Ironically, we are asserting that distinct identity in a world that is becoming more and more interdependent.

Consider what is happening to national economies.

A decision about a microchip in Japan triggers a major trade action in the United States, which literally ripples through the world economy. Ask B.C. farmers about the effect of Europe's Common Agriculture Programme. Ask roughnecks in my constituency about the effect in Alberta of a decision in OPEC.