

Mr. President,
Gentlemen,

Let me say at once how pleased I am to have been invited to join you in celebrating this, your third Annual Civic Night.

Looking around me I can see that I am in the company of very many friends and acquaintances of the Italian Professional and Businessmen's Association of Windsor from outside the Italian community who have come to help in the celebration. This is proof of the kind of organization you are -- outward-looking. I think it significant that your charter calls upon you to direct your efforts not only towards Italian groups but also towards the local community as a whole. Since the founding of your organization in the fall of 1960, your cultural, educational, and charitable endeavours have focussed on this larger objective. You are an example of community broad-mindedness. And it is about the importance of this very characteristic in associations such as yours that I first wish to speak.

In describing the process of nation-building in Canada we often fall back on the term Canadian mosaic. This over-worked phrase is supposed to suggest the idea that each ethnic group, while contributing to the make-up of the whole, retains its own cultural identity. The metaphor is accurate enough as far as it goes. But it fails to take sufficient account of other important aspects of the nation-building process.

It does not, for example, adequately reflect the fact that, for the process to be truly effective, there must be constant inter-play among the various ethnic elements that make up the Canadian community. There cannot be ethnic self-containment. We must avoid the creation of a "Little Italy" which shuts out the influences of its Canadian setting. On the contrary, there must be an openness, and an interaction between ethnic groups and others in their immediate environment so that members can relate to other groups, and can enrich both themselves and the wider Canadian society by drawing upon and giving of their own cultural heritage.