

My first remarks are ones of congratulation to the organizers of this conference and to the directors and staff of the new Canadian-American Centre at this State University of New York at Buffalo. It is undoubtedly obvious to all of those here today that acid rain -- and the damage it is inflicting -- is a serious problem for both our countries. I therefore offer my thanks to the organizers of this conference for their perceptiveness and determination in marshalling so many outstanding experts from both the United States and Canada to confront this most difficult subject. I hope, too, that the efforts of this new centre will serve us well in the future in examining the full range of other concerns which, inevitably, good friends and neighbours must confront.

I do not intend to review in detail today the issues surrounding the dangers and control of acid rain. These have been examined exhaustively and expertly by the many specialists who have preceded me here. Rather, as the minister responsible for Canada's foreign affairs, I want to examine the political components of this phenomenon -- a phenomenon which for Canadians is a question demanding answers in the present, and for both our countries is an issue which goes to the heart of our relationship.

Most of you here today are familiar with the basic structure of Canada-U.S. relations. The relationship is one which spans much of our history and it has -- for the most part -- served us well. The unparalleled prosperity of both countries attests to that. And, despite our differences in population, and despite the different courses on which our national institutions have evolved, Canadians have learned to live alongside their neighbours in understanding and, frequently, with sympathy.

But beyond that, Canadians and Americans share a moral responsibility. Our prosperity and influence have not been solely the product of hard work or economic wisdom. From the very dawning of North American history, it was evident throughout the world that Canadians and Americans were the inheritors of one of the world's richest land masses. Over a span of more than 200 years the riches of America -- as it was known in the old world -- were little short of legendary. It was the promise of these resources that brought to this continent the millions of people who sought to fashion it into strong and influential economic and political entities.

How well our people have succeeded in achieving that is a matter of history. If our living standards over the years are a criterion, they have indeed succeeded in achieving their goals. But I want to suggest to you today that there is another dimension to that inheritance, namely our responsibility towards each other to ensure -- through the rule of law -- that what was given to us is not left ravaged and extinct because we lacked the