

Let no one pretend that is an answer for contemporary Canada, much less for the future of a country which is profoundly different from what it was.

In the past we concerned ourselves with three main questions: in English Canada, it was how we would define our own culture while living alongside a people which for all practical purposes spoke the same language as us, but whose means very often surpassed ours; in French Canada, it was the survival and development of the French culture; and in Canada as a whole, it was the challenge of encouraging two great cultural traditions -- the English and French -- to live and to flourish together within a single state.

The challenge today is broader.

There is of course an urgent need to make Quebecers comfortable in the whole of Canada. But this debate has also changed. It has broadened. Discontentment with Canada now extends far beyond the boundaries of Quebec. It certainly exists in the West, and has for some time. But it is more than a regional phenomenon. There is a feeling that many of our institutions are not up-to-date. Certainly we must reexamine, fundamentally, the approach we have taken to Canada's original people. And there are other issues where it is urgent for Canadians to reexamine our assumptions, our goals, our institutions.

Premier Bourassa asked the right question after the failure of Meech Lake, when he said: The question used to be, What does Quebec want? Today, the question is: What does Canada want?

This is an excellent question -- no less relevant in Toronto than in High River, in Halifax or in Quebec City.

The simple acts of posing and answering that question would be very good for Canada. For one thing, it would teach us a lot about one another. This country is still unknown to most of its citizens -- too few Albertans have contacts with Quebecers; too few Quebecers with Albertans; too few Torontonians understand why the culture and history of western Canada are different from those of the western United States; too few Canadians anywhere have a clear sense of Canada's history. I believe a process which encourages Canadians to come together, to talk about our future together, would help create that unity we discuss so much. But beyond that, it is time for Canadians, together, to look at the wider world, and ask how we want to respond to profound changes that are transforming our planet, and our lives.