

Political, cultural, regional - just three aspects of the Canadian plurality, the plurality that I define as one of great opportunity, and as a major factor contributing to Canadian unity and to Canadian identity. Why, I sometimes ask myself do we Canadians so often agonize about our bilingualism, our multiculturalism, our regional differences, when we should be rejoicing at our good fortune? I must make very clear, however, that particular interests, political, cultural or regional, cannot be pursued to the detriment of basic national aims. The Canadian plurality can only thrive within a wider Canadian unity.

In its recent series "Foreign Policy for Canadians", the Government stated that our basic national aims, however described, embrace three essential ideas:

- that Canada will continue secure as an independent political entity;
- that Canada and all Canadians will enjoy enlarging prosperity in the widest possible sense;
- that all Canadians will see in the life they have and the contribution they make to humanity something worthwhile preserving in identity and purpose.

If these ideas are correctly identified, and if they have the same meaning for us all, I for one have no fears for the continuance and increasing strength of the Canadian unity. This is not to say that Canadian unity can be taken for granted. There is some dispute about who first said "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance". Whoever did say it, it means that anything worth having must be striven for incessantly, for we are always plagued on the one hand by those who seek only to destroy what others have built and on the other by those with little minds who, unable to grasp the essential ideas and fundamental concepts that underlie civilization, are ready to see them watered down and wasted away.

While I do not for a moment question altruism as a motive in human behaviour, it must be assumed that individuals, like nations generally, act in their own best interest as they perceive it. I believe the same to be true of the many disparate groups that make up the Canadian plurality. Canada will continue united, and continue to be more than the sum of its parts as long as the varied elements in its plurality see in Canada their best chance for material and spiritual fulfillment.

This is nowhere more clearly to be seen than in Quebec. Quebec became part of Confederation in 1867 in pursuit of its own best interests as seen by its leaders of the time. It