

In our politics the sword play of ideas, real intellectual debate, has been a luxury that we have often had to do without, if we were going to hold together at all. Our loose federal constitutional structure, with immense reserves of power vested in the provinces, has made it very difficult to tackle many new problems; I refer particularly to those which come from rapid industrialization, problems which are national in scope, but provincial in constitutional terms. The province of Quebec, in particular, represents not just one of ten local governments. It stands, with the strong emotion of conviction in the minds of French-speaking Canadians, as the symbol of French culture in North America. It has taken the English-speaking majority many generations to accept that fact -- not grudgingly or indifferently but proudly as a mark of the rich variety of our national life.

Lastly, we can never forget that always, with all our compromises and frustrations as a small country in everything but geography, we have to live next door to the most powerful nation on earth. As a result of this, one Canadian has ventured to say with more humour than accuracy that we are a people bounded on one side by the northern lights and on the other by an inferiority complex just as vivid. The vast influence of American culture is now beginning to reach all of you as strongly as it has affected us for many generations. Like us you recognize the success and the ability of the Americans at so many things and their generosity and good will. Canadians are sometimes critical of their neighbours. But if we would only admit it, each of us in our own way possesses some unattractive habits and traits. What is important is to acknowledge and accept gladly and without jealousy, the best things into our own lives from wherever they come. In the end we can