

We do not believe that Canadian unity should imply the submergence of Canada's cultural diversity into a single monolithic entity; nor do we believe that it should ever require the subordination of any one cultural identity to another. Rather, confident that our neighbour's differences are not a threat; believing in what we stand for ourselves; accepting roles by which our own identity will find expression; developing a sense of sharing and of common purpose; offering tolerance and understanding of the differing beliefs and identities around us — we are convinced that Canadians *can succeed* in the mission towards constitutional renewal and national unity, and that *we can do so while preserving our diversity of cultural identity*.

In Chapter One, we also trace briefly the history of Canada's cultural evolution: from its beginning among aboriginal peoples, to the early French communities in Acadia and Quebec, through the major waves of English settlers who arrived about the time of the American Revolution, to the coming of Europeans in the early 20th century and, most recently, the arrival of new Canadians from all parts of the world. We point out that, in fact, Canada was a multicultural and multilingual country long before the Europeans ever arrived, noting that aboriginal peoples were as diverse with respect to language, tradition and history as were the immigrants who settled in this country beside them.

In the midst of this history, it is generally perceived that the concept of Canada's two founding linguistic communities had its beginnings with the passage of the *Quebec Act* by Britain in 1774.

Thus in any country, but particularly in one so rich and diverse as Canada, a dynamic vision of both our cultural heritage and our cultural potential is fundamental to our future development. We believe this cultural vision can best be conceived and expressed through our artists, our cultural industries and our heritage institutions. We further believe that this vision can best be conveyed to all Canadians through our comprehensive network of communications facilities.

The most obvious example of our communications network is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and we describe its importance to Canada as a national public institution. At the same time, we also acknowledge the vital roles played by private broadcasters such as the CTV organization, by the community cable stations and by our publishing industry as expressed through newspapers, magazines and books. In all respects, our communications services are critical to the cultural development of Canada, and to a sense of pride in and appreciation for our country among its citizens.

In concluding the opening chapter, we again emphasize that the common ground in Canada is diversity. The essence of *belonging* to Canada is to be able to share in its diversity — its geography, its people, its institutions and its rich and varied opportunities to grow. It is simply not necessary, nor desirable, nor indeed even possible to build a national vision for Canada that is based only on our *similarities*. On the contrary, the key to our nationhood is to recognize, to appreciate and to share our *differences*. The key to Canadian unity is to be able to *identify with our diversity*.