

At the same time, within this country, there is a natural movement of population and power which is of particular interest to Western Canadians. A growing share of Canada's population lives in Western Canada. A dramatic growth of Asian and American markets means that trend will continue. The regional economy is diversifying, and the share of national head offices located in Western Canada is growing steadily.

We used to call the Prairies "next year country". But, to an increasing degree, next year is now. And those changes in the natural dynamics of the country will require changes in our institutions, maybe in our Constitution. The demand for Senate Reform is stronger here, and there will almost certainly be other changes proposed to take account of the new role of Western Canada. My point is that, in the next phase of constitutional change, the West may seek more movement than anyone else. We, particularly, will want a constitutional system that works, rather than one that is both incomplete and embittered by failure.

By almost any standards, we Canadians are the luckiest people in the world. We have freedom, and wealth, and the highest standards of social justice. But there is nothing automatic about our good luck. No one here can guarantee that our children will inherit a kingdom so peaceable as that in which we grew up. The world has known other serene communities that came apart when anger and antagonism became contagious. But it has also known communities that saw the danger of division, and found the imagination and the compromising spirit to grow stronger. I am sure that is what we Canadians will do, and I welcome the opportunity to speak to you today.