

Mr. Chairman:

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address the 128th Annual Election Luncheon of your Chamber of Commerce. As I look around this distinguished audience I can only conclude that this is one of those rare cases where great age is far from incompatible with good health. Nor is great age incompatible with new ideas as your 128th Annual Luncheon welcomes the Niagara Institute for International Studies, recently founded at Niagara-on-the-Lake with the purpose of achieving a deeper understanding between the people of Canada and the United States.

A Canadian politician, and I suppose any Canadian, invited to address an audience in the United States faces an immediate problem: how much will his listeners know about the realities of modern Canada, will they in fact know anything at all beyond outworn and out-of-date clichés; how does he, in the confines of one speech, both paint in the essential background and make a cogent case. This is not my problem today. The people of the Buffalo area know Canada and Canadians, and this not just from their contact with the Saturday afternoon smugglers from Hamilton and Toronto but from sharing with Canadians for more than a century this end of Lake Ontario.

The political and economic ties that bind Canada and the United States together are more clearly perceived here than in more distant parts of your country. We receive each other's radio and television programmes, the pilgrimage made by so many from Ontario to visit your superb Knox-Albright collection is made in the other direction by people from this part of New York State to visit the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ontario Science Centre.

For all these reasons, Mr. Chairman, and for many more, when difficulties between Canada and the United States arise they are felt more keenly here than in some other parts of this country. But I think it is also true to say that they are seen in better perspective. The central facts of the interdependence and shared destiny of Canadians and Americans can never be lost sight of by the people of the Great Lakes basin whether they live on the Northern or the Southern shores.

We who live on the shores of the Great Lakes know from experience that any attempt by one partner to gain more than a temporary advantage at the expense of the other is self-defeating. We instinctively reject the doctrines of narrow economic nationalism that from time to time become popular in our two countries as cures for unemployment.

President Nixon paid us a very welcome visit in Ottawa a few weeks ago and in the course of a speech to both Houses of Parliament summed up very succinctly what I am saying to you now: