

Bilingual we are and must continue since a multilingual state, a modern Tower of Babel, would be hopelessly unwieldy, impossibly expensive and altogether inoperable. In social terms we now clearly recognize that we are multicultural rather than bicultural.

Essential to the Canadian plurality is the interaction of different cultures, indigenous, European and many others. Each of these cultural groups contains in itself much that is of great value, that must be preserved. Each has much to offer to the enrichment of our national life. In giving recognition to Canada's cultural diversity, the Government is not confining itself to words and good intentions, the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State disposes of growing financial resources available to our many cultural minorities to maintain and strengthen their cultural life.

Differing regional interests and problems contribute to the Canadian plurality. Despite the best efforts of the Federal and Provincial Governments working together, regional disparities in opportunity and standard of living continue to plague us. This is one of the most difficult problems we are facing, and one to which adequate solutions have yet to be found. A measure of social justice is achieved by equalization payments to the provincial governments, a number of co-ordinated projects at the federal and provincial levels are being used to stimulate investment and employment in areas suffering from chronic stagnation. More and better co-ordination is needed, and this is one area where federal-provincial co-operation is an essential and federal-provincial competition a nonsense.

Regional disparity is only one facet of the problem. There are very real conflicts of interest between regions, conflicts that can only be resolved at the federal level. Problems arise and they have to be resolved, again by a continuing process of negotiation. Economically, Canada is five regions each with its own particular characteristics and interests. This is one of the reasons why Canadian political parties with any pretension to being national seem to differ so little in their general programmes. By the time the national parties have worked out compromises among their own representatives from British Columbia, the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, they look very much alike. The only political parties that appear to offer radically different programmes are those with a narrow base that have little hope of attaining power in Ottawa, and it is observable that no political party has any chance of retaining office in Ottawa that does not elect substantial numbers of members from both English and French-speaking regions.