

But there is no doubt that, this fall, the knowledge of public support made it easier for Ministers to identify \$4.2 billion in expenditure cuts.

I will speak at other times about the importance of public support for starting the restraint which so many arm-chair Prime Ministers have recommended for so long. But today, I want to focus on a more important Canadian economic challenge, where the options are not so clear, and public opinion not so well-formed. I refer to our future in trade, and the most urgent question that raises for the future of Canada's economic relations with the United States.

For most people, Canada/U.S. relations is a matter of emotions, not economics. The United States of America makes some of us nervous, and some of us proud. But most Canadians react emotionally to the U.S. and there is nothing wrong with that. However, I would ask you today to step back from emotion, and look at the prospects of a fantastically rich country of twenty-five million inhabitants, sharing a continent with a competitor and a market of two hundred and forty million, and sharing a world with nations whose labour and technology challenge everything we know.

Ask yourself whether a country can compete by producing for twenty-five million when its neighbour has a home market ten times that size. Ask if keeping walls - even low walls - around that country would lock wealth in or keep it out. Then ask how the smaller nation should play its hand in the face of a bigger neighbour which has the same tastes and talents and technology, magnified tenfold.

Obviously, economic questions cannot be seen in a vacuum. A country is always more than its Gross National Product and our ability to take advantage of economic opportunities is determined by our character as a country.

I have been active in my country over the last two decades, in positions that have required me to keep my eyes open, and I believe we have moved quietly into a new maturity as a nation. We have been a young country for a long time, but somewhere between the discovery of Imperial No. 1 and Marc Garneau's voyage into space, we have become more sure of ourselves. Part of that had to do with a sense of equality in our regional communities. There has been a dramatic evolution of self-confidence in Québec and, for different reasons, in our region of Western Canada, and that is bound to influence Canadians as a whole. But quite apart from our geographical and cultural communities, these last few decades have seen a burst in Canadian accomplishment - literature, science, investment, invention, painting, sport - you name the field.

Confidence and accomplishment nourish one another, and I argue that we are better able to stand on our own than we have