

Canada are really going to reverse the trend and go backwards towards smaller separatisms.

Certainly, however, the most exciting single development in Canada these days is the surging renaissance, cultural, educational, industrial and political, in Quebec. This renaissance, like any basic change, naturally creates problems. But essentially it is bringing tremendous opportunities, and enriching the lives not only of our French-speaking compatriots but of all Canadians.

French-speaking Canadians are no longer feeling on the defensive, hard-pressed to preserve their culture. On the contrary: they are feeling their oats, bursting with new energy and ideas and the joy of creativity. In my own field of international politics, not all that many years ago, the pressures from Quebec on Ottawa were largely negative -- to avoid this entanglement and spurn that commitment. Today these pressures are very different. They are positive, and impatient. Why do we not have more diplomatic missions in the many French-speaking countries in Southeast Asia and Africa? Why do we not have more active cultural relations? Why do we not join the Organization of American States? Why have Canadian aid programmes been so largely concentrated on English-speaking countries? These are good questions. Speaking personally, I welcome these pressures.

Admittedly some of our French-speaking compatriots have tended to regard Canada's Commonwealth links with indifference and a few with distaste, as reminiscent of the conquest and colonialism, or as involving some sort of subservience to London. I understand this viewpoint, but I do not agree with it. It is not hard to understand, since not a few Canadians of Anglo-Saxon origin have tended to regard the Commonwealth sentimentally in much the same light. This is, as I have been suggesting, a misunderstanding of the true nature of the Commonwealth, which has been so largely a Canadian invention, developed for our own national purposes, and offering us one of several valuable windows of the world. Certainly today the multi-racial Commonwealth, with its vast majority of non-Anglo-Saxon members speaking many languages, of many cultures and civilizations and racial backgrounds, realistically viewed should involve no such attitude. On the contrary, our Commonwealth association can prove a source of enrichment, intellectual and spiritual and political, to all of us.