

OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN THE CASE. WE OCCUPY MORE TERRAIN AND ENJOY OR, DEPENDING ON THE POINT OF VIEW, SUFFER FROM THE LOWEST POPULATION DENSITY OF ANY COUNTRY IN THE HEMISPHERE. WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH ENORMOUS AGRICULTURAL, MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES AND ARE THEREFORE, LIKE MANY OF YOU, SENSITIVE TO CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY PRICES. WE HAVE BEEN SHAPED BY OUR EUROPEAN ROOTS AND MORE RECENTLY BY THE INFLUENCE OF OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOUR. WE ARE DRIVEN BY A MONARCHICAL, PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AND THE DYNAMIC TENSION OF TWO DOMINANT CULTURES. BUT, ALTHOUGH WE ARE A NATION OF PREDOMINANTLY EUROPEAN ORIGIN, PRINCIPALLY FROM GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE, WE ARE A LAND OF IMMIGRANTS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD WHO FIND IN CANADA NOT A MELTING POT BUT A MOSAIC OF CULTURES AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS WHICH GIVE US A DIVERSITY UNCOMMON TO MOST COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. WE ARE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMONWEALTH AND FRANCOPHONIE. CONTRARY TO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THIS HEMISPHERE, WE DO NOT HAVE A REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY. THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE A NEUTRAL OR NON-ALIGNED NATION. AS YOU KNOW, WE WERE A FOUNDING MEMBER OF NATO AND WE CONTINUE TO BE STAUNCH SUPPORTERS IN BOTH DEFENCE AND PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS. BUT OUR BIRTH AS A NATION, NOT SO LONG AGO IN 1867, AND THE MATURING PROCESS SINCE, WERE ESSENTIALLY PEACEFUL (AT LEAST ON THE SURFACE ALTHOUGH, LIKE A DUCK SWIMMING, ANYTHING BUT TRANQUIL UNDERNEATH).