

Mr. Chairman:

It is a great pleasure for me to be in St. John's, at once one of the oldest cities in North America and the newest Canadian provincial capital. Only a few weeks ago I addressed the Board of Trade in Vancouver, a city facing Westward across the Pacific to the Orient. Tonight I find myself addressing the Board of Trade in a city facing Eastward across the Atlantic to Europe. Canada is a country vast in extent, infinite in variety, plural in its culture.

When Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation a generation ago, it was an act of completion and an act of enrichment. The Canadian patrimony was increased for us all, and not just in territorial terms. Into the Canadian tapestry came a new strand, the culture energy and hardihood of the people of Newfoundland. And into the medley of Canadian voices came the Celtic lilt of the Newfoundlander, a voice tuned by centuries for the singing of songs and the telling of tales.

As I travel about the country I learn. No one knows all that is to be known about Canada, no one ever will. I learn that St. John's has its special concerns and interests, concerns that must be heeded and interests that must be furthered by the Federal Government. The same is true of Vancouver, of Winnipeg, of Montreal. I learn too that, despite differing regional interests, Canada is one. For Canadians, prosperity, like freedom, is indivisible. The regional disparities that plague the Canadian economy are unacceptable if we are to strive for a Just Society. They will not be overcome by wishful thinking. What is needed is a conscious act of will on the part of us all, a determination to face up to the problem, to seek new solutions and apply them. And this is a shared task, provinces and regions have their part to play, the private sector must work with the public sector, or, to speak better English, business and government must work together. Business in my mind is not only management, labour is part of it and labour too must work with management.

Most of the indicators tell us that Canada is more prosperous than ever before, and that the economic outlook is for continued rapid growth. But all this is based on averages and totals -- facts of life but not the whole of life. We are still plagued by an unacceptably high rate of unemployment, a rate that varies in intensity in different parts of the country. The number of people at work in Canada is growing more rapidly than ever before, but our work force, increasing at a faster rate than in any other industrialized country, is outstripping the growth in jobs.