

We are in the midst of a vital debate in this country on our future. In our Centennial Year we have reason to be proud of our achievements in many fields. Our prospects for growth, prosperity and increasing world influence are excellent. At the same time, however, 1967 has brought to the fore some basic issues which must be faced squarely by every Canadian - whatever his ethnic origin, whatever his place of residence, whatever his occupation. The question of unity involves us all.

French Canada has now awakened to embrace the technological and social advances of the 20th century. This awakening has altered the terms in which we can look at Canada's future. The French Canadian has not changed his sense of community - it is just as strong as it ever was; but his ability to promote the interests of his community has greatly increased. Thus Canadian unity cannot imply a homogeneous society - the attempt to create such a society would be the surest way to lead to the disintegration of our country.

The people of Canada, I think, appreciate this reality and are prepared to seek ways of incorporating it into the concept of a greater Canada. There are two objectives. The first is to ensure that French Canada can survive and grow as a distinct community within Canada. The second is to convince French Canada that it has an essential role to play in building a united Canada. The achievement of these two objectives - in reality the inculcation of that worn but still indispensable expression "unity in diversity" - requires of all Canadians the highest qualities of understanding, sympathy and goodwill.