

interest groups. Proposals for such a constitutional assembly, of course, exist.

Such an assembly could, over a period of, say, five years, work out the modalities of a new constitutional accord, while government at its regular levels was getting on with the job of governing under the existing Constitution. In the meantime, some key issues could be worked out individually, such as agreement on Native self-government, on which there is a broad, though, I realize, not universal, consensus but a sufficient consensus, I think, to move on this issue.

Any new constitution must, of course, preserve and extend the common interests and values of all Canadians with respect to the national economy, national security, social security and fundamental human rights, protection of minorities and self-government by Native Canadians while reinforcing, not merely accommodating, the aspirations of Quebec as a distinct society within the Canadian nation. We must reinforce and give strength to those aspirations. This would enable us to get on with the business of revitalizing the Canadian economy and preparing Canadians as a whole for the very different, the very much more competitive and the very much more challenging world that we will confront as we move into the 21st century.

Those Canadians who have, as I have, spent much of our lives in the international arena are perhaps especially cognizant of the unique and precious nature of our nation. What a tragedy it would be if we could not succeed in renewing it, but allowed it rather to slide into dissolution!

It would be a tragedy for each of us if we were to bequeath to our children a legacy of failure in the very things that have been the source of success and pride for Canadians and that have made us the envy of the world. Imagine failing in the very things that we have been most able to take pride in and in which the world has given us such special credit.

Our ability to build one of the world's great nations and to contribute out of proportion to our numbers to the evolution of a more peaceful and equitable world order has made us the envy of