

The nature of this fundamental problem of national existence becomes evident in debates on legislation about bilingualism and biculturalism, constitutional amendments, the conduct of foreign affairs or national and regional economic policy. It is evident in the peaceful debate on the separatist option for Quebec. It is seen in its most distorted form, on the periphery of political life, in the actions of a small but dangerous group determined to apply to the solution of a Canadian problem ideologies and tactics of violence which have no real roots in our country.

Basic as these issues are in explaining the need for a review of national policy and a relatively greater attention to affairs close to home, there are others to take into account. Canadians, like Americans, also worry about the social costs of industrialization, urbanization and rapid economic growth. They experience the types of social malaise common to most parts of the developed world. They have also become increasingly concerned about the impact on their society of American influence exerted in many different ways. Today that concern is focused on a very considerable and direct participation by American companies and investors in the economic life of the country. The fear that close association and even economic integration in some sectors would destroy political and cultural independence is not new. Another of our Fathers of Confederation, Etienne-Pascal Taché, warned the scattered colonies in 1865, with reference to the then prevalent fears of military conflict with the United States that, without Confederation, "we should be forced into the American Union by violence and, if not by violence, should be placed on an inclined plane which would carry us there insensibly".

The supporters of the idea of Confederation, in the debates preceding the Act of 1867, emphasized all the advantages of a pooling of resources in achieving what one of them called "a powerful and considerable community". This community would resist pressures from the state to the south and take over some of the burdens of the mother country as the new state moved towards total independence. I hesitated to use the phrase "powerful and considerable community" as a general title for this address because "powerful" usually suggest only the military aspect of power. I prefer to think of "power" as having many other ingredients: political harmony and unity of purpose, economic well-being and social justice, cultural satisfaction, and influential and constructive contribution to the world community. It must also indicate a willingness and capacity to deter attack and contribute to security in areas beyond one's frontiers. One might also think of power as, in a sense, a surplus or reserve of energy, over and above the most pressing needs of normal existence, which enables the leaders of a community to develop a new sense of purpose, and a capacity to initiate reform and to take an active role in relations with other states. We have in the past responded to challenges at home and abroad with achievements which we think have some permanent value. I am confident that we shall continue to do so, provided our home-base is always strong. Need I say more to an audience of this nature than that such preoccupations cannot sound too unfamiliar in the United States?