



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE CANADIAN WOMAN

An Address by Prime Minister the Right Honourable
Pierre Elliott Trudeau in Toronto, March 3, 1971.

Canadians by and large tend to think of Canada as a land of immense potential. Not just as a big land, which it unquestionably is. Or a privileged land, as many others enviously regard us. But as a land of limitless promise. A land, perhaps, on the threshold of greatness.

This attitude sets Canada apart. Canada becomes identified as a land in transition; one with a brilliant future. To much of the world, Canada appears to be the land of opportunity.

A country does not achieve greatness by itself, however. It requires the application of human resolve. Opportunities must be seized by people. Promises must be redeemed by individuals.

Our national performance can never exceed the sum of our individual performances. There is no alchemy available to governments (or to statisticians) which can make Canada something other than the product of our talents, our efforts, and our accomplishments. If Canadians, individually, perform badly, Canada cannot be otherwise. If Canadians, individually, are indifferent -- "copping-out" is the expression of the "Woodstock generation" -- then so will be Canada. There can be but a single aim for Canada and for Canadians -- a standard of excellence.

Canada is not so wealthy in human or in material resources that we are able to cater to mediocrity in any of its manifestations, or to ignore or misuse the talent in our midst. No society is that wealthy; none has ever so acted without suffering as a result. Canada must somehow offer challenging opportunities to all its citizens and must foster within them the desire to perform well.

One need not look far in this or any other Canadian community to find evidence of low standards and poor performance, of misused or wasted skills. We cannot claim with honesty that our present level of achievement is the best we can attain; that our accomplishments in the arts or in science, in business or in government, are adequate. They are not. They are not