

The point that I am anxious to make to you is that there is within our country, from coast to coast, a wide-spread commitment to the concept of national unity and to the maintenance of a single nation, as in fact our motto over the House of Commons puts it in Ottawa, "The wholesome sea is at our gates, our gates both east and west."

We in Canada, like you in the United States, but in a slightly different way, have demonstrated throughout our history a genius for compromise in the most appropriate sense of that word. Like you we have an enormous amount of sheer geography to contend with. Like you we have opted for the federal system, although in our case with a parliamentary democracy rather than the congressional system. But apart from these slight distinctions I don't believe that there are two countries anywhere in the world who have been by tradition and by heritage, and one could even say by instinct, more prepared to provide diversity for their citizens, to provide the maximum degree of openness and opportunity for the expression of the widest possible range of views and for the gratification of the widest range of individual desire.

And so I repeat that while we in Canada have our difficulties, they are not significantly different from those of countries such as your own, where for instance you have demonstrated such remarkable courage, remarkable ingenuity, in dealing with the inevitable problems of minorities, in dealing with the inevitable alienations that can set in when one has such a spectrum of states or provinces, each of which tends on occasion to feel itself remote from the centre, to feel itself in some way deprived, as I know, for instance, this region did for a very long time, and as my own Maritime or Atlantic provinces still feel in terms of the Canadian mosaic.

So I really wanted to say these few words as a background against which to talk about some aspects of Canada/United States relations. On that subject let me begin by saying that no two countries in the world are as close as Canada and the United States, and while the normal diplomatic techniques which have been developed over centuries have a great value and are essential in terms of preserving an ordinary relationship between countries, and indeed in some instances avoiding certain tensions which can exist below the surface, the Canada/United States relationship calls for considerably more than just the routine or standard diplomatic approach. We Canadians are increasingly anxious to ensure that we get to know far more than we do at present about you, and I say in the kindest fashion of course, that it is important that the United States gets to know more about us.