

There will always be differences; they are part of the vitality of Canada. But the pre-occupation with national differences, the definition of national affairs as disputes over differences, was something Canadians wanted ended. We take it as part of our mandate to rekindle a pride and awareness in what we can do as a strong whole country.

Canadians wanted their Government, in our actions, to express and demonstrate real confidence in the country, real confidence in the nature of Canada, in our identity, in our future. They wanted a Government that would be prepared to stand up for Canada in the world, that would be prepared to say "here we are, we are different from other countries, we are different from our neighbours, we have distinct interests of our own, we are going to express those in the world, we are going to assert those in the world".

Nations grow gradually, becoming stronger in stages. And those stages rarely change dramatically. They shade one into another, and suddenly we realise that old assumptions no longer fit.

Ten and twenty years ago, national policy assumed a vulnerability about Canada. The creation of the Foreign Investment Review Agency, the development of the National Energy Policy, and other programmes were based upon the view that there was a certain fragility to the Canadian nature, and that our fragility had to be protected against the rest of the world.