

While we have greatly benefited from the diversity of influences available to us, we have only been able to draw on these sources and maintain the country open to the winds of change that are sweeping the planet because of our commitment to the principles of an open society. Our deeply-rooted respect for democratic freedoms and human rights has also been for us a means of dealing most effectively with the linguistic, cultural, regional and social differences within Canada. I would be less than frank with you if I did not admit that it has not always been easy for us to maintain these principles. We have suffered from the stresses and strains that have arisen from the accelerated pace of history in our time. Nevertheless, we are firmly of the belief that the open society, with all the risks that it entails, is in the long run the only way of successfully achieving change in stability, as well as unity and prosperity.

We now have in power in one of our provinces, Quebec, a government that advocates its separation from the rest of Canada. As a member of the Government of Canada, I want to assure you we are confident the country will remain together. Canada has been in existence now as a Confederation for over 100 years, and this is not the first threat we have faced. Canada has a genius for compromise in the best sense of the word. For this reason, I am certain that this most recent threat to Confederation will be resolved as well.

So far in my remarks I have described the political and cultural parallels in the pattern of development of our two countries. I have, however, neglected an area in which the parallels are perhaps the most striking -- that is, we have faced the problem of attempting to develop with inadequate financial resources, and an often hostile nature, enormous territories enclosing substantial wealth. To do this, we have responded in a similar manner. We have both had to develop or acquire the organization, the technology, and the infrastructure necessary to open up our vast territories and to realize their potential in hydroelectric power, in raw materials, and in agriculture.

If the problems we face in developing show strong parallels so too do the results. We have both expanded to become not merely countries but subcontinents in our size. You are larger than the continental United States; we are second only to the Soviet Union. We are both lands of the future. You, with your vast expanses and your population of 110 million, are surely destined to become one of the world's great powers. We, although we can claim a population less than a quarter of yours, have nevertheless achieved a gross national product comparable to those of many of the major industrial powers of Western Europe.

---