

And we're doing that to a quite remarkable extent. For instance in this region of the United States Canadian investment at the moment is in excess of half a billion dollars, and that has come about in a very short period of time. Last year we increased our trade with the six or seven states in this region from some 700 million dollars to over a billion, and the figure is continuing to rise.

If you took the southeastern United States and visualized it as a separate country it would be the fourth largest trading partner in the world for Canada. This is really quite a remarkable statistic and may add to your very justifiable pride and satisfaction at the level and the rate of your growth.

It's because of all of these things, I repeat, that I am anxious and delighted to be speaking with you today and I want -- in the short time available to me - to give you a broad overview of Canada/U.S. relations. However before I do I know that as friends of Canada you have an obvious and a legitimate interest in what has come to be called the national unity issue in our country, and I welcome this opportunity to say a few words on that particular subject. As you know, on November the 15th of last year a government was elected in the province of Quebec committed to the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada. This election has to be seen in the proper perspective to be understood. In the first place it would be less than honest of me if I did not concede at the outset that any bilingual country such as ours, and in a country which like yours is a federation of provinces as opposed to states, there are invariably regional tensions and difficulties which for us are compounded by the so-called French fact.

There was inevitably some fallow soil within the province of Quebec, as there has been for many, many years - for separation, for a feeling justifiable to a very great degree, that indeed French-speaking Canadians' aspirations and objectives were not being given the attention that they deserved. Having said that however, I think it is important for our American friends to understand that the motivation behind the election of the Parti Québécois in November was essentially economic as opposed to a widespread reflection of political dissatisfaction with our Confederation. I say that because Quebeckers were basically voting for good government, or it might be more appropriate to say against bad government, and of course since that time repeated studies and analyses and surveys have all reflected one common and apparent fact, and that is that the great majority not only of Quebeckers incidentally, but of all Canadians - are strongly committed to national unity and that indeed only something of the order of fourteen or fifteen percent of the residents of the province of Quebec would now opt directly for the separatist route.