



# REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 89

## CULTURAL PROGRESS IN CANADA

Address by Prime Minister Louis S. St-Laurent  
to the National Conference on Higher Education  
Ottawa, November 13, 1956.

I should first like to congratulate the National Conference of Canadian Universities for sponsoring this national conference on higher education. It may indeed prove to be the most important in this field ever held in Canada.

It is very significant that you should meet to study "Canada's crisis in higher education" at a time when our country is experiencing the highest level of economic prosperity in its history and one of the highest rates of industrial expansion in the world. If such crisis really exists, it reveals that our national development suffers from a serious weakness and that our cultural progress has not kept pace with our industrial expansion.

In the economic field, we have realized gigantic projects through private initiative and appropriate government policies. At the time of Confederation, Canada consisted of several depressed regional economies which were much more directly linked with the United States than with each other. It was said that their political unification had created an artificial economic situation which could be maintained only at the price of great sacrifices. However, the West was rapidly populated, appropriate national policies were applied in the fields of trade and transportation and new resources were developed. Today, we have to recognize that our economic relations with the United States are becoming more competitive and less complementary than they were before. The economic unification of our territory, which seemed artificial not long ago, now appears to have been largely achieved and to have become almost natural. A distinct and strong national economy has been built up in Canada through the strengthening and development of our regional economies and the establishment of complementary trade relations between them which are vital to their respective progress. This admirable accomplishment has largely taken place as a result of private initiative, but it would not have been possible without active government support.

I think it is now time for our cultural development to parallel what has taken place in the economic field.

In the cultural field, our development has been much slower than in the economic field. More often than not Canadians still describe themselves in a negative way by recognizing that they are neither British, nor French, nor American. They become aware more easily of their differences