

blems which we must examine and resolve. In resolving them, however, we must make sure that the division of powers is functional ² a road, not a barrier, to social and economic progress for future generations.

This must be our criterion in considering any transfers of power from one level of government to another. While we are committed to the view that Canada requires a strong Federal Government and strong provincial governments, the fabric of Canadian unity can only be maintained if the essential powers of the Government of Canada are maintained. Among these powers are the regulation of economic policy, the redistribution of income between persons and between provinces, the equalization of opportunity for all Canadians, and the protection of our national identity both at home and abroad. I cannot envisage new constitutional arrangements that will destroy these powers.

I am not claiming that the Federal Government has always exercised these powers with perfect wisdom and justice, or that some regions or groups might not have legitimate complaints of neglect or discrimination. As I see it, the solution for such problems is not to transfer power to the provinces, with the consequent erosion of Canada's strength and

unity, but to improve the Federal Government. Similarly, the solution for any inadequacies in a provincial government is not necessarily to invite the Federal Government to assume responsibility; it may be for the citizens of the province to improve their provincial government.

Having said that, I must reiterate that many changes are necessary, and many are possible. Those who deny this endanger the unity of Canada as much as those who preach its destruction....

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