

I want to begin the serious part of my remarks this morning with a reference to the Great Sioux Indian Chief Sitting Bull, because he said once - no doubt in response to a question from the Toronto Star, in their new series on relations between Canada and the United States: "The Buffalo meat tastes the same on both sides of the border."

That quotation reflects one part of the Canadian reality - we are part of this continent. The treatment of Sitting Bull, when he fled over "our border" in 1877, after dispensing with General Custer, reflects another part of our reality. When he and his warriors went back, from their temporary haven in our territory, they were escorted to the 49th parallel by two members of the then North West Mounted Police, and met there by literally hundreds of members of the United States Cavalry. As a Prairie Canadian, I was raised to believe that the difference in the size of the Force denoted a difference in the respect for authority in the societies that came after the Sioux. I still believe that, and believe the larger lesson that our two communities responded to the North American challenge with different principles and at a different pace.

This morning I want to talk about the pace of the progress, and offer the view that we Canadians, after decades of uncertainty about ourselves, have come gradually to a sense of self-confidence that will let us be equal partners in the developments of this Continent.

Much of the discussion in North America on the policies of the new Government has singled out particular programmes - changes in the National Energy Program or in FIRA. There will be changes in those programmes - the details will come after the Speech from the Throne in November and after we have completed consultations with Canadian Governments and other Canadian groups that are affected. This morning - rather than speculate on what we will do - I want to discuss why we will do it. I want to open a debate, not close it. I want to indicate some of the assumptions on which I, as a senior Minister in the new Government am acting, and to invite you and other Canadians to propose practical alternative ideas that would allow Canada to excel - not just to survive and certainly not to diminish, but to excel - in a changed and in a changing world.

Let me digress to two precisions (as we call them in High River). First, the NEP and FIRA. Without wanting to scoop the announcements of my colleagues, I want to make the point that if you live in the small towns of the Pembina Oil Field of Western Alberta, you tend to judge the success of the National Energy Program less by the television commercials of