

Regional Policy

Canada takes a firm stand on regional equalization. That does not mean this country turns a deaf ear to complaints, or a blind eye to signals, that a regional aid program may be construed as undue assistance to an export. What we insist upon is the necessity of upholding the Canadian Constitution and to try to ensure equality of essential services and development opportunities throughout Canada's six regions: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, Pacific and Northern.

Regional policy responds to the extraordinary geographic character of Canada, essentially a ribbon of settlement strung out across the northern half of the continent, each region with differing resource endowments. We seek to even out the inequalities through equalization payments, our social and cultural policies and programs of aid to help people help themselves through economic advancement. In its fundamentals, regional policy, too, is not a matter for negotiation.

SELF-DETERMINATION

In the negotiations, Canada is asserting itself firmly and clearly on sovereignty issues. The very act of international negotiation is an exercise of Canada's sovereignty. Our sovereignty is in no way diminished by any of the hundreds of international agreements that we are a party to. A trade agreement will be no different. We are confident that, at the end of negotiations, our two countries will emerge with an agreement that respects the national sovereignty and self-determination of both countries in setting cultural, social and regional goals.

