

We are also well placed because we have a successful and respected market economy. The world sees our commitment to a free economy as enduring not because we say so but because our history provides proof of this commitment. In a world where the market place is being discovered, our new land stand as an old beacon of stability and prosperity. And despite periodic problems and difficult times, our natural abundance and hard-earned wealth stands in stark contrast to the poverty and chaos so evident in other corners of the globe.

But perhaps our people are our greatest asset. Canadians are accustomed to praise of their multicultural society - of its uniqueness and relative social peace. But our ethnic richness is also a business asset.

We should prize that asset, and encourage the distinctive contributions that different Canadians can make to our collective prosperity.

One in ten Canadians is of East European or Soviet ancestry. Thousands more come from Asia and the Pacific, and know the languages, know the customs we have to master in this global economy.

This is an extraordinary national resource. Canada, better than most, can tap the intimate knowledge of customs elsewhere, of other societies, of other languages to sell our products abroad and attract investment to Canada.

This rich cultural tapestry is also related to a very profound psychological asset. And that is that Canadians are an outward-looking people.

The last election sent a special message. The message was not so much that Canadians supported free trade. The message was that Canadians are confident enough to look beyond their borders, to take risks for themselves - prudently and responsibly - and to shape and manage change rather than to deny it.