Keynote Speech by Senator Vivienne Poy

"In Search of Identity"

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Thank you for inviting me to address your class, as part of the Canadian studies program. Today, I will focus on Canada's search for identity, and how we define ourselves as Canadians.

My perspective on Canada's identity is shaped by my own experience as a woman, and as an immigrant from an ethnic minority. Your personal experiences, both in Canada and abroad, have undoubtedly shaped your understanding of what it is to be Canadian. This is why national identity is so difficult to define – it exists at the intersection of our personal and collective experience.

To the renowned economist, John Kenneth Galbraith, "Canada serves as the conscience for the continent." For Haida artist, Robert Davidson, "Canada is a good place to feel alone." The Acadian author, Antonine Maillet describes Canadians as, "people… who are inspired by a dream. They come to a country that has learned to deal with differences, to be flexible and subtle, confident, and yet not arrogant."

Canadians, in general, are much less self-congratulatory. According to a poll in 1999 by Macleans Magazine, Canadians echo Americans in describing themselves as "friendly", but also use words like "spineless" and "weak". A new book on Canadian identity, "Searching for Certainty: Inside the New Canadian mindset" interprets Canadian friendliness in a more positive way. According to its authors, Canadian "niceness is really rooted in the way we look at the world…we're people who celebrate the role of us being in this together…we're people who want to reach out and help but we're not suckers."

So what does being Canadian mean? The quest for identity is the story of Canada itself. As a small country – alternately pushed and pulled by our two big brothers – Britain and the United States – we have struggled to

define ourselves as an independent nation. Since the 1960s, I believe a distinct Canadian identity has emerged.

In the wake of the tragedy on September 11th, 2001, Canadians are, once again, reevaluating who we are – and the myths that form the foundation of our identity. I would agree with novelist Mavis Gallant who said "if there is one thing that makes Canada different, it's the fact that we ask that question, Who are we? What makes us special?."

The answer to this question has changed a great deal throughout Canada's history as Canada's composition, domestic and foreign policy, and symbols have evolved. Therefore, in order to assess who we are today, we need to look at who we were only a short time ago.

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Before WWII, Canada's immigration policy was based on the premise that it was, and should remain, a white country, primarily composed of people from France, the British Isles, the United States, and northern Europe. For the most part, Canada was a bicultural nation, with the French and British elements of Canada maintaining an uneasy truce. However, to characterize Canada in this way, is to neglect the fact that Canada was founded by three groups: the aboriginals, the French, and the British, despite the fact that aboriginals have been marginalized until recent years.

As a British colony, Canada's foreign policy was firmly tied to Britain. Domestically, no Canadian citizenship existed. Instead, Canadians were identified as British subjects.

Our symbols reflected these ties. We sang 'God save the Queen' and `the Maple Leaf Forever`. Canada flew the British flag. None of these symbols were embraced in francophone Quebec which felt excluded from the emphasis on Britain.

After WWII, Canada's population began to change. New groups of Europeans began to enter Canada. Many of them were economic and political refugees, fleeing war-torn Europe. Even though, in 1951 most immigrants to Canada were British, American or European, by the mid to late 1960's, non-European immigrants began to make their way to Canada in larger numbers. By 1968, Hong Kong became the first non-European

country on the list of the top ten source countries. And by 1998, most new immigrants to Canada were from Asia. Great Britain had dropped off the list of top 10 source countries entirely, with the U.S. nearing the bottom of the list.

After WWII, Canada also began to move away from Britain in terms of defining its domestic and foreign policy. Canadians had gained new confidence as a result of our achievements during the war, and a sense of nationalism was emerging. But just as Canadians were beginning to develop our sense of identity, separate from Britain, we began to feel pressure from our closest neighbour to adopt policies that were compatible with the American Cold War rhetoric.

In 1953, Lester B. Pearson clearly differentiated American from Canadian foreign policy, and, in so doing, attempted to define what it was to be Canadian. He told an American audience that Canada's first interest is "peace", that our second interest is the "welfare and prosperity of our people, which is inseparable from the welfare and prosperity of others," and finally our third concern, is "the deep attachment to certain principles rooted in our history and in our experience as Canadians."

As a result, Canadians began to develop new symbols that reflected our growing sense of nationhood. In 1946 the Canadian Citizenship Act was passed, and as of January, 1947, for the first time Canadians could have their own citizenship. Canadians were able to reflect on themselves with the launching of the CBC News Service in 1941, and the development of a policy for Canadian TV in 1949. In 1965, Canada raised its new flag, after ceremonially lowering the Union Jack.

During the same period, Canada also officially proclaimed O Canada as the national anthem, after many false starts, and much debate. In the late 1960s, a Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons recommended that O Canada be adopted as our national anthem, with minor amendments to the lyrics. A number of bills were introduced to make O Canada official, all of which failed. Finally, after Quebec's first referendum on the question of separation, the federal government felt the need to assert a sense of nationhood. Given this anxiety, The National Anthem Act passed through the House of Commons, and the Senate, with little debate, and O Canada was officially proclaimed as our national anthem on July 1, 1980.

Despite American influence in the post-war years, or perhaps because of it, Canadians have developed a unique identity. I'm going to speak about what I consider to be some of the most important elements of this identity, and discuss how Canada has taken a unique approach to these issues. These elements are: Human Rights; Human Rights and Gender, and Human Rights and Multiculturalism.

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Extensive human rights legislation, and the institutions that have served to extend the human rights agenda in Canada, have led to what Michael Ignatieff describes as "one of the most distinctive rights culture in the world", and it is at the core of what makes us Canadian. According to Ignatieff, Canadian rights go far beyond the individual ones emphasized in the U.S., to include collective and minority rights. Protection for multicultural heritage, aboriginal land claims, language rights, and women's equality are all embedded in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), and these rights have been expanded through the interpretation of the Charter by the Supreme Court over the last two decades. I focus on rights in relation to our identity today because I believe rights go far beyond legislation. Rather, they represent our ideals, our striving towards justice for all, and our moral identity.

Canada's rights culture, while part of a global phenomena, is distinct in a number of ways. We are one of the few countries in the world to have put rights into legislation in both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and through numerous Supreme Court decisions. Our rights have a moral and social dimension. Canadians apply liberal rights to issues such as abortion and capital punishment; we take for granted social rights such as unemployment insurance, and universal health care. We also emphasize group rights. Canadian rights culture is so distinct that we are exporting our expertise overseas. Canadians are regularly invited to countries with civil warfare to discuss collective rights, Chinese judges discuss Canadian Supreme Court Decisions, and South African judges reference the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Michael Ignatieff contends that "The key ideas of rights talk are that we are deliberative equals, that each of us has a right to be heard about the public business of our country, that no one's claim can be silenced and denied simply by the fact of who they are. This ideal of deliberative equality

– the commitment to remain in the same room talking until we resolve our disputes, and do to so without violence – is as much unity, as much community, as modern life can afford."

Our rights culture has had a significant effect on gender relations here in Canada. Article 28 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) states that "notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons". This legal protection meant that the feminist movement in Canada gained legal protection in our struggle for equality. The guarantee of equality in the Charter was an acknowledgement of a change in women's status within Canadian society, most notably, within the workplace.

In 1961, very few women worked in the so-called non-traditional occupations. Only 0.25% of engineers, 3% of lawyers, and 7% of physicians were women. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, many individuals as well as women's organizations lobbied to extend the rights of women throughout the workplace, the legal system, the home, and most importantly, over our own bodies. By 1987, women represented 10% of engineering students, 50% of law students, and 33% of medical students.

Today, the institution that advocates for women's rights in Canada is the Status of Women. However, like the ideals expressed through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the equality of women remains an objective that has yet to be realized. Women remain marginalized in business and government, and therefore our influence on public policy is largely limited. Women are still shut out of many of the top positions in Canada's 560 leading companies. Women fill a mere 2% of CEO positions, 3.4% of titles with significant influence, and only 7.5% of board seats. In addition, a 1996 survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business found that there was "outrageous" discrimination by banks against female entrepreneurs. Women were refused loans 20% more often than men, and when they did get financing, they often paid a higher rate of interest than men. And sometimes, they were asked to have their husbands co-sign the loans.

In government, women make up 21% of the House of Commons and 34% of the Senate. However, it remains both financially, and socially, difficult for women to enter politics, because even if they are able to raise the considerable funds needed to run in an election, women remain primarily responsible for the care of their families in Canada.

Immigrant women are doubly disadvantaged. Despite their education, university-educated immigrant women, between the ages of 25-44, have a higher rate of unemployment than Canadian women of almost any educational background, other than those with less than a grade 9 education. Immigrant women sometimes also lack opportunity because they are unable to access language training, and remain socially isolated in their homes.

Existing symbols, and the use of language, serve to represent women's continued marginalization. The media often describes women as a "special interest" group, ignoring the fact that we make up slightly more than half of the population. And, while men are deemed assertive, women who display the same temperament are described as "shrill" and "aggressive". In addition, women's appearance, and their behaviour, are all subject to intense scrutiny.

I didn't realize how much resistance there is, in certain segments of our society, to the equality of women in Canada until I introduced an inquiry in the Senate in February that addressed the issue of sexism in the third line of our national anthem which reads "in all thy sons command". To me, it seems obvious that the national anthem, as the anthem that symbolically represents everyone in Canada, should not exclude women. It was less obvious to some individuals who argued that tradition justifies women's exclusion. If this argument had carried the day at the beginning of the 20th century, women still would not have the vote, nor would we be allowed to serve in the federal and provincial legislatures or the Senate.

It is unfortunate that Canada didn't have the foresight of Australia. The Australians amended their national anthem, Advance Australia Fair, from "Australian sons rejoice" to read "Australians all rejoice" before it was proclaimed officially in 1984. Now, 21 years after Canada's own anthem became official, I have started a petition to amend the anthem so that our symbols can reflect all of us. As long as our national symbols continue to exclude us, women will not be full and equal partners in Canadian society, as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is something all Canadians need to strive for.

Another element that arises out of our approach to human rights, is multiculturalism. After WWII, Canadians and their government began to see that continued discrimination at home devalued the sacrifices that had been made in defeating the racist regimes overseas. Some senior

bureaucrats also felt that our discriminatory immigration policy compromised Canada's position in the U.N. and in the Commonwealth. Beginning from the 1950s, with the report of the Massey-Levesque Commission, ethno-cultural diversity gradually came to be understood as an essential ingredient in a distinct Canadian identity.

However, until 1962, Canada`s immigration legislation clearly indicated a preference for immigrants who were white. In 1947, the most heinous legislation ever passed in Canadian history, the Chinese Exclusion Act, was repealed. Following this, as a result of an organized nationwide movement against restrictions on non-white immigration, in 1962, a landmark decision was handed down that virtually eliminated racial discrimination as a feature of Canada's immigration policy. New regulations specified that any unsponsored immigrants who had the requisite education, skill, or other qualifications were to be considered suitable for admission, irrespective of colour, race, or national origin, provided they had a job waiting for them in Canada, or were able to support themselves until they found employment. However, one discriminatory element remained, and that was the provision that allowed European immigrants and immigrants from the Americas to sponsor a wider range of relatives.

In 1967, this clause was removed, and the point system was introduced. Since then, Canada has been accepting immigrants from all over the world, and has reflected this increasing diversity through policies, legislation, institutions, and ultimately, a change in our cultural makeup.

Concurrent with our change in immigration policy, by the mid-1960s, the truce between Canada's French and English was beginning to show signs of breaking down. In response, the federal government appointed a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to hold hearings across the country. English and French, along with representatives of ethnic groups, argued that the old policy of assimilation was unjust and unfair. The Royal Commission agreed. Volume 4 of the Commission's Report, published in 1969, acknowledged the importance of cultural pluralism to the Canadian identity, and it encouraged Canadian institutions to reflect this in their policies and programs.

In October, 1970, the conflict between the Francophone and Anglophone populations of Quebec reached a crisis when the British Commissioner, James Cross, and Pierre Laporte, Quebec's labour minister,

were kidnapped. As a result, The War Measures Act was invoked by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

One year later, in October 1971, the Multicultural Policy within a bilingual framework was formally adopted by the federal government. Trudeau announced the policy with this statement, “A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all. “

Lester B. Pearson, and Pierre Elliott Trudeau, were both internationalists who supported the vision of a pluralist nation.

However, some academics have argued that multiculturalism was simply a way of avoiding or postponing the polarization of Canada’s French and English into separate camps.

So what does multiculturalism mean?

According to one viewpoint, this policy promotes tolerance, and understanding among different groups. It takes a middle road between assimilation, and the creation of ghettos, where minority groups are ostracized. It invites participation in civil society, the promotion of shared values that underpin our society, while accepting the differences that serve to enrich our collective dialogue. But as we know from Orwell’s Animal Farm, true equality is difficult to realize. Thus, in multiculturalism, everyone is presumed to be equal, but some cultures are perhaps more equal than others.

After all, knowledge of French or English remains essential to success in Canada. Therefore, the Economic Council of Canada views multiculturalism as an integrationist strategy that does not try to maintain complete cultural systems but aims to preserve as much of ethnic culture as

is compatible with Canadian customs. Nevertheless, some Canadians worry about the erosion of British tradition.

The most common criticism of multiculturalism, such as that expressed by well-known author Neil Bissondath, is that the policy promotes hyphenated-Canadians, fragmentation, and the inability of society to develop a cohesive identity. Or, as TV Ontario personality, Rick Green joked, "we have matured from a nation of two solitudes to a nation of about 43 solitudes."

Bissondath, who immigrated to Canada from Trinidad in 1973, fueled the debate on multiculturalism with his 1994 book, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism.* Bissondath maintains that Canada's multicultural policy has been "quietly disastrous for the country, and for immigrants." He asserts that Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government assumed that 'culture' could be transplanted, and that immigrants would wish to bring their culture of origin with them. He describes the festivals by different cultures as "folkloric Disneyland".

University of Winnipeg professor Rias Khan echoes Bissondath's sentiments, "people, regardless of their origin, do not emigrate to preserve their culture and nurture their distinctness…immigrants come here to be productive and contributing members of their chosen society…whether I preserve my cultural background is my personal choice; whether or not an ethnic group preserves its cultural background is the group's choice. The state has no business in either."

The Multicultural Policy, Bissondath argues, creates mental ghettos, leading immigrants to feel divided loyalties. Not only are differences highlighted, but individuals are defined by their differences. The result of Canadian multiculturalism, according to Bissondath, is the lack of integration of immigrants into the Canadian mainstream, and subsequently, a weakened sense of Canadian identity.

On the other hand, Dr. Morton Beiser, founding Director of the Toronto Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), a tri-university consortium that researches migration, and diversity, disagrees with Bissondath's perspective on multiculturalism. Through his extensive research with immigrants over the years, he has found that immigrants to Canada find it easier to integrate into mainstream

Canadian society than those in the American melting pot. He attributes their successful acculturation to the Multicultural Policy. He says that immigrants feel welcome in Canada because they don't feel the pressure to shed their cultural identities immediately upon entering Canada. They have time, and the necessary community supports, to help them settle in Canada. As a result, according to Dr. Beiser, a much greater percentage of immigrants to Canada obtain their citizenship than immigrants to the U.S..

Dr. Beiser's findings would seem to be borne out by a new book by Morton Weinfeld, a sociologist here at McGill University. His book, "Like Everyone Else But Different" argues that multiculturalism means that "Canadian Jews rank with Americans in terms of freedoms and affluence, but they enjoy a deeper Jewish cultural and communal life". He describes Canada as "a post-biblical Garden of Eden, for those seeking both participation in the general society and a vibrant Jewish culture."

As an immigrant who chose Canada as her home, I would tend to agree with these perspectives on Canada's Multicultural Policy. At the core of inclusiveness is the understanding that we participate in a society in which our language, colour, education, or our sex need not divide us, but can, instead, make us more sensitive and tolerant of difference.

While the increasingly diversity of Canadian society is an indisputable fact, the goals of tolerance, respect, and equal opportunity, as laid out in our multicultural policy, remain an objective that Canadian society must continually strive towards.

In 1950, when the Massey-Levesque Commission linked cultural diversity to Canadian identity, 92% of Canada's population growth was a product of the birth rate. Today, immigration has outpaced the natural birth rate, and accounts for 53% of overall population growth.

Today, Marshal McLuhan's global village is a reality, and people are now more interconnected, and interdependent than ever. Being a knowledge-based economy, in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, Canada needs the best and the brightest minds, no matter which part of the world they come from.

The diversity of our population is now a major advantage as access to global markets grows increasingly important to our economic prosperity.

Canadians from different parts of the world help to build both economic and cultural bridges for Canada. As a result, Canada is developing new, and profitable, trading partnerships.

As Canada embraces diversity, and as its diverse population expands, new links are being forged with the world at a time when Canadians recognize the increasing importance of having a credible voice in international affairs, and in strengthening our advantage in the global economy. Experience with diversity has taught us to accept and respect different perspectives, which makes us effective international mediators. We understand the virtues of accommodation and respect, and the importance of negotiation to peaceful conflict resolution. Canada is regularly asked by developing nations, and newly emerging democracies, to provide advice and assistance on conflict resolution, human rights, democratization, and establishing civil society institutions.

Many of the national achievements we are most proud of stem from our contributions to world peace and human security. They include peacekeeping, our role in negotiating the Ottawa convention to ban landmines, and our involvement in establishing the International War Crimes Tribunal.

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Now, I would like to bring your attention to the 1996 Census because it is of special interest to us. For the first time, no specific ethnic origins were specified in this Census to be checked off. Instead, respondents were asked "to which ethnic or cultural group (s) did the person's ancestors belong?", and were provided with four blank lines in which they could write the names of as many groups as were applicable. Also, for the first time, "Canadian" was among the 24 examples of ethnic or cultural origins to which someone's ancestors might have belonged. 19 percent of the population reported "Canadian" as its ethnic origin, while a further 12% described themselves as "Canadian", plus other origins. It is not clear whether the reporting of "Canadian" in the Census was understood by respondents as representing their ethnic origin or their identity, but it is interesting to speculate on the number of Canadians who identified their ethnic origin as Canadian.

The same Census found that 36% of the population was of multi-ethnic origins. This gives us the opportunity to consider the nature of Canada's social and cultural reality today, given decades of ethnic intermarriage, and acculturation, resulting in the emergence of a unique Canadian identity. Therefore, having a Canadian identity means more than being born in Canada, being a resident, or having citizenship. Ethnic intermarriage, and living in Canada for generations, alongside those of aboriginal, French, and British descent, has a significant impact on the characteristics of a distinctive Canadian identity. It is an evolutionary process by which our own cultural differences are moulded by our assimilation and acculturation experiences in Canada.

This evolutionary process is most evident in our urban centres. For example, Toronto, the city that I call home, is now the most multicultural city in the world. More than 150 languages are spoken there, and about 54% of Torontonians are immigrants. Toronto is the only urban centre in the western world where the majority of people are visible minorities. As a result, groups of individuals who would shun each other in their home continents, come together on the basis of shared values in Toronto. Toronto, which means "meeting place" in the Huron language, is aptly named.

As Haroon Siddiqui of the Toronto Star stated in his speech at York University recently "Never before in the history of humanity have so many different peoples come together in such a common bond of peace and tranquility as under the broad canopy of Canada. Unlike many nations that approach diversity as a problem, Canada embraces it."

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Since September 11th, 2001, all aspects of our collective identity as Canadians are being reevaluated. According to the polls, Canadians feel closer to Americans than they did before. More Canadians are concerned about immigration. At the same time, somewhat paradoxically, Canadians are equally worried about maintaining our independence in the face of globalization.

Canadian columnists have been questioning immigration, and the multicultural experiment. Although racism has always existed in Canada, it has been unleashed over the last month. People feel they can do, and say, things they would not have before September 11th. For example, in Ottawa,

there have been a number of racial incidents, and the hate crimes unit has doubled. I know there have been similar incidents in different parts of Canada.

In a recent column in the Globe and Mail, Michael Ignatieff wondered whether immigrants arriving in Canada may be bringing their hatreds with them. This is an unsettling thought, but it should not make us lessen our commitment to multiculturalism. In fact, in the wake of September 11th, we are realizing the extent to which tolerance, respect, and most importantly, education, are required if we are to live together in peace.

What Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau stressed when he introduced the policy of multiculturalism in 1971, still holds true today. The intent of multiculturalism is to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies because national unity must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity first, out of which one can grow to respect that of others. And in 1971, Canada was not nearly as diverse as it is now. In a speech in June, 2000, Prime Minister Jean Chretien said "The Canadian Way" involves "the accommodation of cultures, recognition of diversity, and a partnership between citizens and the state."

Our commitment to a rights culture remains an ongoing challenge because inevitably, individual and collective rights often come into conflict. Despite the Charter, employment equity legislation, and the Multiculturalism Act, immigrants are still faced with institutional discrimination. Many highly educated immigrants come here, and find that they cannot find employment in their professions, even in high-demand areas such as engineering and medicine. The net loss to immigrants and to the Canadian economy of this "brain waste", according to a study by University of Toronto sociology professor, Jeffery Reitz, is in the neighbourhood of $55 billion a year. He estimates that visible minorities earn between 15 to 25 % less than most immigrants of European origin, whether in skilled or unskilled labour markets. This situation needs to be corrected.

And, despite the major advances women have made over the last century, and the existence of institutions such as Status of Women, integrating women as equal partners in Canadian democracy remains a continuing challenge.

A few years ago, Francis Fukuyama, the award-winning author of *The End of History and the Last Man*, wrote an article entitled *"Women and the Evolution of World Politics."* In the article, Fukuyama suggested that a society in which women made up a significant percentage of world leaders would be less competitive, less hierarchical, and less prone to war because women "form relationships" while men practice "realpolitik".

This is borne out in countries such as Sweden where women are treated as the norm, not as representatives of a minority. They hold 43% of the seats in the Swedish legislature – the highest percentage in the European Union. The result is that Sweden has some of the best social programs in Europe, and its productivity grew by 47% between 1990 and 1999 – more than both the European average and American growth over the same period.

Not surprisingly, given the influence of women on the foreign policy agenda, only Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands have ever reached the internationally recognized goal of 0.7% of G.N.P. for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Meanwhile, Canada's contributions to ODA have been declining rapidly over the last decade to an all-time low of 0.25% of G.N.P. Canada needs to learn from these global examples.

It is interesting to note that Rogersville, a municipality of 1,300 people in New Brunswick, has taken this lesson to heart. In May of this year, it became the largest municipality in Canada to elect an all-female council. The women on the council, all of whom have full-time day jobs, hope that they will inspire other young women to get involved in their communities and in politics. "It would be a great pleasure if they noticed us and thought they could do it also," one of the councillors said.

As a woman, mother and grandmother, I would like to identify with a Canada in which more women are involved in decision-making, so that we become the norm, rather than the exception, in this country. As long as our institutions, our language, and our symbols continue to subtly exclude women, women cannot be full and equal partners in nation-building, which is a requirement for a true democracy.

I'm a Canadian who's proud of my heritage. At the same time, like other new Canadians, I am more attached to Canadian symbols than many who were born here. I take being Canadian very seriously. Despite Michael Ignatieff's speculations, I believe that most immigrants would like to forget

the conflicts that have driven them from their homelands. We come here because we are seeking the security, peace, human rights, and other values that Canada stands for.

A conversation I had with a highly educated immigrant expressed this well. I asked her why she and her husband chose to immigrate to Canada instead of the U.S., Australia, or other countries. She said they researched each country thoroughly and decided on Canada because of our respect for rights and freedoms.

I think that it is time to return to the principles identified by former Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson. Prosperity, as a human right for all, which must precede peace, emerges as the most pressing concern in these troubled times. In fact, if one looks at the root causes of September 11th, they are to be found in the teeming slums, refugee camps, and the misery of many developing nations. People who have nothing, have nothing to lose. As my colleague Senator Roche recently said in his speech at the University of St. Jerome's College in Waterloo "morality and pragmatics have intersected. What we have long known we should do for our brothers and sisters on the planet, we now know we must do if we are to survive without the most wrenching dislocations in our lives."

This, needless to say, also applies to the first peoples of our country, a topic I have not had the time to dwell on today. Respecting aboriginals as the first peoples of Canada, under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, remains a major challenge for the new millennium.

Canada's future depends on the commitment of all its citizens who take pride in the uniqueness of individual heritage. Canadian identity evolves from the remaking of each immigrant, and those born in Canada, within a new Canadian society. A society that embraces diversity, a society that believes in equality of opportunity for both women and men, a society that values peaceful dispute resolution, over armed conflict. Ultimately, the will to strive towards human rights for all is the essence of being Canadian.