

### *Prorogation of Parliament*

Amendments to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act have provided a new equalization formula and authorized transfers to the provinces of nearly 100 billion dollars over five years for equalization purposes and to help fund post-secondary education and Medicare. The federal government last year paid more than half the total cost of post-secondary education and of insured services under Medicare.

The House of Commons adopted a new experimental set of rules designed to enhance the role of the Member of Parliament and to improve the speed and efficiency of the institution.

A Joint Parliamentary Committee was established to consider options for Senate reform, and a Green Paper examining this issue was published.

Access to Information legislation was adopted to give the public wider access to government documents, and a new Privacy Act was passed with stricter controls on the transmittal of personal information.

The Post Office has been turned into a Crown corporation, and the process of streamlining its operations is well underway.

The Canada Elections Act was amended to shorten to 50 days the period required to hold elections, and to ensure a more equitable financial basis for all candidates.

"O Canada" was officially adopted as our national anthem, and July 1st officially designated as Canada Day.

### *Pursuing a Vigorous Foreign Policy*

The last of the five major commitments made three years ago by the Government was to pursue a vigorous and active foreign policy.

The Government has pledged to fulfill its responsibilities as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by increasing real defence expenditures by at least three percent annually. For the last three fiscal years the real growth of defence expenditures has exceeded that target. The Government has taken steps to acquire new F-18 fighter aircraft, Aurora patrol aircraft, military trucks, tanks, and patrol frigates. An agreement for defence systems testing has been signed with our American allies.

While honouring our international defence commitments, we have continued both publicly and privately to work towards mutual arms limitations and to advance the nuclear suffocation approach first proposed by the Prime Minister in

1978. An Ambassador for Disarmament was appointed. At the 1983 Williamsburg Summit, Canada played a key role in the process leading to the adoption of a declaration on security and arms control by the participating countries. Recently, the Prime Minister launched a new peace initiative intended to improve communication, and hence the prospects for progress on arms control and disarmament.

Canada has undertaken a number of actions to help developing nations. During the 1981 North-South Summit, which the Prime Minister co-chaired, Canada demonstrated leadership in helping to keep North-South lines of communication open in the face of international forces pressing for a retreat into isolationism and protectionism. On a per capita basis, Canada has resettled one of the largest numbers of foreign refugees of any country in the world; more than half of these refugees were government-sponsored. We have progressed towards raising official development assistance to 0.5 percent of Canadian Gross National Product by 1985.

Recently this Parliament approved amendments to the Bretton Woods Act to increase our contribution to the International Monetary Fund.

Canada played an active role with other major industrialized countries in seeking solutions for fundamental economic and political problems, and was pleased in 1981 to be host for the annual Economic Summit.

In particular, we have sought to resolve bilateral issues with our American neighbours. Many efforts were successful—for instance, in the transborder trucking and softwood lumber issues. Amendments to the Clean Air Act were passed which provide automatic Canadian matching of U.S. measures which afford environmental protection to Canada, and a bilateral agreement recently was concluded for a joint study of acid rain.

### *Members of the House of Commons:*

I thank you for the provision you have made for the public services in the previous and current fiscal years.

### *Honourable Members of the Senate:*

### *Members of the House of Commons:*

May Divine Providence continue to bless our country.

This concluded the first session of the Thirty-Second Parliament.