

Students and parents, employers and employees, educators and governments will be asked to work together to develop a "learning culture," just as we have developed an environmental culture. My government will, also, ask the newly created Labour Force Development Board to present proposals in this area. The objective is to equip Canadian men and women to participate fully in creating and sharing Canadian prosperity.

The full participation of Canada's aboriginal peoples in Canada's economic prosperity and political life is a goal shared across the country. To put itself in a position to respond more effectively to the needs of the aboriginal peoples of Canada, my government will appoint the Right Honourable Brian Dickson, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, to serve as a special representative of the Prime Minister in order to consult widely on the terms of reference and membership of the Royal Commission announced recently and report back to my government.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that the Commission neither delays nor negates constitutional, legislative or other reforms already under way. These reforms include land claim settlements, community development initiatives, education and other activities launched during the second session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament. In cooperation with Indian people themselves, my government will explore alternatives to the Indian Act, especially concerning land, monies and self-government. Finally, my government will consult aboriginal Canadians on changes in the system of administering justice. The goal is to work with Canada's aboriginal peoples so that they control their own lives, can contribute to Canadian prosperity and can share fully in it.

Our children are the most important yet most vulnerable members of our society. Last September, at the Children's Summit in New York, the attention of people everywhere was focused on children at risk. Seventy-one leaders pledged that that moment would last a decade. My government will bring forward a plan to implement the commitments it made that day; the objective is to see Canadian girls and boys better educated, better protected and better nurtured so that they can make their own contributions to Canada's future. In addition, my government will review its policies in relation to the family, the most fundamental building block of Canadian society. And my government will appoint a blue ribbon panel of concerned Canadian men and women to inquire into the serious problem of violence against women in our society.

My government will lay before you proposals for programs and policies to remove the barriers still faced by disabled Canadians to full participation in Canada's political life and economic prosperity. The government plans to implement a five-year strategy that will resolve issues such as access to employment, training, housing and transportation, public sensitivity and community integration.

You will be asked to approve a number of other important legislative initiatives to advance the economic, social and international interests of Canadians. You will, also, be asked to appropriate the funds required to carry on services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

Changing the Way Ottawa Works

Change is the hallmark of our age; in Europe, in Asia, in Latin America, old assumptions are being discarded and new principles are

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being adopted. In Canada, too, new problems require new solutions. There is a need for change in the way Parliament does business and in the way governments conduct their affairs. The goal is to ensure that Canadians' agenda is Parliament's agenda.

In the Thirty-Third Parliament, a committee of the House of Commons proposed far-reaching reforms to enhance the role of private members. During that Parliament, you implemented more than eighty-five percent of the committee's recommendations. And, at the end of the last session of this Parliament, further changes were passed to make it possible for members to spend more time at home with their constituents so that they can be more effective in representing the wishes of their constituents and more efficient in the conduct of House business.

Canadians exercise their democratic freedom by electing their representatives through secret ballot. During this session, you will receive the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform established by my government. Canadians want to know that their elected representatives have the power and authority to represent them. My government will propose further reforms so that all Members of Parliament can fulfil better their obligations to their constituents.

The respect of the people for Parliament and Parliamentarians is essential for a healthy democracy. But the appearance, and sometimes the reality, of excessive party discipline and over-zealous partisanship, of empty posturing and feigned outrage have eroded that respect in Canada. Members will be asked, therefore, to consider new procedures for assessing legislation, for raising grievances on behalf of constituents and for questioning government. This will further enhance the role of individual members and afford them greater independence.

Change is also necessary in the ways governments conduct their affairs. Governments must be both effective and efficient, implementing necessary programs at the lowest cost to taxpayers. Canadians understand that their governments simply cannot afford to do everything that is demanded of them. In the past six and a half years, through prudent management, the growth of government operations has been curtailed. My government has privatized and eliminated twenty-four Crown corporations and streamlined virtually all government departments and agencies. Since 1984, ninety thousand employees have been removed from the payroll of the federal government and its agencies. During this session, my government will take that process further. A draft spending control bill to cap federal program spending will be referred to a parliamentary committee for consultations with Canadians. Legislation will also be introduced to create a debt servicing and reduction fund so that GST revenues, as well as monies from further privatization of Crown corporations and from voluntary contributions, will be used to service the national debt. Streamlining of government structures and operations to serve Canadians better and to save taxpayers' money will continue to be a priority of my government. Better ways to conduct the business of government are being examined. Improvements in the management of the public service, started under the Public Service 2000 initiative, will continue. A public service reform bill will be introduced into Parliament in support of this renewal program. Additional special operating agencies will be created to provide better service to Canadians through more autonomy and a sharper focus on objectives.