

mands, in so far as they do not conflict with the general welfare, are the expression of a truly democratic ideal. They must be satisfied if our society is to attain its goals of peace and justice.

The Government believes that the time has come to extend the franchise in federal elections and it will therefore recommend to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the House of Commons that the voting age be lowered to 18.

Changes will be proposed in the legislation governing the Northern Territories which will improve the representational character of their Councils.

If the rights and interests of individuals and groups are to be safeguarded, they must be accurately reflected in the political structure of this country and in its basic blueprint, the Constitution.

The Government therefore attaches the greatest importance to the revision of the Constitution and to the progress achieved by the Constitutional Conference. The last meeting of the Conference provided an opportunity for particularly productive discussions, and the Government is determined to spare no effort to ensure the success of this vital task.

LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

History, geography and economics have placed certain of our citizens at a disadvantage. Under legislation enacted during the last session of Parlia-



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ment, the Government is establishing programs to reduce these inequalities.

The Official Languages Act, which provides for the use of French and English in federal government institutions wherever the composition of the population justifies it, will permit the exercise of essential language rights within a society that recognizes and welcomes a rich diversity of race, religion and cultural traditions.

This resolve to achieve linguistic equality will have its counterpart in social and economic life. During the last session, Parliament enacted legislation that will enable the Government, with the co-operation of the provinces, to set up programs to reduce regional disparities in employment opportunities and average incomes. In fact, despite the general cutback in its expenditures, the Government, recognizing the overriding urgency of these programs, has decided to allocate an increasing proportion of its revenues to them.

The necessity for raising the level of employment of Canadians of Indian descent and other less favored citizens will also receive special attention.

Changes in the patterns of need in our society call for a more equitable social policy which will offer assistance and security to people unable to work or to provide for themselves and their families. A White Paper on social security will be presented together with a proposal concerning the reorganization of the unemployment insurance program....

ECONOMY MEASURES AND TAX REFORM

In recent months the Government has urged both the public and the private sectors to adopt special measures to combat the dangers of inflation. These measures, which the Government has itself adopted, must be applied by all if further restraints are to be avoided.

You will also be called upon to study proposals for tax reform aimed at a fairer distribution of the tax burden, combined with favorable conditions for growth in the national economy. The structure of our tax system must be adapted to reflect more accurately the true circumstances of individual Canadians and of business organizations in our modern society....

WATER RESOURCES

...Our resources are immense, but they are not inexhaustible. Although we must encourage their development, we must also conserve them and regulate their use. Water is among the most precious of these resources. The evidence of past failure to rehabilitate our water resources is there for all to see - befouled water, despoiled beaches, rotting marine vegetation, and diminished fishing. The Government has made known its views on this serious problem, and has begun urgent discussions with the provinces. Upon their completion, the Government will introduce legislation that will enable it, in co-operation with the provinces, to improve and preserve our water resources. Thus may we assure ourselves of their