

To improve the ability of Canadian industry to compete abroad in order to create jobs at home, my Government will establish a national trading company. My Government also intends to make assistance programs more accessible to small business, to simplify application procedures, and to better co-ordinate programs.

To improve our system of collective bargaining, a Labour Information Bureau will be created to provide an impartial clearing house for the statistics and data required for negotiations. A fresh start will be made in the labour management relations of the Post Office by turning that department into a crown corporation.

My Ministers believe that the stake of Canadians in their own economic destiny must be strengthened. Government procurement will be used vigorously, in a manner consistent with our international commitments, to encourage the creation and expansion of independent Canadian-owned enterprises.

The Foreign Investment Review Act will be amended to provide for performance reviews of how large foreign firms are meeting the test of bringing substantial benefits to Canada. As well, amendments will be introduced to ensure that major acquisition proposals by foreign companies will be publicized prior to a government decision on their acceptability. The Government will assist Canadian companies wishing to repatriate assets or to bid for ownership or control of companies subject to takeover offers by non-Canadians.

IV. Strengthening National Institutions

To increase the confidence of Canadians that their national institutions can respond effectively to their needs, my Government will propose a program to make Parliament both more efficient and more responsive.

You will be asked to appoint a committee of Parliament to examine the electoral system in order to ensure that the highest degree of representativeness and responsibility is achieved and that the confidence of Canadians in parliamentary institutions is strengthened.

As part of its commitment to renewed federalism, my Government will revive the process of constitutional reform. My Ministers are committed to the full development of Canada's two major linguistic communities and to the enhancement of our mosaic of cultures. My Government will seek to constitutionally entrench a bill of civil and human rights, including language rights.

Members of Parliament, whatever their party, agree on the need to guarantee to Canadians greater access to information of concern to them. Freedom of information legislation will be introduced to provide wide access to government documents. The right accorded to Ministers to withhold government documents from courts of law under Section 41(2) of the Federal Court Act will be removed.

[The Governor General.]

Legislation will also be presented to extend the rights of access by individuals to their personal information held by the government and to provide greater protection for privacy by further restricting the use that may be made of that information.

Also, in response to the recommendations of the Marin Commission, the RCMP Act will be amended to formalize internal discipline and grievance procedures, and to provide for an external authority to review public complaints about the behaviour of any member of the RCMP.

It is my Government's hope that these measures will serve in the years ahead as a fundamental bond of trust between government and people.

V. An Active Foreign Policy

My Government takes office against the most sombre international background of recent years. Events in Iran and Afghanistan have done great damage to international laws and institutions and have undermined confidence and stability.

In response, my Government intends to conduct an active foreign policy. Canada will rely upon its strong ties of friendship throughout the world. Part of our international response must be a determination to increase the ability of the NATO Alliance to provide security for its members and to advance the cause of peace, and my Government is committed to doing its full part. In keeping with that commitment, my Government has decided to proceed with the purchase of a new fighter aircraft.

But while recognizing the need for Canada to strengthen alliance security, the dangers of nuclear holocaust cannot simply be forgotten. If anything, these dangers are heightened by current tensions and by the continuation of the arms race. Canada's imperative is clear. This Government must continue its strategy to suffocate the deadly growth in the nuclear arsenals of the world. We must, and we will, actively co-operate in international efforts to negotiate agreements on verifiable means of arms control and disarmament, and seek to rally others to a cause that is no less than human survival on this planet. To assist in this process, a new position of Ambassador for Disarmament will be created within the Department of External Affairs.

Before concluding, I address a special message to members of the House of Commons from the three westernmost provinces.

It has been said in recent weeks that the three westernmost provinces have no elected voice in the governing of this country. That is not true. Parliament is the supreme law-making assembly of Canada, and every Canadian is represented in the House of Commons by his or her duly elected member.

Like all of your colleagues in the House of Commons, you who represent the people of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, have a responsibility to represent your constituents