

NEW MINISTER, NEW VISION:

After seven years as Minister of Industry, John Manley was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs on October 17, 2000. **Canada World View** presents a profile of the new Minister and his vision of Canada's international relations.

A passion for high tech

Often described as the "connected Minister," John Manley has an unusual profile for a member of the federal Cabinet. Like several of his colleagues he is a lawyer, but he stands out for being computer-savvy and passionately interested in electronic devices and the Internet.

In high school he was a math whiz, fascinated by computers. He studied mathematics—and political science—at Carleton University before specializing in tax law at the University of Ottawa. Around Parliament Hill he always carries his Canadian-designed BlackBerry handheld computer, exchanging frequent wireless e-mails with his staff. And while sitting at his desk in the House of Commons, he even receives briefing notes electronically for use in Question Period.

One of his priorities as Minister of Industry was to ensure an Internet connection for every Canadian public school and library by March 1999 through the SchoolNet program. In addition, he fostered innovation at the Canadian Space Agency, the National Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and elsewhere—always with the aim of securing Canada's position as a global leader in high technology.

A passion for politics

Aside from maths, computers and science, another passion has shaped John Manley's life: politics. He grew up in a household where political questions dominated conversation at the supper table. When he was 12 years old, his parents took him to the House of Commons to watch the debates from the public galleries. In 1968 he was a young volunteer at the leadership convention that chose Pierre Elliott Trudeau to head the Liberal Party.

From his studies John Manley went on to a successful law career, but politics continued to attract him. He first ran for Parliament in 1988. Then as now, he set himself lofty goals: to achieve positive changes for the people of his riding of Ottawa South, and to help prepare Canada and Canadians for the 21st century.

Foreign policy agenda

Given his background, it's no surprise that Mr. Manley sees economic issues as central to the Foreign Affairs portfolio. In his words, he doesn't think "there's a country in the world that doesn't consider its economic interest to be a key part of its foreign policy interests. However, Canada's foreign policy has always been value-based, and those values include the support for basic human rights, the support for the distribution of wealth, and the investments we've made in peacekeeping and in overseas development assistance."

He insists that he is not abandoning the human security agenda put in place by his predecessor, Lloyd Axworthy. Instead he says, "Humanitarianism and promoting Canada's economic prosperity are intertwined. The broader human security agenda is an essential part of economic relations. You can't have an economic relationship with a country where human security is not assured. That includes the rule of law and a functioning legal system. I see them as tied together."

What cause might he want to champion during his tenure at Foreign Affairs? He replies, "Using communications technology to help connect the developing world and bridge the 'digital divide' by transferring some of our know-how to the world. The Internet is going to be the great tool for transferring information and values in the 21st century. Canada can play a role in seeing that it's extended to everybody on the planet."



photo: CANAPRESS

In Toronto in October 1998, Alexandra Terpoy (front right) and Sharon Choy (left) show off their research project to Microsoft CEO Bill Gates (back left) and then Industry Minister John Manley at a news conference announcing initiatives to get schools on-line.