

Speech from the Throne

provinces on this important subject. Should there appear reasonable prospects for agreement, formal negotiations will proceed in the expectation that Quebec will take its rightful place as a full partner in the Canadian Constitution.

The question of aboriginal rights is still on the constitutional agenda as a result of the Accord signed with the provinces in 1983. Pursuant to that agreement, a First Ministers Conference on aboriginal constitutional affairs will be convened. This will be the third and last such conference provided for in the 1983 Accord. In cooperation with the provinces, my government will exert every possible effort to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion.

Official bilingualism is an indispensable feature of our national character. Seventeen years after its enactment, Canada's Official Languages Act now needs to be revised. Appropriate legislation will be introduced in this Session to ensure, as well, that this Act conforms with the Canadian Charter of Rights.

My Ministers will propose amendments concerning the objectives and powers of the National Capital Commission. It is their intent to give greater expression and meaning to our national symbols.

Canada's National Parks represent a heritage of great importance to the present and future generations. My government will ask Parliament to approve major reforms to the National Parks Act for the first time since the original Act was passed, over five decades ago.

The preservation of historic properties is important to fostering a sense of history and national identity among Canadians. The government of Canada, as the largest owner of heritage sites and properties in the country, will assume a leadership role in their restoration and preservation.

Economic Renewal

Canada's program of economic renewal has as its goal the building of a national economy equipped to compete in an environment of intense global competition, changing markets, and new technologies. Economic renewal will be furthered by continued progress in restoring health to our public finances, by trade initiatives and by tax reform.

My government has committed itself to four principles in its quest to restore fiscal health to Canada. First, to reduce the growth in the national debt to less than the growth in the economy by the end of this decade. Second, to achieve continuing, sizeable, year-over-year reductions in the deficit. Third, to ensure substantial annual declines in the government's financial requirements. And fourth, to ensure that the greater part of this progress is secured through effective expenditure restraint.

Success in this quest will foster a climate of investor and consumer confidence that will continue to support lower inflation, lower interest rates, higher growth and more job opportunities for Canadians.

If Canada is to achieve an enduring economic recovery, government must also ensure that our country's interests are secured and enhanced in the international sphere.

Nearly one third of our economy depends on international markets. Our future is trade. That is why my government is seeking to open and secure new markets for Canada everywhere in the world. These efforts include bilateral talks with the United States and multilateral negotiations under the auspices of the GATT.

My government intends to improve Canada's status as a trading nation among our major partners. Particular emphasis will be placed upon trade with Japan and other Pacific Rim countries.

Trade promotion, however vigorous, cannot succeed if world markets important to Canadian exporters are threatened by increased protectionism.

Such pressures emphasize the importance of my government's pursuit of a mutually advantageous trade agreement with the United States. These talks are being accompanied by extensive consultations with the provinces, business and labour. Successful negotiations will strengthen both our economy and our capacity to reinforce our culture, our sovereignty, our commitment to regional development and the fundamental purposes of Canadian social policy.

Progress has already been made towards my government's objective of comprehensive tax reform. We have begun to restructure the corporate tax system. Equity in the personal income field has been enhanced through the introduction of the minimum tax. A refundable Sales Tax Credit has been introduced. Opportunities for tax avoidance have been curtailed.

In my government's further consideration of tax reform, fairness will be a guiding principle. The objectives of reform will be to lower tax rates and to

reduce reliance upon personal income tax by improving the revenue balance between personal income and other taxes. A simpler and more comprehensible tax system would also be welcomed by all Canadians.

During this session, you will be asked to consider new initiatives to strengthen the competitiveness of the private sector.

To help remove obstacles to economic growth, my Ministers will continue to reduce the burden of paperwork and regulation, to advance the process of privatization of Crown Corporations, and to press for the removal of barriers to interprovincial trade.

My Ministers will introduce programs to promote small business and entrepreneurial values. Included will be measures to improve procurement procedures, to strengthen the unsolicited proposals program for small companies and entrepreneurs, to increase technology transfer from government laboratories, and to develop new initiatives to promote entrepreneurship among youth.

My government will again be placing before Parliament measures to give Canadians a more efficient, competitive and safe transport system by relieving the burden of unnecessary regulations on the transportation sector.

My government will propose a new regulatory framework for the financial services industry that will promote competition, efficiency, and international competitiveness, while strengthening consumer protection.

For many years, successive governments have sought to provide measures intended to promote regional development. Their efforts have not been as effective as hoped. Regional disparity remains an unacceptable reality of Canadian life. Our experience has shown that spending more money, by itself, has not solved the problem.

It is time to consider new approaches, to examine how our considerable and growing support for Canada's regions can be used more efficiently, more effectively and with greater sensitivity to local conditions and opportunities. In renewing their efforts to come to grips with this longstanding problem, my Ministers are convinced many positive proposals for new policy initiatives will come from those who live and work in the regions concerned.

Building on the human and natural resource strengths of the regions, a renewed cooperative effort will lead to a new development agenda. Special emphasis will be given to diversifying the economic base of Western Canada.

As a first step in achieving improved results from this sustained national approach, an Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency will be constituted to facilitate and coordinate all federal development initiatives in the area. This agency will make fuller use of the expertise available in the Atlantic region and invite the maximum participation of other governments and organizations in the area.

My government is concerned about the increasing concentration of corporations, particularly where takeovers serve to increase corporate size without creating new jobs or stimulating economic growth in Canada. Some aspects of this essentially non-productive activity will be examined and considered by Members of this House.

The importance of the fishing industry to Canada is fundamental. To provide increased safety for our fishermen and to protect their material investments, my government will place special emphasis on improving the management of small craft harbours in all fishing areas.

The forest sector is Canada's largest net export earner. My Ministers have substantially increased funding for forestry renewal. The government will continue to work in close partnership with the provinces, industry, and private woodlot owners to ensure that Canada's rich forest heritage continues as a vital source of wealth and jobs for future generations.

Measures will be introduced to strengthen Canada's cooperatives and to give recognition to their role in community development.

My government is deeply committed to supporting, with the provinces, a system of post-secondary education based on excellence and equality of opportunity. To help meet the challenges facing higher education, my government will propose a national forum on post-secondary education, to be held early next year.

My Ministers have begun to forge a partnership with the provinces, with the scientific and educational communities, and with business and labour in an effort to stimulate increased technological development in Canada. To assist and encourage cooperation between the universities and private sector in research and