

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Canada is the only country that is a member of G-7 leading industrial countries, of the Commonwealth and of la Francophonie; Canada is completing a term as a member of the U.N. Security Council.

[English]

Membership in the Group of Seven leading industrial countries gives Canada a role at the table where the major international, political and economic issues are dealt with.

Millions of people all over the world are literally lining up to come to Canada because successive generations of Canadians have succeeded in building a tolerant, democratic, peaceful and very, very prosperous country. That is what we have now, and that is what we risk losing.

I know that many Canadians are preoccupied, and properly so, with the state of the economy, but I also know that national unity and economic prosperity go hand in hand. Uncertainty about Canada's future would deter investment and make our economic problems even harder to solve. We need a renewed consensus to take us into the 21st century.

I am pleased therefore to announce today that the government is launching a major initiative to promote a discussion among Canadians on the future of Confederation.

This process will be led by Mr. Keith Spicer, who resigned today as Chairman of the CRTC, for the period required to undertake this crucial new assignment. I know that all members wish him well.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: He will be assisted by an executive advisory group consisting of: Richard Cashin, President of the Fishermen's Food and Allied Workers' Union in Newfoundland; Carol Corcoran, a barrister and solicitor and acting band manager of the Fort Nelson Indian Band and a former chief of the band; Fil Fraser, Chief Commissioner of the Alberta Human Rights Foundation; Thomas Kierans, President of the C. D. Howe Institute;

[Translation]

Robert Normand, a former Deputy Minister of Finance in the Quebec government, chairman and editor of *Le Soleil*.

[English]

Helena Zukowski, screenwriter and author;

[Translation]

Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations; Roger Tassé, a former Deputy Minister of Justice, and Executive Vice-President of Bell Canada;

[English]

Susan Van de Velde, farmer and community activist; Elsie Wayne, mayor of Saint John, New Brunswick; and Jack Webster, broadcaster, journalist and author.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: If any member of this House of Commons from any party appears before that commission and can get a word in edgewise, let me know.

I think, however, it is fair to say they are a remarkable group of men and women from across Canada. I know they are going to undertake this crucial enterprise and bring it home with success. I know that all members of the House of Commons wish them well.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Mulroney: Quebec, Alberta and New Brunswick have established commissions to consider their own futures and some other provinces are planning to do so, as well. Our initiative will complement not compete with these undertakings—but the Government of Canada represents all Canadians and the Forum will be seeking to develop a national consensus.

This is not a traditional Royal Commission. The goal is for Canadians to talk not just to an appointed panel but to each other about the country's future.

Consensus is created by people; we have all learned that it cannot be imposed by governments. This is an initiative for the people and of the people. Our objective is to get Canadians talking to each other about the values and characteristics and fundamental interests of this country.