

of the land. That is why my government hopes that the referendum, to be held in Quebec some time during the coming weeks, will be a time when Quebecers affirm their will and their right to be fully Canadian, a time when all Canadians will reaffirm their desire to live together in the country to which we all belong, and which belongs to all of us.

Because my government wants to strengthen the spirit of Canadian unity and nurture the seeds of renewal, it promises to interpret a vote of No to sovereignty-association as a vote for the rebuilding of the Canadian federation. My government also promises to give effect to a No vote by mobilizing all the forces at its command in order to ensure the renewal of the federation in a spirit of respect and justice for all.

I. Putting People First

Canadians are a sensible people. They understand that these are difficult economic times throughout the world. They know too that Canada cannot insulate itself completely from the effects of global inflation coupled with recession. In responding to these turbulent conditions, my government will be guided by the two main principles at the core of the program my ministers placed before the people.

The first is that Canadians will accept sacrifice to meet the economic challenges of the 1980s, but they will not accept injustice. Canadians have always faced up to difficult decisions—and if necessary they will do so in the future—but only if the burden is shared equitably.

The second principle is equally critical. Canadians recognize the need to live within their national means and they understand that in doing so the state cannot meet every demand or satisfy every group. Therefore, in employing the limited resources available, my ministers will help first those who need help most.

In particular, my government recognizes the need to protect those Canadians most affected by unacceptably high interest rates. My government will act to assist those unable to bear the burden of renegotiating their home mortgages in the present abnormal situation so that the spectre of foreclosure will be avoided. My ministers are convinced that this objective can be achieved without the government embarking upon a major subsidy program. Farmers and small businessmen are also hit especially hard by rising costs, and my government is sensitive to their plight. To assist the individual entrepreneur, the ceiling for loans under the Small Businesses Loans Act and the Farm Improvement Loans Act will be raised to \$100,000. Other measures of assistance will also be introduced.

Inflation strikes hardest at the old and those least able to take care of themselves. You will be asked to give urgent consideration to legislation raising the Guaranteed Income Supplement to the Old Age Security pension by \$35 a month per household by July 1 of this year. This measure will primarily benefit single pensioners, the vast majority of whom are women. By fulfilling this commitment, Parliament will be providing needed assistance to over 1.3 million elderly Canadians.

Beyond providing immediate relief for elderly people with low incomes, my government intends to convene a National Pension Conference in the fall of 1980. Work must begin immediately to design better methods of providing flexible, portable, and secure pensions both in the private and public sectors. To start this process, my government will soon release a major study on the Canadian pension system.

One of the essential objectives of this government is to put more people to work. Young people, women, natives, and the handicapped face special problems in finding jobs. To meet the needs of these groups, my government will expand its employment program while using its resources more efficiently. There will be an increased effort to develop critical trade skills so as to better prepare today's labour force for tomorrow's jobs.

Expanding native opportunities and training women for new occupations will receive strong emphasis.

Members of Parliament will have a major role in advising on the selection of job creation projects, and my government will enter into a new partnership with voluntary agencies and local organizations in a program of community service.

Additional attention will be paid to the employment problems of the handicapped whose special difficulties cross all regional, sexual, and cultural boundaries. Amendments to protect the rights of the handicapped will be made to the Human Rights Act.

Speech from the Throne

The role of women in Canadian society is undergoing marked improvement, and government initiatives must reflect and support that change. As a major employer in Canada, my government will play a leadership role by implementing affirmative action measures in the public service. My government believes that there is no room in Canada for sexual discrimination of any kind.

The serious problem of violence against women will also be addressed along with other amendments to the Criminal Code, and efforts will be made in concert with the provincial and territorial governments to improve health and social services for women who are victims of violence. It is time, too, to move cannabis offences to the Food and Drugs Act and remove the possibility of imprisonment for simple possession.

II. Security of Energy, at a Fair Price

My government's energy policy is critical to the success of all its economic policies. Energy policy is as important for Canada in the 1980s as railway policy was in the 1880s. Like railway policy in that earlier era, energy development has the potential to create growth and prosperity across Canada.

My government believes that the price of oil in Canada must be based upon Canadian conditions and circumstances, and not upon the vagaries of a turbulent and unpredictable world market. We need a made in Canada price. A new blended price will therefore be established, which will progressively incorporate the costs of the Oil Import Compensation Program, while at the same time maintaining a single national price for consumers. The blended price will reflect the right of producing provinces and corporations to a fair return for their resources and their investment.

Discussions have already begun with the governments of the producing provinces and will be vigorously pursued toward an agreement consistent with my government's energy policy commitment, as endorsed by the people of Canada. My ministers do not intend to impose an 18-cent increase in the excise tax on transportation fuels, and the made in Canada price will result in a lower price to consumers than the one proposed in the budget of the previous administration.

A Petroleum Price Auditing Agency will be established to investigate and report to the government and people of Canada on oil company costs, profits, capital expenditures, and levels of Canadian ownership.

In spite of Canada's large energy resources, which put this country in the extremely favourable position of being a major energy exporter, we remain partially dependent upon imported oil. My government is determined to reduce that dependence by promoting conservation and by stimulating the production of new domestic energy supplies.

To improve conservation of oil and gasoline in transportation, you will be asked to approve legislation setting mandatory fuel efficiency standards for automobiles. Measures will also be introduced to encourage higher standards of home insulation, and the existing home insulation program will be improved.

In co-operation with provincial governments, other steps will be taken to encourage more rapid substitution from oil to other energy sources in order to substantially reduce the significance of oil in meeting our energy needs. Policies will be introduced to encourage consumers to switch from oil to natural gas or electricity for home heating. My government equally favors the earliest possible construction of a natural gas pipeline to Quebec City and the maritime provinces, and awaits with interest the report of the National Energy Board on this project.

Petro-Canada will be maintained and expanded as an instrument of public policy. My government has already increased the budget of the corporation by \$80 million this year, and our national oil company will also receive a renewed mandate to engage vigorously in oil purchase negotiations and agreements with foreign suppliers.

You will be asked to approve a new Canada Oil and Gas Act, which will provide new preferential rights for Petro-Canada and other Canadian companies on federal lands, and establish new and more demanding requirements for exploration and development of these promising frontier areas.

An alternative energy corporation will be created with a mandate to stimulate the development of new and renewable energy sources to replace oil.

My ministers believe that, if given the opportunity, Canadian companies and investors would involve themselves more heavily in the energy field. My government, therefore, adopts the specific goal of at least 50 per cent Canadian