

works well, but no single element can be fully understood without considering the whole.

If the process of constitutional renewal is to succeed, the Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee will need the widest possible cross section of Canadian views. The Joint Committee will use these views to craft the changes Canadians feel would make constitutional renewal a reality.

I want to encourage all Canadians to reflect carefully on these proposals and to participate in the Committee hearings which are now getting under way. It is essential that we move beyond this constitutional challenge so that we can address other pressing issues. Not least of these is the competitive position of our country, which, after all, provides the support for our standard of living.

And that is why the Government of Canada will soon launch the Prosperity Initiative, which will serve as the focal point for efforts to renew and enhance our competitiveness.

You have the kind of insights needed to enrich this process, which will be tackling the five key aspects of fostering competitiveness.

First comes developing a learning culture, to renew the skills of Canadians.

Tackling the science and technology challenge is a second priority.

We also need to increase the availability of investment capital in Canada.

A fourth component of the Prosperity Initiative is upgrading the efficiency of our domestic market -- because section 121 is unfortunately not the only outmoded law or regulation with which consumers and suppliers must deal.

Opening opportunities for trade is the fifth area in which we can act to improve our ability to compete.

I am convinced that, together, Canadians can develop new and essential competitive tools. I hope that the process of consultations will provide Canadians with the means to reach a consensus both on the nature of the issues facing us and on a plan of action to address them.

The federal government sees its role in this initiative as one of a facilitator and catalyst for developing this consensus. With the active participation and leadership of the private sector, labour and other important elements of our society, meaningful