

The National Advisory Board on Science and Technology, composed of members from the scientific and technical communities from all parts of the country, has established a continuing dialogue between Canada's scientific leadership and the federal government. The Board has made a number of important policy recommendations. These include a network of centres of excellence and programs for the development of strategic technologies such as biotechnology, advanced industrial materials, and information technology. These recommendations are now being acted upon, and my government will provide direction and leadership in this vital area of Canada's national life.

The new federal approach to regional development is working. Decentralized decision making, through the regional agencies in Western Canada, Northern Ontario, and Atlantic Canada, has been instrumental in stimulating both entrepreneurial endeavor and business investment. Funding for regional development in Quebec and for these agencies will be continued, and government procurement policies will become increasingly responsive to regional considerations.

My government is concerned that our native peoples participate fully in Canada's economic development prospects and, to this end, will be extending its programs to assist native economic development.

The government will continue other economic initiatives of its first mandate, including:

further privatization of those Crown corporations which no longer serve a public policy role; and

passage of business framework legislation which will contribute to the smooth functioning of a modern economy, including the reform of laws dealing with bankruptcy and the regulation of financial institutions.

These initiatives will serve to build a modern, competitive, market-oriented economy.

Jobs for Canadians

Greater competition in our largest trading markets, a diminishing reliance on traditional industries, the rapid growth of the service sector and more sophisticated technology—all these indicate the need for a comprehensive human resource strategy for the 1990s.

If Canada is to meet these new standards and compete in this changing world situation, it must rely upon the skills and resourcefulness of the Canadian people. It must make full participants of disabled persons and visible minorities. It is imperative that literacy initiatives, education, training and retraining for Canada's work force, especially our youth, reflect the requirements of a modern economy.

Expanded labour-force programs to encourage continual upgrading of skills will be an important focus of my government's response to the report of the Advisory Council on Adjustment. Extensive discussions will

Speech from the Throne

be initiated with labour, industry, the provinces and other interested parties in order to encourage their participation in this vital process.

My government will propose amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Program in order to improve the Program's effectiveness and its fairness. These changes will direct more resources toward active training which, together with improved identification of marketable job skills, will promote greater opportunities and a more productive and rewarding experience in the work force.

At the same time, this program will continue to recognize the special circumstances in regions with historically high levels of unemployment.

It is also my government's intention to restructure unemployment insurance benefits in order to eliminate inconsistencies with Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to create greater incentives to employment, and to ensure that the resources available are used more effectively to generate greater labour market opportunities.

The increasing participation of women in the work force underlines the need for initiatives that promote equality of opportunity in Canada's economic life. The report of the Task Force on Barriers to the Employment and Promotion of Women in the Public Service will give my government—as the largest employer in the country—further opportunity to remove or reduce the difficulties that many women still find impede their working careers.

The Environmental Imperative

Canadians possess a unique sense of their relationship to the land, whose rich, vast diversity has shaped their values and experience.

Throughout the regions and across all linguistic and ethnic communities, there is a shared concern that we protect our environment for generations of future Canadians.

The world itself is facing an environmental challenge of unprecedented magnitude. Recognizing this, my government has strongly supported the Brundtland World Commission on Environment and Development and its call for "sustainable development"—which holds that the state of the world's environment, the strength of the global economy and the health of the earth's inhabitants are inextricably linked.

My government will participate in the establishment of a centre for the international promotion of sustainable development, to be located in Winnipeg.

As well, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy has been established to provide leadership and to form new partnerships of effort among Canadians, in order to deal more effectively with environmental concerns and their relationship to the challenges of economic growth. The government has also altered its operational practices and enlarged the responsibilities of the Minister of the Environment to ensure that environmental issues are fully considered in the course of its decision making.

These initiatives are part of a new environmental agenda which will also include the commitment to: