

cultural and linguistic equality. It makes 14 recommendations. Some of them are addressed to the Federal Government. We accept these and we shall proceed to implement them as quickly as we can.

Some are addressed to the provincial governments. We hope that the provinces will find it possible to accept them. For our part, we stand ready to offer such help as may be necessary and desired.

Some of the recommendations are addressed to the federal and provincial governments jointly. In those cases, we should be glad to enter immediately into negotiations with the provinces, with a view to agreement on joint implementation. As I see it, it will be one of the most important tasks of this conference, with top priority, to secure the widest possible measure of agreement on these far-reaching and carefully considered recommendations.

There are recommendations which if accepted, would involve changes to the British North America Act which would have to be agreed to by the federal and provincial governments. These two changes, whether in the precise form recommended or in some other, are, in my view, fundamental if we are to establish and to ensure the basic principle of equality for the communities of people speaking our two official languages. It is essential for Canada that this principle be accepted and become real.

I hope also that we can reach agreement in principle at this conference on a constitutional charter of rights for all Canadians. This would cover a wide variety of rights, political, legal, egalitarian as well as linguistic. To agree on the detailed provisions and the mode and pace of enactment of a charter of human rights will clearly not be easy, and it will take time. There are subtle and important legal and constitutional questions at issue. But I would urge that in this process none of us lose sight of the large goals before us. What we shall be aiming at, if we can agree here in principle, is to provide a firmer, wider and more secure basis for the freedom of all Canadians, not only as individuals but also as members of particular societies within a larger unity. That, I believe is the beacon that we should steer by.

I hope, finally, that we can agree here to undertake jointly - as a matter of fundamental importance - a comprehensive constitutional review, and agree, as well, on the methods and procedures that we should follow in carrying it out. The British North America Act was a great act of statesmanship in its day. It has served as the constitutional basis for the growth of the strong and varied Confederation that we know today. But it is hardly to be expected that an Act passed more than 100 years ago should be adequate for all the needs or aspirations of Canadians today and for the future.

That is why my colleagues and I recommend that we now agree to begin a systematic and balanced process of constitutional review. It is impossible for me, or for anyone else, to forecast in advance what the ultimate and agreed results of this are likely to be. But, as an indication of the scope of the review that we recommend, we should want to include in it the institutions of federalism, such as the composition and functions of the Supreme Court of Canada, and the Senate. Certainly, a most important part of any such review would be the division of powers and jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments.