

Speech from the Throne

The policy is one of fairness and reasonableness toward the people speaking the two official languages of Canada; and the Government is of the view that it must be maintained in the interests of justice and of the unity of Canada.

Canada is a diverse country. Unity can result only from a recognition of that diversity, and not from any attempt to impose rigid uniformity. In matters of language and culture, it is important to recognize the personality of the various parts of the country without departing from fundamental principles of justice and generosity, which should apply everywhere.

The Government has established programs intended to give real meaning to the official languages policy. Some of these measures have proven successful, and will be continued. Others have not, and will be modified.

Grievances originating from public servants through the Commissioner of Official Languages will continue to be reviewed, in order to fulfill the Government's commitment to ensure maximum fairness and effectiveness in the implementation of the official languages policy.

The Government remains committed to the enhancement of the bilingual capacity of the federal public service. However, it believes that a better balance should be established between the money spent to introduce bilingualism in the public service and the money spent to enable more Canadians, particularly young people, to learn to communicate in both official languages. The Government is convinced that a great majority of Canadians are dedicated to the strengthening of bonds among Canadians speaking our two official languages, and belonging to our many different cultures.

[Translation]

Canadians appear particularly anxious that their children have the best possible chance of understanding their compatriots of the other language. Consequently, the Government intends to discuss with the provinces arrangements to increase the effectiveness of training in both official languages in the school systems across Canada.

The Government also intends to increase programs to enable young people from various parts of the country to learn more about one another.

II—Equality of Opportunity

While it is essential to national unity that all Canadians believe we have an equal opportunity to be fully ourselves in a cultural sense, it is just as essential to unity that we enjoy equal opportunities for individual and regional economic fulfilment.

To translate Canada's economic potential into real growth and equality of opportunity, we must be both clear-sighted in our recognition of the obstacles which lie in our path, and united in our determination to remove them.

The most important obstacle is inflation; a destructive force which we all know can take jobs and income away from our workers, rob the elderly of the value of their savings, stunt the dreams of families for a better life, impede the flow of capital necessary for industrial growth, and obstruct the fight against poverty and inequality.

The continued reduction of inflation, and the creation of many more employment opportunities for Canadians, are and will continue to be the Government's highest priorities.

To create the climate necessary for the achievement of these two vital objectives, the Government will continue to practise fiscal restraint. The control of inflation will remain the single most important condition for economic stability in Canada, even after price and income controls are removed. Determined restraint in fiscal and monetary policy is essential to the long-term control of inflation.

The Government remains committed to a reduction in the growth of the public service. In the ten years prior to 1975-76 authorized man-years in the public service grew at an average annual rate of 4 per cent. This year the growth rate was reduced to 1.5 per cent, requiring actual reductions in 27 departments and agencies. The Government will reduce the rate of growth to below one per cent in the coming fiscal year.

In a further effort to reduce the size of government as well as expand the range of opportunities for private enterprise, all federal programs will be reviewed to identify those government activities which could be transferred to the private sector without reducing the quality of service to the public.

The international trading environment will profoundly influence our economic performance, and significant progress will be sought by Canada in the Multilat-

[Mr. Speaker.]

eral Trade Negotiations and through other trade development initiatives. To support private industry in meeting greater international competition, the Government will modify substantially its industrial assistance programs.

[Text]

The Government also places a very high value on the contribution small businesses make to the economic and social well-being of Canadians. Small owner-managed firms are a mainstay of employment in cities and towns across the country. They supply goods and services essential to consumers and to other business, and they demonstrate the innovation and entrepreneurship from which successful enterprise must spring. More than that, small businesses, and the people who own them, manage them, and work in them, are the economic backbone of countless communities throughout Canada.

The Government will introduce measures to assist small businesses by improving local access to financial assistance and other services provided by government departments, the Federal Business Development Bank, and financial institutions in the private sector.

In response to concerns expressed by many Canadian businessmen, the Government will establish a better balance between the need for economic data, and the paperwork burden thereby imposed on small firms. The number of firms required to make statistical reports to government will be substantially reduced. Those larger companies which will still be required to submit information on a regular basis will be able to do so on fewer and simpler reporting forms.

In pursuit of the goal of a higher rate of employment, it will be necessary to improve the efficiency of the labour market and actively hasten the return of unemployed workers to productive effort. Adequate income is a pre-requisite to human dignity; and the Government believes most unemployed Canadians would much prefer to secure that income through worthwhile work than through public assistance. In some cases, and locations, this goal can be achieved only through direct job creation by governments.

You will therefore be asked to approve a comprehensive, year-round, direct job creation program, directed particularly toward areas of chronic high unemployment. Other programs will provide more job opportunities and improved employment counselling for young people.

The Government will not compete with the private sector for the services of unemployed workers, but will create jobs in areas where its efforts will be a necessary supplement to private sector activity.

You will be asked to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act in ways which will permit insurance funds to be used to maintain the income of Canadians being trained for new jobs, and to help employers retain workers who might otherwise be temporarily laid off.

To facilitate these improvements, the Government proposes the merger of the operations of the Unemployment Insurance Commission and the Manpower and Immigration Department, so that Canadians may obtain employment support services at a single source.

You will be asked to consider amendments to the Immigration Act, designed to promote Canada's regional and urban development goals, promote family unity, achieve a balance between immigration levels and employment opportunities, and preserve Canada's reputation as an open, tolerant society which welcomes the energy and cultural diversity of people from all parts of the world.

[Translation]

The improvement of labour-management relations in Canada is an essential pre-condition to economic stability. While it considers the collective bargaining system to be one of the important ways of ensuring fair wages in a democratic society, the Government and Canadians generally are deeply disturbed by the loss of productivity and increased social tensions which frequently result from the inadequacies of that system.

The solution is not to be found in excessive restriction of collective bargaining rights, but rather in the development of better mechanisms for settling disputes in a less adversarial, more co-operative manner.

The Government therefore intends to work with the provinces and with labour and business communities to develop a number of initiatives aimed at improving labour-management relations.

It is intended to establish a collective bargaining information centre, which will offer objective economic and compensation data to all parties. It is also intended to encourage greater participation by plant workers in decisions affecting their working conditions; to expand labour education programs; to develop a