

fulfill their reasonable aspirations. There are native peoples across the land who are still in search of a better life for themselves and their children.

This discontent in such a wealthy country must find its causes in the human spirit, and it is there also that the unity of the nation must be found. A greater willingness to listen to each other, to understand each other's needs, a greater generosity between individuals and between different parts of the country, a greater willingness to sacrifice so that others may have a chance, to take less so that others may have enough—all these are in the realm of the spirit. All are essential to the unity of the country. Governments, of course, have a special responsibility to both encourage and respond to the spirit of unity by their words and their actions. Canadians are, I believe, coming to recognize the seriousness of the problem. They are recognizing the need to make a new and deeper dedication to mutual understanding and sharing.

The Government dedicates itself profoundly to the re-discovery of the spirit of unity. It wishes to learn from all who are interested in Canada and who have thoughts on how it can be made a better place in which to live. It is prepared, particularly, to work with the governments of the provinces, all of whom have a vital interest in a better Canada.

The Government recently appointed the Task Force on Canadian Unity which is now in the process of canvassing opinion in all parts of Canada. The work of the Task Force should assist Canadians to participate more actively in debate, and to make a greater contribution to the future shaping of the country.

[English text]

The Government will also be placing before Parliament, and in this way before the people of Canada, later in this Session, a measure that will contain a number of proposals relating to the Constitution of Canada, which it believes will be of particular importance for the future of the country. The proposals will be concerned, among other matters, with the essential nature of the Canadian federation and its objectives, with certain fundamental rights and freedoms which the Government feels should be enjoyed by all Canadians as being essential to Canada's continuing existence as a free and democratic society, and with certain elements of the framework of the Canadian federation that are important to its effective functioning.

It is the hope of the Government that these proposals will stimulate a process of constitutional review in which all governments in Canada will share and in which Canadians generally will have an opportunity to express their views and convictions about the kind of Canada they wish to have now and in the future. We may confidently expect that, from that process, may emerge a new federalism that will receive the support and the devotion of Canadians everywhere.

The question of language rights is of particular relevance to national unity, and the Government has therefore welcomed the historic "Statement on Language" approved at the meeting of provincial Premiers at St. Andrews in August. The Government believes that this important initiative can and should become a basic part of our Constitution and has recently asked the provinces to consider this possibility.

After consultation with the provinces, the Government will amend the criminal code to guarantee the right of accused persons to be tried in the official language of their choice.

The goal of enhancing the rights and freedoms of Canadians can also be pursued through commitment to the principle of open government. An example of that commitment was the enactment of the Human Rights Act, and the recent appointment of the Human Rights Commission and the Privacy Commissioner. To the same end, the Government looks forward to hearing the views of Parliament on the Government's proposals concerning public access to official documents. In the further promotion of open government, you will be asked to approve the establishment of the office of ombudsman to deal with complaints arising from federal administrative actions.

Speech from the Throne

The Government will also propose the amendment of the Official Languages Act, in order to make more specific its provisions respecting the language of work of federal employees, to strengthen the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and to clarify the role of the courts in safeguarding the equality of status of the official languages within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada.

A comprehensive policy for official language minorities will be announced, and initiatives will be taken to ensure its full implementation within federal institutions. In the coming months, the Government will be proposing specific initiatives to be taken in collaboration with the provinces, and exploring ways of assisting the provinces in measures which they propose for ensuring greater availability of education in both official languages to all Canadians.

The unity of Canadians is often judged by the manner in which the federal and provincial governments work together for the benefit of the citizen. It is in recognition of this that the Government has recently designated a Minister of State responsible for federal-provincial relations, so that greater attention can be given to the search for harmony and co-operation between governments in Canada.

[French text]

Given the new economic realities to which Canada must adjust, and the urgency of promoting linguistic and cultural harmony, it is readily apparent that Canada is now entering a new era.

It can be an era of increasing confrontation, tension and division, or an era of enhanced freedom, co-operation and unity of purpose. Fundamentally, the choice must be made by every citizen every day.

It is apparent to thoughtful Canadians everywhere that this is a time of great decisions for Canada, a time for re-discovering the strength and potential of a marvellously free and caring society.

That re-discovery will require that Canadians rededicate themselves to each other's well-being, just as I dedicate myself anew today to the people and the nation I am very proud to serve.

Members of the House of Commons,

You will be asked to consider budget proposals and to approve the expenditure of funds required for the administration of government services and programs.

Honourable Members of the Senate,

Members of the House of Commons,

May God bless and inspire all your deliberations and decisions.

[English]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister) moved:

That the Speech of Her Majesty the Queen delivered this day from the throne to the two houses of parliament be taken into consideration later today.

Motion agreed to.