

We have already proved that we are sincerely interested in working closely with the provinces wherever the two levels of government have interests in the same field. And today every provincial government recognizes the importance to it of overseas trade. Many provinces, like British Columbia, have had posts abroad for years. I firmly believe that, as elected representatives of the people, those governments too must be allowed to participate in the policy matters that come under my jurisdiction.

So the federal government is now sincerely looking for, and finding ways of getting more public input. But there are initiatives that you as private citizens can take too. You shouldn't wait for the government to make an opportunity available.

For example, does the speaking program of the Club give adequate weight to Canada's international involvements? Are you showing the interest you might - and might benefit from - such as trade for China-Canada and Japan-Canada, or the Canadian Association for Latin America? Are you doing all you can to communicate your views?

And speaking of communicating your views, I cannot stress too strongly the importance of writing to your Member of Parliament. The mail is the single most effective way MP's - including Ministers - have of knowing what people think. Without our mail we would be operating in the dark. Write to us. A politician is supposed to have what is known as political instinct. But we aren't mind-readers. And I promise you that as soon as we get the Post Office working properly you'll be getting replies right back.

May I leave you with this thought. The next time you notice the government doing something on which you have a strong view, ask yourself: "How can I influence that decision?" There are lots of ways you can participate. I want you to because it will make my job all that much easier. But I don't say this just because I would welcome more help. I say it because I really believe that that is the way we can get the kind of government we really want.

Thank-you.