Speech Module

COSMOPOLITAN CANADA:
A modern state with a human face

Canada has a functional, flexible federal structure that adapts to changing circumstances. The Canadian Parliamentary system is fully capable of adjusting and evolving to meet the changing needs of all its citizens. In 1867, Canada's Fathers of Confederation adopted a flexible and dynamic federal form of government, that was based on the British Parliamentary model. As a result, each province and territory has been able to develop in accordance with its own characteristics and priorities, while enjoying the benefits of being part of Canada.

The Constitution Act of 1982, which includes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is the foundation of the modern Canadian federation. The Act includes an amending formula, which has yet to be used.

Still, the framework for our governance has continued to evolve. For example, in 1995, the federal Parliament passed a resolution recognizing Quebec as a distinct society. In 1996, Canada's five major regions were given a guarantee that no constitutional change would be made without their unanimous consent.

Provincial governments have long been able to opt out of federal-provincial programs on equitable terms. More recently, the provinces have been allowed to take over responsibilities in areas such as labour market training and mining and forestry development.

Our government is responsive to the needs and concerns of citizens, and a public sector that offers them efficient service. Despite privatization and deregulation, in such areas as energy, transportation and telecommunications, Canadians continue to believe in a strong role for government. For example, a recent survey asked "What contributes to belonging to Canada?" Of the respondents, 51 percent mentioned social programs.

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