Canadian dollar to move in response to changes in the balance of supply and demand in the foreign exchange market. That continues to be our policy.

It also continues to be our policy to intervene directly in the market to moderate short-term fluctuations in the rate of exchange. This intervention dampens the more erratic short-term movements. It also provides resistance to appreciable movements of the rate in either direction. The intervention does not prevent the exchange rate from moving in response to the market situation. It moderates the speed of change.

Such intervention gives rise to changes in Canada's official reserves. In the event of a sustained declining trend in the exchange rate, such as we have been experiencing, the drain on the official reserves can be considerable. In such circumstances it is prudent for the government to replenish the foreign exchange component of reserves by borrowing foreign currency. As hon. members know, we have been following just such a policy.

Changes in the official reserves arising from exchange market interventions reflect the over-all balance in Canada's international payments. When, as at present, we have a deficit in the current account of our balance of international payments, changes in official reserves can be regarded as adjusting the net inflows of capital that finance the current account deficit.

In recent months the net inflow of capital to Canada, particularly that arising from the usual foreign borrowing of Canadian provinces, municipalities and corporations, has been low in relation to the size of the deficit on current transactions in goods and services. For seasonal reasons, this deficit is normally much larger in the first several months of the year than in the other months. In these circumstances the Government of Canada has used exchange reserves to supplement the inflow of capital. The Bank of Canada has raised the bank rate on two recent occasions to encourage Canadian borrowers to raise funds abroad. In summary, it is our policy to undertake such foreign borrowings as are required to replenish our reserves and to provide assurance that the government is in a position to supplement the net inflow of capital to Canada.

With our costs now under better control and a lower exchange rate, we have become more competitive internationally. This has helped us to turn around our trade balance from a deficit of $500 million in 1975 to a surplus of almost $3 billion in 1977.

In other ways, our progress has been no less important, but perhaps harder to measure. Expectations have changed. Hopefully they are more realistic. Some of the divisions in our society have been narrowed or closed.

We have also seen a remarkable improvement in relations between labour and management. In 1976 we lost 11.6 million man-days in strikes. Last year that number fell 70 per cent to only 3.4 million man-days. More important, labour and business are talking to each other about their common problems.

There is also a more effective dialogue among governments and between governments and business, labour and other groups in our society. It is not a matter of choice whether we pursue this dialogue. We must achieve more agreement on economic issues and find more ways to co-operate, or we cannot get the best out of our economy.

[Mr. Chrétien.]

[*Translation*]

The Challenge of Structural Reform

The federal government discussed co-operation and structural change in the paper entitled *Agenda for Co-operation.* The first minister's conference was a milestone in federal-provincial relations both in terms of the range of policy agreement and the commitment to structural reform. A comprehensive work program is now underway as a result of the meeting. For example, studies are proceeding with the private sector in 22 manufacturing industry categories. A major effort is underway to cut down the burden of government regulation. Measures have been taken to help arrest and reverse the tourist deficit. Food and agricultural policies are under review. We are looking forward to developing the potential created for our fisheries by the 200-mile limit.

For my part, I can encourage useful structural adjustment as minister responsible for tariffs and tax policy.

Commercial Policy and the Tariff

The multilateral trade negotiations now taking place in Geneva have longer-range potential for the productive sectors of our economy. We are participating actively in the talks, and seeking reductions in both tariff and non-tariff barriers to give us better access for our exports, especially highly processed resources and manufactured goods. We will also be prepared to reduce Canadian tariffs, but only in return for concessions of real value. Canada's development in the 1980s will depend very largely on the ability of our industries to grasp significant new export opportunities and compete more effectively against imports at home. As First Ministers have urged, we will be ready to support the private sector adjustments that will be needed for our success in the trading environment of the decade ahead.

The Geneva talks are moving ahead quickly and we hope for a successful conclusion in the coming months. In the meantime I am not submitting any major amendments to the Customs Tariff. However, I am proposing tonight that most of the temporary tariff reductions introduced in 1973 on a broad range of consumer products be extended for another year beyond their scheduled expiry date of June 30. The extension will contribute, as it has in the past, to our efforts to minimize inflation.

I am also proposing to withdraw the British Preferential rate from certain goods imported from Britain and Ireland, including certain diesel engines, radio and television apparatus, truck-mounted cranes, knitted goods and confectionery products.