

This modernization is part of a range of proposals to strengthen the economic union by giving Parliament "a new power to make laws for the efficient functioning of the economic union," and by harmonizing the fiscal policies of all Canadian governments, along with the nation's monetary policy.

The federal proposals suggest enhanced federal-provincial co-operation in managing the economic union through a newly constituted Council of the Federation. We are also suggesting that the Bank of Canada have a specific, clarified mandate to fight inflation, and we want to develop guidelines with the provinces to harmonize federal and provincial fiscal and spending policies.

These proposals for a fuller economic union are, as I mentioned, part of a larger package of Constitutional Proposals that the government has put out for the consideration of Canadians.

As Americans, you are to be forgiven for perhaps thinking that remaking the Constitution has replaced hockey as Canada's national sport. Our federal system, like yours, is asked to provide certain checks and balances, and as our nation has evolved, the system has achieved that in constantly evolving ways that have, at the end of the day, kept us together and kept us prosperous. I am confident that this will continue to be the case.

The government's Constitutional Proposals are, in the Canadian tradition, evolutionary, not revolutionary. What is revolutionary is the change in attitude required to build a more productive and prosperous Canada.

Competitiveness doesn't just happen. It is the result of a larger political and economic structure that encourages competition. The federal government is creating that kind of political and economic structure. Driving this surge to competitiveness, forcing this thinking in new terms, is a strong nation we have built over 124 years.

Canada is a wealthy nation. We are 32nd in the world in population, but the seventh-ranked economy. A United Nations study says we have the second-highest standard of living.

Those glowing statistics mean there are few people in poverty. They mean opportunities -- real opportunities -- opportunities for meaningful, satisfying jobs with companies making a contribution to the world's economy, not jobs as drones with companies forever on the fringe of bankruptcy.

Our standard of living means a strong base for social programs, so that no man, no woman, no child goes without adequate medical care, or decent shelter, or proper food. Our standard of living