

These policies, conceived and implemented as part of a comprehensive, long-term plan, have, in the intervening years, taken effect. Prior to the recession now ending, from 1985 to 1989, Canada's economy grew (not counting inflation) at an average annual rate of 4.3 per cent, better than all the leading industrial countries except Japan.

Canada's record in creating jobs during this period led all industrial nations. Not only have our policies taken positive effect, but those effects have not gone unnoticed, by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund and other impartial observers of the global economic scene.

Every year the Geneva-based World Economic Forum issues its report on the relative competitiveness of nations. It compares the 23 nations of the OECD in eight different categories.

Back in 1986, the report ranked Canada in eleventh place. That was before our Agenda for Economic Renewal had had a chance to kick in. By 1987, Canada had advanced to sixth place. In 1989, we moved up to fourth, then slipped back to fifth last year, behind Japan, the United States, Germany and Switzerland.

If, as Canadians and as a government, we take some satisfaction at this vindication of our policy direction, we have never made the mistake of thinking that the job was all done. There was, is, and always will be, a great deal more to do.

The 1991 World Economic Report was released in June of this year and predictably there was good news and bad news for Canada. Once again, we ranked in fifth place, behind Switzerland and ahead of Austria.

Once again, we earned high marks for such features as our natural resources, our cheap energy, our highways and airports, and our health care system -- which was rated the best in the world.

That is the good news. But the warning signals become apparent when we take a look at some of those features that will be vital to a national economy in a dynamic global marketplace in the 1990s and beyond. Indeed, the report contains warning signals that call into question our very ability to continue to provide for those very highways, airports, and health care services we prize so highly.

In terms of the effectiveness of our school system to meet the demands of a competitive economy, we ranked 11th. The effectiveness of our company training programs ranked 20th -- near the end of the pack.