

*Speech from the Throne*

Creation of these northern parks will not be permitted to affect in any way the traditional use of wildlife and fish resources by the native people of the north. We will discuss with northern residents who live near the parks ways to make sure that they get their share of the jobs created and every other possible economic advantage the parks can provide. Canadians now have the framework of an outstanding national parks system, but we must not stop here. There is much more to be done if we are to protect our natural heritage. The government is presently looking for opportunities to develop new kinds of parks and recreation areas extending along river valleys, geographical features, scenic routes, underwater parks, historic canals and walking trails.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to announce today that the responsibility for eight canals has been transferred from the Department of Transport to the conservation program of my department. All those canals are linked with significant historic events: the Rideau, Trent-Severn and Murray canals in Ontario; the Carillon and Sainte-Anne canals on the Ottawa River, the Saint-Ours and Chambly canals in Quebec and St. Peter's canal in Nova Scotia.

All those canals are readily accessible from large urban centres in eastern Canada. We intend, in close co-operation with the provinces, to develop their historic value, the recreational aspect of those waterways and to protect their parks and wildlife habitats. The conservation of natural wonders is consistent with the preservation and protection of historic and architectural monuments in Canada. The Louisbourg fortress, the small Fort Garry, Dawson and the trail of the Klondike gold rush are some factors which add colour and variety to the national system of historic parks and sites. All were carefully chosen to commemorate the important events in our history and to inspire Canadians of today and tomorrow with feelings of satisfaction and national pride.

• (1510)

*[English]*

During this session, I will be introducing legislation to establish a national trust which will be known as Heritage Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Chrétien:** I would like at this point to mention the interest in that project of many members of this House, especially the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Roberts) who sponsored a bill that, to some extent, was the inspiration for this new legislation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Chrétien:** Its main objective will be the preservation of our historical, architectural and natural heritage. Heritage Canada will acquire property by purchase, donations and bequests. It will be a broadly based corporation with the same degree of independence as the Canada Council. Heritage Canada will be launched with the aid of a generous federal endowment grant to give it a start. The private sector will have a major role to play. The aim is to enable anyone anywhere in Canada interested in preserving our

historic and natural heritage to play a part in discharging a national responsibility.

*[Translation]*

Our cultural heritage, Mr. Speaker, makes up an essential part of the quality of our life. Not only must we preserve it, but we must make it available to all Canadians.

The government, through the Secretary of State Department, intends to increase the responsibility of the National Museums of Canada. A system of associated museums will be set up in order to allow the Canadian people across the country to enjoy the National Museums collections.

At the same time, the Canada Council will be given more funds and its responsibilities will be extended in order to insure the protection and use of museum collections that do not belong to the national system. This will lead to the establishment of the first elements in a network of national exhibition centres and to the management of a collection of art objects which will be loaned in order to attract the public to the museums.

*[English]*

Ignorance about the culture and history of the various groups that make up our population has had much more to do with dividing us than any other single factor. National parks, historic sites and museums enrich the quality of Canadian life and strengthen visibly the fibre of national unity. They tell us much about the world around us, ourselves and each other.

Communication and understanding are essential in a diverse society. We must seek to deepen our understanding, to enlarge our appreciation of all others. This is the foundation of the government policy on bilingualism and the *raison d'être* of its multicultural programs, the basis for a better Canadianism. There is no threat in this. There is a promise, a promise of a land in which the dignity of everyone, the heritage of every one of us will be respected and understood by all.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Chrétien:** Before concluding, Mr. Speaker, I wish to mention a subject that is very close to the members of this House, especially myself as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I am happy to refer to the fact that in the past four years we decided to work very hard on one of the cultural problems about which we all feel very strongly. I refer to the cultural heritage of the first citizens of our land.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Chrétien:** We have started on programs to try to help the Eskimos and Indians of this land to preserve their culture. During the past session, it was announced that the government in the next year will spend \$10 million to help establish cultural centres and other activities that will permit our native population to go back through their history. We have a diverse cultural society. One of our responsibilities is to permit our first citizens to find in their background, history and tradition a new strength in order that they may find the place in society they want. In the past 100 years we may have tried too hard to impose our values on these people.