

Canadian Speech from the Throne stresses free trade, world peace

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Prime minister Brian Mulroney at the opening of Canada's 33rd parliament. Behind him is Governor-General Jeanne Sauvé.

Photo: United Press Canada Ltd

Canada's new government has committed itself to a 'renewed internationalism' that will make it a strong proponent of free trade, an active participant in building what it hopes will be a healthier world economy, and a defender of freedom and world peace.

These objectives of Canada's recently elected Progressive Conservative government were spelled out last month in the Speech from the Throne, which opened the first session of Canada's 33rd parliament.

Reading that speech as the representative of the Queen, Canadian Governor General Jeanne Sauvé said 'Canada has a vital stake in the elimination of barriers to trade, commerce and investment on a global basis. In this connection, there is an urgent need for a concerted attack on non-tariff barriers, which have become increasingly insidious and more prevalent.

'Acknowledging that no country, including Canada, is blameless, my government declares its willingness to do its part in a renewed multilateral effort to remove these obstructions in the international marketplace.'

These efforts would not only promote trade and prosperity among the developed nations, but they would also greatly assist the developing nations. Said Mdme Sauvé 'It is striking to observe how much hardship has occurred, how much debt burden has increased, how much economic activity has been held back in developing countries because of world recession, unstable markets and trade barriers.

'A successful attack on these problems will accelerate economic development and social progress in many of these countries. The alleviation of unconscionable human misery will result.'

Review of defence forces

On the subject of defence, the new government announced plans for a major review of the part its armed forces will play in the immediate future.

'My government is convinced,' Mdme Sauvé said, 'that Canada's defence forces urgently require

a new definition of their role, in keeping with present-day conditions. The strategic context in which we defend our own territory and that of our allies has changed considerably since the early 1970s, when the government last carefully considered this matter.'

At the same time, the government assured the military that they would be given the resources they need to do their job; and it reiterated its on-going commitment to NATO.

'My government is determined that Canada will again play its full part in the defence systems of NATO. Only in this way do we earn the right to full consultation and participation in the policies of that alliance.

'From this prudent and responsible position, Canada will work unceasingly with other nations, in every available forum, to halt the spread of nuclear weapons and prevent their development and use.'

Improved market efficiency

On the economic front, the Throne Speech promised steps that would 'reduce the (federal) deficit in an orderly, balanced and fair manner, and to control the growing burden of the public debt.

'That we must deal urgently with the deficit is beyond dispute. If allowed to continue to grow out of control, it will consume our available financial resources, undermine our capacity to respond to new opportunities, put increased pressure on interest rates, and inhibit investment and growth in our economy.'

The Speech also stressed a new commitment to improve the efficiency and flexibility of Canada's capital markets; to promote a more market-orientated economy through changes in competition laws and in the regulatory framework; and to encourage risk-taking, innovation and entrepreneurial initiative. It also promised renewed efforts to stimulate investment, both domestic and foreign.

Said Mdme Sauvé: 'My government is determined to regain Canada's reputation as a reliable and profitable place to do business.'

Container pier, Halifax: Speech from the Throne calls for a "concerted attack on non-tariff barriers" as a way of promoting international trade.



Photo: National Film Board of Canada