

should be enjoyed by all Canadians as being essential to Canada's continuing existence as a free and democratic society, and with certain elements of the framework of the Canadian federation that are important to its effective functioning.

It is the hope of the Government that these proposals will stimulate a process of constitutional review in which all governments in Canada will share and in which Canadians generally will have an opportunity to express their views and convictions about the kind of Canada they wish to have now and in the future. We may confidently expect that, from that process, may emerge a new federalism that will receive the support and the devotion of Canadians everywhere.

The question of language rights is of particular relevance to national unity, and the Government has therefore welcomed the historic "Statement on Language" approved at the meeting of provincial Premiers at St. Andrews in August. The Government believes that this important initiative can and should become a basic part of our Constitution and has recently asked the provinces to consider this possibility.

After consultation with the provinces, the Government will amend the criminal code to guarantee the right of accused persons to be tried in the official language of their choice.

The goal of enhancing the rights and freedoms of Canadians can also be pursued through commitment to the principle of open government. An example of that commitment was the enactment of the Human Rights Act, and the recent appointment of the Human Rights Commission and the Privacy Commissioner. To the same end, the Government looks forward to hearing the views of Parliament on the Government's proposals concerning public access to official documents. In the further promotion of open government, you will be asked to approve the establishment of the office of ombudsman to deal with complaints arising from federal administrative actions.

The Government will also propose the amendment of the Official Languages Act, in order to make more specific its provisions respecting the language of work of federal employees, to strengthen the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and to clarify the role of the courts in safeguarding the equality of status of the official languages within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada.

A comprehensive policy for official language minorities will be announced, and initiatives will be taken to ensure its full implementation within federal institutions. In the coming months, the Government will be proposing specific initiatives to be taken in collaboration with the provinces, and exploring ways of assisting the provinces in measures which they propose for ensuring greater availability of education in both official languages to all Canadians.

The unity of Canadians is often judged by the manner in which the federal and provincial governments work together for the benefit of the citizen. It is in recognition of this that the Government has recently designated a Minister of State responsible for federal-provincial relations, so that greater

attention can be given to the search for harmony and co-operation between governments in Canada.

Given the new economic realities to which Canada must adjust, and the urgency of promoting linguistic and cultural harmony, it is readily apparent that Canada is now entering a new era.

It can be an era of increasing confrontation, tension and division, or an era of enhanced freedom, co-operation and unity of purpose. Fundamentally, the choice must be made by every citizen every day.

It is apparent to thoughtful Canadians everywhere that this is a time of great decisions for Canada, a time for re-discovering the strength and potential of a marvellously free and caring society.

That re-discovery will require that Canadians rededicate themselves to each other's well-being, just as I dedicate myself anew today to the people and the nation I am very proud to serve.

*Members of the House of Commons,*

You will be asked to consider budget proposals and to approve the expenditure of funds required for the administration of government services and programs.

*Honourable Members of the Senate,*

*Members of the House of Commons,*

May God bless and inspire all your deliberations and decisions.

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The House of Commons withdrew.

Her Majesty the Queen was pleased to retire.

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The sitting of the Senate was resumed.

## RAILWAYS BILL

### FIRST READING

**Senator Langlois** presented Bill S-1, relating to railways.

Bill read first time.

## SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

### CONSIDERATION NEXT SITTING

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform you that Her Majesty the Queen has caused to be placed in my hands a copy of Her Speech delivered this day from the Throne to the two Houses of Parliament. It is as follows:

**Hon. Senators:** Dispense.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, when shall this Speech be taken into consideration?