

Even the tools with which we work today are changing. Advances in computer and communications technology have changed not only how we work but the nature of the work itself.

Training, at the entry-level and at every step of the way throughout an employee's career, is essential more than ever before. Canada's representatives abroad and our staff in Canada must have the "state-of-the-art" skills necessary to promote our nation's interests. This institute is a tangible example of this government's commitment, under the Public Service 2000 initiative, to a culture of continuous learning and service.

Other countries, too, devote significant resources to foreign service training. There are now over 40 national diplomatic institutes abroad. I look forward to the day when foreign service personnel from other countries will have the opportunity to learn from our Canadian Foreign Service Institute the values, the vision, and the special skills that Canadians bring to the resolution of international issues.

The Institute is not a closed shop. It will provide training appropriate to each and every employee in this Department. This training will also be of interest to other government departments that post employees abroad. The Institute will deliver its courses by bringing together the most effective teachers and teaching methods with the most skilled of our own practitioners.

There are many people who have worked very hard to make the Institute a reality, and I thank you all most sincerely.

There are many others who are looking forward to being the beneficiaries of the Institute's courses, none more so than those here with us this afternoon who will begin the first cycle of new courses starting tomorrow at the Institute's temporary quarters in the Asticou building in Hull. Please join with me in wishing them success in their studies.

Let us also applaud the Institute staff and all those who have worked with them to bring us to this important moment in the Department's history and in the continuing development of Canada as a respected force in international affairs.

I hereby officially declare the Canadian Foreign Service Institute open.