

few other industrialized countries. The fundamental reality which will guide your deliberations is that Canada is entering upon a decade of opportunity.

It is our strength, and our confidence in ourselves which give us the real opportunity to make greater progress toward those goals which all Canadians share—national unity, equality of opportunity, and the enhancement of individual rights.

I—National Unity

In order to promote that level of unity among Canadians without which we cannot be truly free, truly one nation, nor hope to achieve our shared national goals, the Government will place a very high priority upon the promotion of better understanding among French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, and upon the achievement of formal constitutional independence.

Since 1968 the policy of official languages, supported by all parties represented in Parliament, has been based on the principle of equality, and on the right of Canadians to speak English or French according to their own will. An essential consequence, agreed by Parliament, is that the federal government provide services in the two official languages in the National Capital, and wherever else there is sufficient demand for such services.

The policy is one of fairness and reasonableness toward the people speaking the two official languages of Canada; and the Government is of the view that it must be maintained in the interests of justice and of the unity of Canada.

Canada is a diverse country. Unity can result only from a recognition of that diversity, and not from any attempt to impose rigid uniformity. In matters of language and culture, it is important to recognize the personality of the various parts of the country without departing from fundamental principles of justice and generosity, which should apply everywhere.

The Government has established programs intended to give real meaning to the official languages policy. Some of these measures have proven successful, and will be continued. Others have not, and will be modified.

Grievances originating from public servants through the Commissioner of Official Languages will continue to be reviewed, in order to fulfill the Government's commitment to ensure maximum fairness and effectiveness in the implementation of the official languages policy.

The Government remains committed to the enhancement of the bilingual capacity of the federal public service. However, it believes that a better balance should be established between the money spent to introduce bilingualism in the public service and the money spent to enable more Canadians, particularly young people, to learn to communicate in both official languages. The Government is convinced that a great majority of Canadians are dedicated to the strengthening of bonds among Canadians speaking our two official languages, and belonging to our many different cultures.

[Translation]

Canadians appear particularly anxious that their children have the best possible chance of understanding their compatriots of the other language. Consequently, the Government intends to discuss with the provinces arrangements to increase the effectiveness of training in both official languages in the school systems across Canada.

The Government also intends to increase programs to enable young people from various parts of the country to learn more about one another.

II—Equality of Opportunity

While it is essential to national unity that all Canadians believe we have an equal opportunity to be fully ourselves in a cultural sense, it is just as essential to unity that we enjoy equal opportunities for individual and regional economic fulfilment.

To translate Canada's economic potential into real growth and equality of opportunity, we must be both clear-sighted in our recognition of the obstacles which lie in our path, and united in our determination to remove them.

The most important obstacle is inflation; a destructive force which we all know can take jobs and income away from our workers, rob the elderly of the value of their savings, stunt the dreams of families for a better life, impede the flow of capital necessary for industrial growth, and obstruct the fight against poverty and inequality.

The continued reduction of inflation, and the creation of many more employment opportunities for Canadians, are and will continue to be the Government's highest priorities.

To create the climate necessary for the achievement of these two vital objectives, the Government will continue to practice fiscal restraint. The control of inflation will remain the single most important condition for economic stability in Canada, even after price and income controls are removed. Determined restraint in fiscal and monetary policy is essential to the long-term control of inflation.

The Government remains committed to a reduction in the growth of the public service. In the ten years prior to 1975-76 authorized man-years in the public service grew at an average annual rate of 4 per cent. This year the growth rate was reduced to 1.5 per cent, requiring actual reductions in 27 departments and agencies. The Government will reduce the rate of growth to below one per cent in the coming fiscal year.

In a further effort to reduce the size of government as well as expand the range of opportunities for private enterprise, all federal programs will be reviewed to identify those government activities which could be transferred to the private sector without reducing the quality of service to the public.

The international trading environment will profoundly influence our economic performance, and significant progress will be sought by Canada in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations and through other trade development initiatives. To support private industry in meeting greater international competition,