

and to his cabinet colleagues. The most important of these is the yearly meetings with the president of the United States and the prime minister of Canada — a process already begun. For my part, I visited President Reagan in Washington very shortly after my election as prime minister. I am pleased to announce tonight that President Reagan has accepted my invitation to make a working visit to Canada in March 1985.

Second, regular meetings of senior ministers to be held alternately in the US and Canada.

Third, we favour an accelerated rhythm of bilateral parliamentary and congressional meetings in order to cover a wider range of topics of interest to our two countries, from steel imports to acid rain.

Fourth, our provincial governments can and should meet more frequently with their geographical counterparts in the state governments.

In addition there have been various proposals for new and improved institutional mechanisms for investigation, analysis and resolution of bilateral disputes, possibly modelled on the International Joint Commission. These are worthy of study. This does not suggest an exclusive or narrow focus in our involvement in world affairs. Indeed, in trade liberalization as in defence, disarmament and international development, we attach great importance to our role in sound multilateral institutions.

We believe these institutions offer us the best opportunity to exert a constructive Canadian influence on the international scene. There have been changes in Canada over the last decade. Canadians have come through a difficult period in their history. Canadians in the mid-1980s have a renewed sense of confidence in themselves as a nation. People across the country are persuaded that the future lies in working together. They used the power of the vote to express a strong desire for an end to confrontational politics in our dealings with each other in Canada. They voted for a start on a new era of conciliation and co-operation.

Canadians wanted the offshore impasse in Newfoundland regarding oil and gas resolved. It is being resolved now. Canadians wanted the West to have a full voice in Confederation. They now have it.

Last Thursday, I had a significant meeting with Premier Lévesque in Quebec City. The people of Quebec overwhelmingly supported our program of national reconciliation and economic renewal in last September's election. Let me tell you there is a new mood there. The people of Quebec are seeking to ensure that they now assume a full and unequivocal role in the affairs of Canada.

I want to tell you something about the financial state of Canada as we found it following our election on September 4. We found that the projected federal deficit for the current fiscal year was \$34.5 billion. And we found that, even assuming reasonable growth projections, the yearly deficit would remain between \$34 billion and \$38 billion between now and the end of the decade, adding to an already staggering national debt load.

Let me put this in other terms. In 1967, when our country celebrated its one-hundredth birthday, our

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