

( ) THAT in 1997, on September 23, I circulated a response to the speech from the throne

EXHIBIT

THE GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

RESPONSE TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE:

PRO-ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH LITTLE COMMITMENT TO REAL CHANGE

In the Speech from the Throne, it was noted that the elected government has the responsibility "to fulfill the commitments it made to the people in its election platform".

It should have been added that it also has a responsibility to fulfill the commitments made in previous elections, and to act on international commitments and to discharge international obligations.

In the Speech from the Throne, there was a claim made that the Canadian government is a leader in the international sphere; yet the government ignores strong messages emanating from commitments made through recent international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), the World Conference on Human Rights, and the Habitat II Conference, and obligations incurred through conventions and covenants. . .

Canada had undertaken to move away from the current over-consumptive mode of development through commitments from UNCED and Habitat II. Yet, in the Speech from the Throne, the emphasis was on "economic growth" or "sustained growth in our standard of living" which thrives on increased consumption without standards or regulations at the expense of the environment, human rights and social justice.

In the Speech from the Throne, there appeared to be a call for unrestrained economic growth without standards or regulations. Repeatedly, we hear from industries that governments should move away from "command and control" and embrace deregulation and voluntary compliance. In the Speech from the Throne, there was no discussion about the need for standards and regulations, and for socially equitable and environmentally sound development; there was only full endorsement of unrestrained economic growth. . .

In the Speech from the Throne, the Governor General lauded the great accomplishments of Team Canada. Yet Team Canada has transferred to other states, substances and activities that are harmful to human health and the environment; a violation of a commitment made in the Rio Declaration at UNCED. Canada has become an international pariah in its promotion of CANDU reactors around the world. Activities promoted by Team Canada, have tended to foster trade at the expense of human rights and the environment. In addition, often serious human rights violations are overlooked and rationalized in the promotion of trade.

Throughout the Speech from the Throne, there were recommendations for close and increased collaboration between government and the private sector. The term "partnership" was used consistently and has become a code word internationally for more and more power being devolved to the corporate sector. . . .

#### WHAT WAS VIRTUALLY ABSENT FROM THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

#### UNITY ISSUES THROUGH JUSTICE AND ADDRESSING COMMON CONCERN

In the Speech from the Throne there was a call for all levels of government and for all citizens to work towards achieving Canadian unity. For too long, this appeal has been made. What is needed now is true leadership.

The federal government should have shown leadership by ensuring that government to government negotiations take place to resolve the outstanding land rights of first nations people. In addition, the Federal government should have urged the provinces to enshrine the constitutional measures that would protect the French language and culture in Quebec. Then a discussion should have been opened up across Canada on how to really change Canada to become a country where human rights are guaranteed, where the environment is protected and conserved, where conflict is prevented, where socially equitable and environmentally sound employment is enabled and where social justice is ensured.

#### HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROVISIONS AND PREVENTION OF DISEASE, AND NEED FOR ALTERNATIVES

In the Speech from the Throne, there was a commitment to maintain the universality, and comprehensiveness of the Canadian health care system; it was not clear if there would be a strong policy against a two-tier health care system. There was a commitment for increased funding but not sufficient funding.

There was no mention, in the Speech from the Throne, about the prevention of disease and the increasing number of diseases that have been environmentally-induced. In the Speech from the Throne, there was concern expressed about the health of Canadians; yet there were no proposed measures to ban the production and consumption of toxic, hazardous and atomic substances— including chemical pesticides, and other activities that contribute to environmentally induced health problems.

In the Speech from the Throne there was support for the international promotion of Canadian biotechnology. In many cases, it has been shown that biotechnology in areas such as genetically engineered foods and other genetically modified organisms, have introduced potential hazards to human health and the environment. There are many natural substances and herbs on the market which should be encouraged, and there was no indication that the current policy proposal of discouraging the use of safe alternatives to chemicals was to be revoked.

## RIGHTS NOT CHARITY

In the Speech from the Throne there was a call for addressing the issues of child poverty. Often, the language used suggests that what is needed is a charitable approach to those in need. However, Canada, in its signing and ratifying of the legally binding International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights, incurred an obligation to provide for the right to housing, the right to food, and the right to social security.

## MILITARY CONVERSION

In the Speech from the Throne, there was a call for the need to reform the military but no mention was made about the need to substantially decrease the current \$10 billion military budget. At least 50 % of this budget should be transferred into restoring health care education and the environment.

In the Speech from the Throne, the Governor General noted the benefits of the military to society: disaster rescue missions and coast guard activities; these services could and should be provided by a civilian body.

The rest of the military budget should be transferred to the promotion of peace through prevention of conflict.

No mention was also made of the discontinuing of weapons testing in Nanoose Bay and the discontinuing of nuclear powered vessels in Canadian Harbours.

## FIRST NATIONS ISSUES JUSTICE

In the Speech from the Throne, there was an undertaking to implement the Royal Commission report. Yet there was no firm timeline to rectify years of abuse, or to apologize for the abuse. In the Speech from the Throne, there was mention of June 21st having been proclaimed as National Aboriginal Day; evidently it was a hollow day when first nations peoples have been arrested and charged as criminals for protecting their land.

In 1992, Canada made a commitment to not do anything on the lands of indigenous peoples that would cause environmental destruction or be culturally inappropriate (Agenda 21, UNCED). Yet while Treaty negotiations are proceeding, destructive practices of multinational corporations are continuing on land under negotiation. .

## ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

In the Speech to the Throne, Canada's responsibility towards the environment was acknowledged but few concrete actions were proposed.

Even though Canada incurred an obligation to conserve biodiversity through the Convention of Biological Diversity, and to reduce CO2 emissions and conserve carbon sinks under the Framework Convention on Climate change. Canada has failed to carry out an environmental assessment review of activities that could contribute to the loss or

reduction of biodiversity; and Canada has made little effort to decrease CO2 emissions or other greenhouse gas emissions. Canada has even failed to enact the necessary statutory law that would enable Canada to discharge its obligation under the above conventions.

In addition, Canadian courts are granting injunctions to forest companies to continue destroying vital carbon sinks and arresting citizens that are protesting the destruction of forests and other carbon sinks.

In the speech from the Throne, there was an acknowledgment of the fact that we have a high percentage of global forests and water and that we have a responsibility to conserve the forests and water. The federal government, other corporate sympathetic administrations and provincial governments, however, show responsibility not for the natural heritage but for forests and water as sources of sustained income.

There appeared to be no resolve to move forward on endangered species legislation, and to enact strong legislation to ban substances and activities that are harmful to human health or that cause environmental destruction.

In addition, at recent international conferences such as UNCED and Habitat II, Canada undertook to move towards environmentally sound technology including environmentally sound energy and transportation.

The forest, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, biotechnological, agriculture, aquaculture and automobile, etc. industries have been permitted to determine government policy in the area of Conservation of biodiversity, and of reduction of CO2 emissions and the conservation of carbon sinks.

## SUSTAINING WILD FISH POPULATIONS

In the Speech from the Throne, there was reference to the impact of over fishing which has been and continues to be advocated by various levels of government. There was no mention, in the Speech from the Throne, about the destructive forest practices that have contributed to the loss and reduction of wild fish stocks. In addition, there was no mention of a precautionary approach towards aquaculture given the recent research in other parts of the world on the impact of fish farming on wild stocks. Where there is a potential of environmental degradation, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for not preventing the degradation.

## RIGHT TO NATURAL HERITAGE AND THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

In the Speech from the Throne, there was reference to the rights of future generations, and the need to set up youth job creation programs; along with crime prevention through social programs and alternative sentencing.

There was, unfortunately, no commitment in government policy to ensure that those who protect the rights of future generations to safe drinking water and natural heritage are not arrested in Canada. In addition, there was no assurance that the rights of

citizens arrested as a result of injunctions are respected as required under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights.

As early as 1972, in the Convention on the Protection of Culture and Natural Heritage, there was expressed an obligation to ensure the rights of future generations to natural heritage. Yet those who are protecting the rights of future generation are being arrested and treated as criminals when they stand on the road to preserve natural heritage.

#### SCIENCE FOR PEACE AND THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY

In the Speech from the Throne, there was a reference to the importance of fostering and promoting science. In 1975 there was a United Nations General Assembly Declaration that the "Use of Scientific technology should be for Peace and the Benefits of Humanity". Scientific technology in Canada is not being used expressly for peace and the benefits of humanity. Although, it was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, that Canada would undertake to eliminate its stockpile of land mines. Canada is still one of the major producers of weapons. It should also be noted that the continued mining of uranium has contributed to the nuclear arms industry. In addition, no mention was made of scientists who, because they are in the employ of governments or corporations, are not able to reveal damaging evidence because of fear of reprisals or loss of funding.

#### EDUCATION WITHOUT CORPORATE CONTROL

In the Speech from the Throne, there was considerable discussion about education; particularly higher education and "partnerships with industry". One serious result from the "centres of excellence" and other corporate funded university programs, is the close association between universities and the private sector to the point that the private sector is determining the philosophical underpinning of education and the direction of research.

#### PROMOTION AND SUPPORT OF INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Throughout the Speech from the Throne, there was a call for support for creativity and innovation yet there was no indication that the funding for the CBC would be increased so that Canada would continue to have an informed, innovative and creative public broadcasting system.

#### DE-LIBERALIZING TRADE

In the Speech from the Throne, there was the endorsement of the continued liberalization of trade.

A recent report indicated that the annual number of jobs created in Canada has considerably decreased since free trade. There is increasing concern about the continued impact of NAFTA and of the future impact of the Multilateral Agreement on

Investment (MAI). Both of these agreements undermine years of international agreements in the area of human rights, labour rights, environment, and social justice.

Canada has increased its corporate presence in other countries but often in the form of destructive environmental practices in mega energy projects, forestry, and mining. .

#### JOB CREATION IN THE AREA OF SOCIALLY EQUITABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND EMPLOYMENT

Throughout the Speech from the Throne, there was an emphasis on the need for job creation but there was no mention about the quality of jobs. Canadian citizens could be fully employed making CANDU reactors (each sale of a CANDU reactor creates about 25,000 jobs in Canada). Canada could become the gambling centre of North America. Canada could log all the old growth forests; Canada could continue to increase arms production etc., but is this what citizens of Canada want? What is needed is a well thought out employment program of job creation in socially equitable and environmentally sound development.

There was no support for a reduced work week which would enable the sharing of jobs and no indication that there would be a shift of subsidies away from the socially inequitable and environmentally unsound practices to promote practices that do it right the first time. Canada is becoming a nation of deregulation which permits the production of toxic, hazardous, and atomic substances and activities, and then the growth of an "environment industry" to clean up the waste.

#### MIXED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

In the Speech from the Throne, there was no mention of the need for electoral reform; given the discrepancy between the popular vote and the composition of parliament.

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