

MARCH 3, 2010

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

A STRONGER CANADA, A STRONGER ECONOMY, NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE

On March 3, 2010, Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, opened the Third Session of the 40th Parliament with Prime Minister Harper's Conservatives' Speech from the Throne. The Speech focused on successfully steering the country through the post-recession recovery, emphasizing job growth and a return to fiscal balance.

1. Phase Two of Canada's Economic Action Plan

The Government's top priority is to complete the second year of Canada's Action Plan. They will accomplish this through working with the provinces and territories to ensure the completion of projects over the next year.

2. Returning to Fiscal Balance

The speech indicated the Government will not cut transfers for health care, nor education, nor will it raise taxes. The Government will wind down stimulus spending to end by March 31, 2011.

The Government also plans to restrict overall federal program spending.

Legislation will be introduced to freeze the salaries of Members of Parliament as well as freeze departmental operating budgets, such as administration costs, overhead and total salary spending.

3. Building Jobs and Industries of the Future

The Government will launch a digital economy strategy to stimulate the adoption of new technology and to encourage new ideas. Canadian laws governing intellectual property will also be strengthened to encourage and protect the rights of Canadians whose research, development and artistic creativity contribute to the country's prosperity.

Government plans on keeping tax rates competitive and low, but will also take aggressive steps to close unfair tax loopholes. The Speech outlines that steps will be taken to increase opportunities for venture capital and foreign investment in



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key sectors, including the satellite and telecommunications industries. Specific to the uranium mining industry, the Government will ensure that unnecessary regulations do not inhibit its growth by unduly restricting foreign investment.

The Government promises an aggressive pursuit of free-trade and to build upon the recent agreement that gives Canadian companies permanent access to state and local government procurement in the United States.

The Speech points to the unique strength of Canada's financial industry that set us apart during the global financial crisis. The Government intends to build on this strength by making Canada a world financial centre. Furthermore, the Government will create a Canadian securities regulator.

In order to support development of Canada's energy and mineral resources, the Government will review the regulations that needlessly complicate project approval replacing them with simpler, clearer processes that offer improved environmental protection and greater certainty to the industry. The Government will also continue to invest in clean energy technologies by reviewing energy-efficiency and emissions-reduction programs to ensure they are effective.

The Government will reform the northern regulatory regime to ensure that the region's resource potential can be developed where commercially viable, while ensuring a better process for protecting our environment.

4. Making Canada the Best Place for Families

The Government will strengthen the Universal Child Care Benefit for sole-support, single-parent families.

To ensure protection from unsafe food, drug and consumer products, government will reintroduce the consumer product safety legislation in its original form, continue to strengthen Canada's food safety system, and ensure that families make informed decisions as it pertains to the production, importation and selling of goods by providing the necessary information.

The Government plans to hold accountable those who commit crimes by introducing laws that mandate prison sentences and focus on the further protection of women, children, and victims of white-collar crimes. The Government will also offer tangible support to innocent victims of crime and their families.

5. Climate Change

In recognizing integrated continental economic links, Government will work to reduce emissions through the Canada-U.S. Clean Energy Dialogue, launched last year, with President Obama's administration.

6. Commentary

There is nothing in the Speech that came as a surprise, or could trigger an election. The emphasis on job growth and cutting the deficit could just as easily been given by a Liberal government. The Prime Minister clearly is governing from the centre.

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