

MANITOBA

INCOME SECURITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA BELIEVES THAT ANY DISCUSSION OF INCOME SECURITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES MUST BE APPROACHED WITH TWO PRINCIPLES IN MIND, EACH OF WHICH OVERRIDES FISCAL AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AS WELL AS THOSE OF TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS.

EACH OF THESE PRINCIPLES, WE NOTE WITH PLEASURE ARE AT LEAST IMPLIED IN THE FEDERAL PAPER. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE, IN OUR OPINION, IS THAT THE PURPOSE OF ANY ARRANGEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF ANY DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS AMONG THE GOVERNMENTS OF CANADA AND OF ENSURING GOVERNMENTS THE MEANS TO CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, IS NOT THE CONVENIENCE OF GOVERNMENTS BUT RATHER THE CONVENIENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS WHICH THE GOVERNMENTS SERVE. PUT ANOTHER WAY, THESE ARRANGEMENTS MUST BE EXAMINED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF HOW WILL THEY SERVE THE PEOPLE.

THE PRINCIPLE WE SUGGEST IS STATED EFFECTIVELY ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE FEDERAL PAPER IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH WHICH EXPRESSES THE NECESSITY TO ENSURE THAT "THE EFFECTS OF REGIONAL DISPARITIES ON INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS ARE TO BE MINIMIZED".

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE WHICH WE INSIST UPON IS EXPRESSED IN THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF PAGE 2 OF THE FEDERAL PAPER, WHEREIN IT IS INDICATED THAT "THERE MUST BE STRONG AND EFFECTIVE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND THAT THEY MUST HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR PROVIDING THOSE SERVICES WHICH CONTRIBUTE MOST INTIMATELY TO THE DIRECT DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PROVINCES." AGAIN THE OPERATIVE WORD IS "INTIMATELY", THAT IS, WHERE THE SERVICES COME MOST DIRECTLY IN CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE. IF SHORT RESPONSIBILITIES MUST BE ALLOCATED ON THE BASIS OF WHICH JURISDICTION CAN

MOST EFFECTIVELY DELIVER THE SERVICES TO THE PEOPLE, RATHER THAN ON THE BASIS OF WHO IS BEST EQUIPPED, FISCALLY AND AND FINANCIALLY TO DO SO.

MANITOBA IS ALSO IN AGREEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THAT NATIONAL EQUITY IN THE PROVISION OF MAJOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES IS BEST INSURED BY PLACING NO LIMITS ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO TRANSFER REVENUES TO THE PROVINCES AND TO MAKE DIRECT PAYMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS.

HAVING SAID THAT, I MUST POINT OUT THAT THERE ARE AREAS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

FIRST OF ALL, THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA WISHES TO MAKE IT PLAIN THAT MANITOBA DOES NOT POSSESS A REVENUE BASE OF SUFFICIENT SIZE TO CARRY OUT SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, IN THE AREA OF INCOME SECURITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES ESPECIALLY, WITHOUT FEDERAL SUPPORT.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, IN MANITOBA'S OPINION EXHIBITS AN EXCESSIVELY MODEST CONCEPTION OF ITS OBLIGATIONS TO ASSIST PROVINCES IN MEETING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES IN THAT IT RESTRICTS ITSELF TO INTERVENING ONLY IN A CRISIS SITUATION.

IT IS MANITOBA'S POSITION THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD CO-OPERATE WITH THE PROVINCES TO PREVENT CRISIS SITUATIONS FROM DEVELOPING. THIS APPROACH WOULD IMPLY A MUCH LESS CLEAR DIVISION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, BUT IT WOULD INVOLVE A MUCH MORE HUMAN AND REALISTIC CONCEPT OF HOW GOVERNMENTS MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO THEIR PEOPLE. FOR THIS REASON AMONG OTHERS, MANITOBA ARGUES THAT WE SHOULD RESIST UNDUE SPECIFICITY IN CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL SYSTEM SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.

IT IS IN THIS LIGHT THAT THE FEDERAL PROPOSALS FOR TAX REFORM AFFECT THESE DISCUSSIONS. THE INCREASED PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIGH-COST SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMMING ADVOCATED IN THE PAPER WE ARE AT THIS MOMENT EXAMINING IS NOT MATCHED BY A PARALLEL RECOGNITION, IN THE WHITE PAPER, OF THE NEED FOR INCREASED AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF NATIONAL REVENUES.