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(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, February 2, 1994**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 2, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### BOSNIA

**Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, Martin H. Creegen of Kranj, Slovenia, sent the following letter to the *European* newspaper in January 1994:

The international community has created an impossible situation for itself in relation to Bosnia, especially when the presence of United Nations troops in the country is cited as the reason for not enforcing UN resolutions there. The need for a new approach could not be clearer—I suggest that the following provides the only basis for bringing peace to Bosnia.

Bosnia must be declared a UN protectorate for a specified period and administered by the UN.

All parties must immediately cease all military activity.

A large program for handing over arms and those accused of war crimes must be agreed and enforced.

A large scale program of civil reconstruction should be instituted immediately with the main emphasis being on cross cultural co-operation.

As soon as conditions allow, an all-Bosnia assembly must be elected under international supervision and on the basis of electoral units, not ethnic affiliation.

Pressure must be maintained on neighbouring countries, in particular Croatia and Serbia, to resolve inter-ethnic relations.

**The Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but her time is up.

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[Translation]

### DOMINION TEXTILE

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead):** Mr. Speaker, as the daily *La Tribune* was reporting today, it is

with great sadness that we learned yesterday that Dominion Textile was closing two factories in Quebec. Tremendous international competition and low demand would have prompted Dominion Textile to make such a decision.

The Domil spinning mill in Sherbrooke employed 275 workers averaging 40 years of age and 16 years of service. Losing a job when times are so hard and when you have devoted so many years of your life to it is a traumatic experience. I sympathize deeply with those laid-off workers and assure them of my support.

This new factory closing shows the urgency of initiating retraining measures for the workers in areas more and more affected by foreign competition. Not only is the federal government doing nothing in this regard, but it refuses to recognize that vocational training would be better off under the jurisdiction of the government of Quebec, the only one able to take efficient steps in this area.

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[English]

### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I have been receiving a growing number of letters from constituents regarding unemployment insurance premiums and benefits, one of which reads as follows:

As an unemployed person who is required to pay unemployment insurance premiums, I am incensed at the recent government decision to increase premium rates instead of reducing program costs. My after tax dollars are scarce to begin with, I don't need them shrunken further!

Unemployment insurance should provide only benefits for people who find themselves unexpectedly out of work. I cannot afford all the other benefits the government seems to want to build into the system.

The letter lists seven items which the writer thinks should be cut. I will provide a copy of that to the appropriate minister.

The letter concludes:

As the Member of Parliament for my riding, I request your support in making the unemployment insurance system more effective and affordable.

S. O. 31

### GENERATION X

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, the other day my colleague, the Minister of Human Resource Development, used the term generation *x*. Generation *x* refers to young people in Canada who are frustrated with bleak employment prospects and concerned about the value of their education with respect to career opportunities available to them.

(1405)

In addition to the social challenges facing the youth, generation *x* finds itself wondering why they must shoulder the burden of the nation's economic woes which were caused by the previous generation. In short they are asking: "What about us?"

The youth of today are tired of means to no end education and aspire to more than mere part time jobs. It is time to make a change.

The government is committed to the youth of Canada and must certainly reflect that in the next budget through initiatives such as the youth service corps, job training, the national literacy program and increased funding for aboriginal post-secondary education. The government will substantiate its commitment not only to generation *x* but to future generations as well.

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### TOBACCO PRODUCTS

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, there are those who use the tax on tobacco as an excuse to break the law, and there are those who invoke civil disobedience as an excuse to break the law.

When Henry Thoreau staged civil disobedience, it was to protest the American civil war.

When Mahatma Gandhi staged civil disobedience, it was to free the people of India from colonialism.

When Martin Luther King staged civil disobedience, it was to free the American blacks from racial discrimination.

However when smugglers deliberately violate the law for money and others invoke civil disobedience to protest our tax laws on cigarettes, it is pure greed.

We cannot surrender the supremacy of law to the lawless. We must apply the law of our land to every part and parcel of our country.

Decreasing taxes on tobacco will increase the consumption of cigarettes, causing disabilities, human suffering, a lifetime of addiction and premature death.

The present and future health of the newborn, children, teenagers and adults—all of us—are in the hands of a healthy government public health policy.

Let Parliament rally our citizens and remind them that those who break the law hurt their neighbours, their friends, their families and our nation.

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### WIARTON WILLY

**Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about one of the residents of my riding of Bruce—Grey, the famous Warton Willy. He resides in the town of Warton which is a short distance away from the beautiful Bruce Peninsula Park of Tobermory.

Warton Willy has a unique characteristic in that he was born on the 45th parallel which is between the equator and the North Pole, and because of this he has the facility of forecasting. Warton Willy happens to be a white albino groundhog and this morning the mayor of Warton and a group of dignitaries, all dressed in white tuxedos, ventured out to speak to Warton Willy at his burrow. They brought with them a space heater and Willy came out and did his thing.

Unfortunately I have to inform the House that he saw his shadow and so we have another six weeks of winter. I visited with Willy before the election and I want to tell the House that his predictions are good nine times out of ten. He predicted that I was going to win the election.

Congratulations to the Warton Lions Club for the kickoff of the 38th Groundhog Festival.

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[Translation]

### SHIPYARD IN LAUZON

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans):** Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to the solidarity of the Magdalen Islands people so that they support right now the ferry building project of the MIL Davie shipyard.

The shipyard is capable of responding to the needs of the Magdalen Islands people and of providing a comfortable, reliable and secure ship that will be able to move through the ice in the St. Laurent Gulf. The Bloc Québécois is convinced that the Magdalen Islands people will see the opportunity of reconciling these needs with the urgency of maintaining 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in the greater area of Quebec City.

Why should we pay for the importation of a ferry from Europe or elsewhere when we have the manpower and the facilities necessary to built it ourselves? In these difficult economic times, it is vital that the decisions that we make reinforce Quebec's economic activity in the interests of all Quebecers.

The Magdalen Islands people are proud and self-supporting. They are well capable of taking charge of their own economic, social and cultural destiny.

S. O. 31

[English]

**NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA WINTER GAMES**

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform Canadians of a very special event that will take place in the Prince George—Peace River riding from February 4 to February 6. I am referring to the 20th annual Northern B.C. Winter Games taking place in the city of Fort St. John.

(1410)

The games provide an opportunity for athletes in the north to compete with one another and form lasting friendships. The Northern B.C. Winter Games encourage participation from competitors of all ages, from youths to seniors. All of them demonstrate the sportsmanship and competitive spirit which have made these games such a great success.

It is particularly appropriate that Fort St. John should host the event this year, as the city is celebrating its 200th anniversary. Please join with me in extending congratulations to my home town of Fort St. John and in wishing these dedicated athletes every possible success.

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**THE LATE JUDY ROSE MCKAY**

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the contributions of a courageous leader in the fight against kidney disease. Judy Rose McKay, 46, of Woodstock, New Brunswick, died on Sunday, January 23.

One of the longest survivors of a kidney transplant in Canada, Judy McKay served as the first president of the local and provincial chapters of the Kidney Foundation of Canada. A founding member of the Lorna Morse Chapter of the Kidney Foundation of Canada, Judy was always concerned for the welfare of others and leading the way in the fight against kidney disease.

On behalf of my family and friends, the constituents of Carleton—Charlotte, and my colleagues in the House of Commons I respectfully offer my condolences to the family and friends of a local hero.

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**TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

**Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that steps must be taken to address the issue of tobacco smuggling in Canada. It is my opinion that the government can succeed in substantially reducing it, without rolling back tobacco taxes.

A multifaceted approach must be adopted that includes the reintroduction of the highly effective federal export tax, tougher enforcement measures, restrictions on the amount of tobacco

that can be shipped to the United States, measures to prevent manufacturers from shifting production elsewhere in order to supply the contraband market, and increased pressure on the U.S. government to bring their cigarette prices into line with our own.

Relying on a tax rollback is a public health risk that will lead to increased health care costs as rates of consumption rise. The loss in tax revenues will further add to the deficit problems being faced by every level of government in the country.

I feel that the health of Canadians and the health of our economy must be primary considerations in developing a strategy to end tobacco smuggling.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SAINT-AUGUSTIN LAKE SEAPLANE BASE**

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, the seaplane base on Lake Saint-Augustin, Portneuf county, has been progressively surrounded by residential areas. Its activities are no longer compatible with its location.

I know the Minister of Transport has received pressing requests from the municipality of Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, from the Quebec urban community and from other municipalities in the Quebec region, all asking that the base be relocated.

Cap-Santé and surrounding municipalities would like to have an airport and a seaplane base in their area. What is a problem for Saint-Augustin could very well be an opportunity for Cap-Santé. Therefore, I ask the Minister of Transport to do a feasibility study on such a project and I assure him of my unfailing co-operation in this matter.

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[English]

**FRUIT GROWERS**

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt):** Mr. Speaker, the Okanagan Valley ships apples, pears, peaches and fruit of all kinds around the world. Our producers have become world leaders in the industry and strides forward continue to be made.

From January 26 through January 28 the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association held a major convention in Penticton. It was highly successful and brought many fruit growers together to discuss issues that are important to the industry, such as the impact of the NAFTA, the GATT and advances in new technologies.

Over the last 100 years, B.C. fruit growers have invested their capital, their ideas and their hard work to become a world leader in fruit growing. It is again proof that Canadians can compete and win against the best in the world.

*Oral Questions***CANADA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough):** Mr. Speaker, Trent University in Peterborough is the smallest university in Ontario but its students consistently perform well in national and international scholarship programs.

Trent maintained this record of excellence in this year's Canada Scholarship Program.

The Canada Scholarship Program was established to encourage young people, especially women, to undertake careers in science. Trent students have a fine record in the program.

(1415)

This year 34 students, more than half of them women, won Canada scholarships. They were drawn from academic departments which span the sciences from social and environmental to physical.

A special feature of science at Trent is the flexibility of students in selecting programs which involve creative combinations of disciplines. This flexibility is producing young scientists who are well trained in their specialities but who have a broad range of interests. This approach is going to stand Canada well in the 21st century.

I am sure members of the House join me in congratulating all young Canadians who won Canada scholarship awards this year.

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**KEMANO PROJECT**

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the issue of the Kemano completion project. The previous government's handling of this issue was improper and showed little respect for fishing groups, environmental groups and First Nations.

The government deserves praise, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in particular, for efforts to improve relations with these constituent groups. To date, the present government has committed to a full public airing of the issue by participating in the British Columbia Utilities Commission public hearing on the matter.

The present government is prepared to make available its expertise, to open its files and to make federal officials available as expert witnesses in these hearings.

I would suggest, however, that if we should find the province's inquiry is too narrow in its scope to cover the balancing of interests involved, the federal government should keep in reserve the possibility of a federal judicial inquiry into the matter.

**TUBERCULOSIS**

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government announcement yesterday to spend \$2.8 million in an effort to eliminate tuberculosis from aboriginal communities by the year 2010 is commendable. The incidence of infectious TB in native communities is alarming and a serious problem that has to be addressed. However, while diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis are important, attacking the root causes is perhaps more important.

The real problems in aboriginal communities of poor housing, water and sewage treatment, problems that contribute to the growing incidence of TB, are still largely ignored by this government.

In recognizing the seriousness of the health related concerns of aboriginal people, I ask the government to take the next important step and implement some of the many recommendations of the 1992 aboriginal affairs committee report on housing appropriately entitled "A Time for Action". Indeed it is time to act.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[Translation]

**CIGARETTE SMUGGLING**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

The protest movement against cigarette smuggling is spreading, but anti-smoking groups are opposed to any reduction in taxes on cigarettes.

Meanwhile, the government procrastinates and does nothing to put an end to the serious social problem cigarette smuggling in particular has become in Quebec. Yesterday, two Liberal members publicly said they were opposed to cuts in cigarette taxes, while the Minister of National Health and Welfare was equally reluctant.

My question is this: Must we conclude that the government is taking such a long time to announce its action plan against cigarette smuggling because of profound divisions within Cabinet and the Liberal caucus on the Prime Minister's plans to reduce this tax?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we have been working on this problem for a number of weeks. We are in touch with the provincial governments. I intend to discuss the problem early next week with the Premier of Quebec, as soon as he gets back from his trip, and also with others who are now absent.

I was speaking to several provincial premiers this morning, and we hope to reach a conclusion on the issue as soon as possible.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, for nearly three weeks we have asked the government repeatedly to take some kind of action. And what kind of answer did we get today? One of the people involved is in Europe, others are absent, people are talking and waiting and they tell us there may be a decision shortly.

Does the Prime Minister agree that the high tax on cigarettes, by encouraging smuggling, has in fact made cigarettes available to a class of smokers who are now more numerous than ever before and who on top of that are not helping to finance health care?

(1420)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it would be very helpful if we could get a clear position from the opposition. The other day, the health critic made it clear to the Minister of National Health and Welfare that he did not want tax rates to be reduced. It would also be very helpful if the Leader of the Opposition asked his members not to join demonstrations with individuals who are breaking the law in Canada.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau, to whom the Prime Minister alluded, made it clear that he dissociated himself from any civil disobedience. He made this quite clear. However, in the Liberal caucus we hear voices telling us where to look and who these people are and that the Solicitor General knows nothing, although he has access to the RCMP.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the Prime Minister that all members of the Bloc, without exception, support tax cuts. I want to repeat that. And I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he still agrees it is necessary to lower these taxes, as recommended by his Minister of Finance and Minister of National Revenue.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see the Leader of the Opposition does not agree with his health critic. We noted that he clearly said he was in favour of reducing taxes. In fact, it is the first time he said so, and this will help us when we make a decision.

As for the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau, I do not think any of our members went on television to announce that they supported people who break the law and to applaud and praise them for doing so. People who break the law should be harshly condemned by all members of this House.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I heard today, and I will repeat it for the benefit of the Prime Minister,

that six white vans loaded with smuggled cigarettes crossed the ice bridge on Lake of Two Mountains, heading for the 10 outlets selling smuggled cigarettes in the Oka area.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Does he realize that his refusal to take action and the incompetence of his government are contributing to destabilize Quebec society as a whole?

[*English*]

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as the Solicitor General said in the House yesterday, instructions have been given to RCMP officers to do their job and to arrest anybody who is not following the laws of the land.

If the hon. member is aware of some information that can be very useful to the RCMP, he should give it to me and I will pass it on to the RCMP.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** It would be a good idea to give the RCMP a subscription to *La Presse*.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister not recognize that the inefficiency of his government and its refusal to take action have allowed cigarette smugglers to expand their network into Quebec high schools?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy for the opposition to lay the blame on this government which has been in office for two months and a half. We gave orders and, as a result, several people were arrested. But the problem is not new. It started with the intolerance of the Conservative government. In those days the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Tory cabinet.

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[*English*]

## TAXATION

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Would the Prime Minister tell the House whether he believes his government has a clear mandate from the public to expand the tax base and the total tax bill paid by Canadians?

(1425)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the mandate we received from the Canadian people is based on the program in the red book which was distributed across the land, that we have to improve the situation in Canada, create jobs, create growth and make sure at the same time that the tax system is fair for all Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.

Thousands of participants in RRSPs—contributors, financial institutions and recipients—wish to make direct and effective representation to the government to dissuade it from reducing contribution levels.

Is the government willing to receive and respond to these representations prior to finalizing the 1994–95 budget?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Reform Party has to wait a few weeks for the budget that will be introduced by the Minister of Finance.

I hope the Minister of Finance will not take the idea proposed by the Reform Party leader who wants us to cut the pensions of old age pensioners.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I have one further supplementary question.

Thousands of customers, investors and workers involved in the production, distribution and consumption of fossil fuels wish to make direct and effect representation to the government to dissuade it from instituting a carbon tax.

Is the government willing to receive and respond to these representations prior to finalizing its 1994–95 budget?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, I must say the first time I heard somebody raise the issue of a carbon tax was when it was raised by the leader of the Reform Party.

I would also say that when I was in Calgary I met with groups on that particular issue. I am certainly prepared between now and the date of the budget to meet with other groups.

I would tell the leader of the Reform Party that there have been very strong representations made to me by the members of the Alberta caucus, led by the Minister of Natural Resources.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SOCIAL PROGRAMS**

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have clearly stated that substantial budget cuts will be made next year. The Minister of Human Resources Development is also announcing that his social program review will result in a restructuring of these programs during the next year.

Is the Minister prepared to concede, in spite of his magnanimous remarks, that this strange coincidence gives all Canadians much cause for concern as to the extent of the cuts that will be made to social programs?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, what we have been saying together is that there are much more effective ways of delivering government services.

In particular I point out to the hon. member that in discussions with provinces there are many ways to eliminate the repetition or duplication of services and to work out more rational ways of delivering services.

These are all parts of our efforts and attempts to have a new partnership of federalism in Canada so that not only can we begin to save taxpayers' money but we can also give better service.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.

Will the Prime Minister recognize, in spite of the laudable comments of the Minister of Human Resources Development, that the government is preparing to impose its views on the provinces through the extremely powerful medium of the upcoming renegotiation of various transfer programs? Will he concede that his views will prevail in the social program reform process?

(1430)

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, the provinces are not being pressured. On the contrary, they are asking the federal government to respond to their efforts to develop new approaches to the social security system.

It is the Bloc Quebecois, in this House, that is rejecting the reform process, thereby isolating itself on this issue. Surely you are aware that all of the Quebec newspapers, *Le Soleil*, *Le Droit* and others, have published articles stating that the time for reform is now.

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[English]

**CANADA ELECTIONS ACT**

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last year the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench struck down the parts of the Canada Elections Act that restrict spending on election advertising by anybody other than political parties to just \$1,000.

*Oral Questions*

The court ruled that these restrictions could not be justified in a free and democratic society. Is it the government's plan to restore faith and trust in the process by abandoning any appeal of this case and by amending the Canada Elections Act to reflect the court ruling?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, we believe this case involves very important issues. Therefore we think it appropriate that this matter be tested further by a higher court, the Supreme Court of Canada.

The issues are of sufficient importance that whatever the Alberta court of appeal has ruled, Canadians deserve to have this matter dealt with by the Supreme Court of Canada if it is willing to accept the appeal.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister believe the restrictions imposed in the act as it presently stands are compatible with a fair and open political process?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think yes. Many people would like to influence the result of an election but do not have the guts to run. They use the power of their money to try to gain that influence.

I want to make sure the people can make a choice in an election that is based not on the amount of money that is spent but on the quality of the programs and the candidates of every party.

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[Translation]

**MANPOWER TRAINING**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. The game goes on between Quebec and Ottawa regarding an agreement, yet another agreement, on manpower training. Yesterday evening, the Quebec employment minister announced that an agreement was imminent, a statement that the Minister of Human Resources Development immediately denied. This morning, the Minister from Quebec qualified his statement.

Can the minister confirm that no agreement on job training was reached with Quebec, in spite of what the Quebec minister of employment said?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I had a positive discussion with Mr. Marcil on Monday evening. We see eye to eye on the importance of an extensive restructuring of the social security system. We share the same determination to fight unemployment. We agree that the one-stop concept, similar to what we have now in New

Brunswick, is a valid goal as far as the provinces are concerned. That is what Mr. Marcil said not so long ago.

Indeed, we will first report to our respective Cabinets on our discussion and then, at the provincial ministers' meeting to be held on February 14, we could suggest together some ideas on how to save money and develop a new approach to deal with unemployment and poverty. As you know, in Canada, we generally work together.

(1435)

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, we do work together, but we generally do not have much to show for it.

Can the minister confirm that the two to three month deadline announced by the Quebec minister yesterday—because he did mention that yesterday as well—is the same for Ottawa? Are we to understand that these negotiations are nothing more than a smokescreen put up by the two ministers to prevent this issue from being discussed during the public consultations that will be held at the same, as it were, as a possible election campaign in Quebec? Is that the minister's strategy?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, it may be the strategy of the Bloc Québécois to try to fight a provincial election in this Chamber. We are interested in actually solving the problems of unemployment. We are interested in a partnership with the provinces.

We are interested in developing a new sense of co-operation and federalism and that was the basis for the discussion with the Quebec minister, as it has been with all the provincial ministers. They have agreed to come together for a meeting on February 14 so we can establish new arrangements.

If members of the Bloc Québécois want to play election politics that is their business. We are interested in getting Canadians back to work.

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**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the representative on the Board of Internal Economy. In view of the Speaker's ruling on January 31, will the representative on the board undertake to discuss the subject of extra salaries with the board with a view to doing three things.

First, agreeing on a procedure for making all such expenditures—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair is having a little difficulty. If the member could phrase the question a little more generally it would be acceptable. We have someone here to answer the question. Please continue.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Ringma:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I cannot phrase it generally because it is quite specific. It goes back to the discussion we had in this Chamber on Friday, January 28, which was ruled on—

**The Speaker:** Order. We will let the member put the question and then I will rule on it.

**Mr. Ringma:** Mr. Speaker, to reiterate I would ask the representative on the board to do three things. First, to agree on a procedure with that board for making all such expenditure decisions public.

Second, to rule that June 9, 1993 decision of the Board of Internal Economy to pay those extra salaries to members not entitled to them was wrong.

Third, to report their findings to this House.

**The Speaker:** I am going to permit a reply from the government whip.

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, I will take his question as a representation to the board. However I would like to remind the member that his own party has a representative on the board. Maybe he should make a similar representation to the board.

The board will decide because the board is its own master. The decision taken to continue to pay the leaders of the parties and officers of the House is a decision that is made before all elections. Members of Parliament continue to get paid during the election so officers, who have extra duties to perform even during an election, also get paid.

(1440)

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. whip for his response to the question.

For the edification of the House, the reason I bring this matter to the House—

**The Speaker:** I am sure the hon. member is going to put a question. I wonder if he would put it forthwith.

**Mr. Ringma:** Would the hon. whip not agree it is better to present information in the House openly like this rather than through our party representative? In that way it is presented to the public as a whole and not hidden in messages.

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, again I take his question as a representation. I will report his comments to the board at the next meeting.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SOCIAL HOUSING**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Today, hundreds of people living in inadequate housing took their personal budgets to the office of the Finance Minister. The objective of this operation is to show the Liberal government that serious housing problems are being created in Canada. Every month, thousands of households must save on food just to pay the rent.

Will the Prime Minister make his Finance Minister restore and increase social housing program budgets and unfreeze the budget of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to avoid a social housing rent increase?

**Hon. David C. Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

[English]

The hon. member must recognize that the responsibility for social housing is not just with the federal government. We have committed \$100 million to RRAP over two years. We have also committed the savings under the direct lending program which is approximately \$120 million for a four-year period to go to social housing. In addition, the Government of Canada is committed to the \$2 billion that we have directly involved in maintaining the existing stock in social housing across this country.

The hon. member knows that the Government of Canada, like all other governments, has a limited fiscal capacity. Within that fiscal capacity we will do our best to try to obtain additional funds in order to address the important concerns she raises.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question, again to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister know that all social, co-operative, low-cost and non-profit housing programs have been frozen and that housing conditions for tenants in his hometown of Shawinigan are among the worst in Canada? Does he know that?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I know very well that between 1988 and 1993 the riding of Saint-Maurice was represented by a Conservative member of Parliament. So we will now be able to take better care of it.

\* \* \*

[English]

**LAW OF THE SEA**

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the most distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs. It has to do with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which, if implemented, would go a long way in protecting oceans, in improving fisheries and in reducing the dangers of pollution.

*Oral Questions*

Ratification by 60 nations is needed to make the law of the sea operative. So far some 57 nations have ratified this important document.

Will the minister inform the House when Canada, after nine years of inaction, will ratify the law of the sea?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, let me first of all compliment the hon. member for his active effort in this regard. As an opposition member he fought very vigorously to try to impress on the Tory government the necessity to ratify this convention.

As the member understands, there are a few difficulties in regard to the convention. We are diligently working to improve it and will hopefully be able to ratify it in the near future.

\* \* \*

(1445)

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has refused to allow members to represent their constituents by having free votes in this Parliament. He has said in effect that such a reform would be contrary to parliamentary democracy. However the mother of Parliaments in London has already adopted this reform.

When will the Prime Minister announce that the government will not consider the defeat of a government motion, including a spending measure, to constitute an expression of non-confidence unless it is immediately followed by a formal motion of non-confidence?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we have already announced some new initiatives for this House with the free debates. We have had three so far in less than three weeks: one on Bosnia, one on the cruise missile and one on the budget. People were free to express their views. I heard some members of my party stating views that were in opposition to others. That is free expression.

Eventually a government has to decide. The budget of the nation is a vote of confidence in the government. If the government cannot present a budget and pass it, it should call an election. It is as simple as that because the government will have lost the confidence of the House.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin):** Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of record that the British Parliament defeated the Maastricht treaty without any disastrous results or damage to the democratic process.

Would the Prime Minister tell Canadians why they should settle for any less democracy than the people of Britain?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hon. member, the Maastricht vote was not a budgetary measure. It was voted on again in the House in England and eventually was passed.

It is not the same thing. The vote was on a more general policy. It was not on the budget of the administration in Great Britain. When a vote is on the budget it is confidence in the government.

I have full confidence that the Minister of Finance will present a good budget and I know the party will support him. We were elected to form a good government and have good ministers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### POLICY ON APPOINTMENTS

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The Prime Minister has said many times that he wants to restore integrity in federal institutions. In this regard, the previous government had instituted a new policy for appointments to management positions in public agencies, in particular by giving parliamentary committees the right to approve appointments in a free, binding vote.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage explain to this House why this policy has been changed and why candidates for the position of President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation had to send their résumés to the Prime Minister's Office, to the official in charge of appointments, who is a long-standing Liberal Party activist and wife of the defence minister?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member thinks that some policies have changed, perhaps it is because the government has changed. However, I will point out to her that all Canadians have been invited, through an announcement in *The Canada Gazette*, to propose candidates for the presidency of this great institution, the CBC.

As for the choice of president, I would refer her to a short statement I made on January 27, 1994, which she will find on page 454 of *Hansard*.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, besides publishing the required qualifications and saying that the appointment of the president of the CBC will be announced shortly, can the minister reassure the House that the appointment of the next president of the CBC will be subject to a parliamentary committee for approval in a free, binding vote, as the previous government promised?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, I am not an expert on parliamentary procedure, but I understand that the new president, once he is appointed, will

*Oral Questions*

have an opportunity to appear before the parliamentary committees concerned. That is how we intend to proceed.

\* \* \*

(1450)

[English]

**LABOUR DISPUTE**

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

The longshoreman's labour dispute on the west coast has taken a devastating toll on the agricultural sector in western Canada.

Canadian grain and alfalfa industries are losing products, customers, sales and millions of dollars because of this dispute. Farmers and alfalfa processors have asked me to ask the minister if they can ship their products through U.S. ports and still benefit under the Western Grain Transportation Act.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member will approve, as I think most members of the House will, that today the parties are back at the negotiating table with the help of a federal mediator. We hope that under those circumstances they realize their mutual responsibilities to come to a settlement.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

If mediation is not successful I would like to remind the minister that back in 1986 the government legislated the longshoremen back to work.

The hon. member then represented Winnipeg—Fort Garry, now Winnipeg South Centre. He said at that time: "We would support the bill primarily and fundamentally because of the situation faced by western farmers".

Will the government make the same commitment today to legislate the west coast longshoremen back to work under these circumstances?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, your namesake is an experienced member of the legislature and he would know that any statement of that kind would have a very negative effect on the bargaining process.

It would be unseemly for the member to make that suggestion. Certainly it would be for those responsible for labour. As I said at the outset, we believe that the collective bargaining process is the way to settle labour-management disputes. We offered our services. We have the good fortune that the parties have under-

stood that message, have come back to the table and they are now using a federal mediator.

I hope the hon. member and his party would be supportive of what is clearly the kind of process we should follow in a good private enterprise system.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TAX CUT ON TOBACCO**

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. For two weeks now, we have been talking here in this House about cigarette smuggling, which is causing major problems, like an upsurge in crime and civil disobedience.

It is high time for Canadians to face reality. As a physician, I am very concerned about the unavoidable lowering of taxes on cigarettes, since that would undoubtedly encourage young people to take up smoking. However, as a parliamentarian, I cannot help but to consider decreasing taxes to put a stop to this social and economic evil.

If the taxes on cigarettes are lowered, can the Minister of Health tell us if she intends to introduce preventive measures to fight the increase in smoking among young Canadians? If so, what would these measures be?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, we have to acknowledge that cigarette smoking is bad for us. I am ready to suggest serious measures which would target the population at risk and especially our young people. I have also instructed my department to review the relevant pieces of legislation under my authority to see how we can put more teeth into them.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. After the comments made recently by the Auditor General of Canada to the effect that the Canadian International Development Agency was misusing its resources, an internal study done by CIDA, and made public by the CTV network, reveals that more than 80 per cent of the 1,400 Canadian advisors abroad are incompetent.

(1455)

Can the minister tell us what he has done so far to stop this wasting of public money?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the hon. member's allegation to the effect that the interview shown on the CTV network referred to an internal study done by CIDA. The study was conducted seven

years ago by an external consultant and refers to a behaviour which clearly is associated with another era.

It is true that the Auditor General criticized in rather strong terms some CIDA programs, but he also congratulated all those who work in that field for the good will, the integrity and the efficiency they display in most situations.

It is unfortunate that some, like the member opposite, insist on a few bad cases and forget the importance of international development throughout the world.

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us that he will not, in spite of what he says, take advantage of a case of mismanagement to make drastic cuts to the funds granted to CIDA and thereby jeopardize its whole mandate?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that the previous government, without any notice or consultation, made a 10 per cent cut in CIDA's budget, thereby adversely affecting many non-governmental organizations which are active everywhere in the world and which complement the work of the Canadian International Development Agency.

I can assure the hon. member that we want to cut what is called the fat in the federal administration, but that we will be very careful and try to maintain, as much as possible, the budgets earmarked for non-governmental organizations working throughout the world.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Late last year the minister announced that he will undertake a major review of the Canadian military to determine what defence forces Canada needs in the new world order. Our party supports the need for such a review.

Could the minister explain to the House why he is now preparing to close military bases across Canada before this review is complete?

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, in the Liberal Party's red book we talked about a defence review which will be completed later this year with the policy announced probably January 1995.

In the meantime, the red book also talks about the need for \$1.6 billion worth of savings from the defence department. These savings will help pay for some of the spending programs such as the infrastructure program to create jobs.

#### Oral Questions

We have a balanced approach. The Prime Minister talked about this earlier in question period. We have to move now because the Minister of Finance wants to know how much we can cut and where before April 1 when the fiscal year starts.

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

The Reform Party applauds the signs of fiscal responsibility on the part of the government. Few would disagree that the review is likely to require the closing of several bases.

How can the minister decide which bases to close before the review is complete?

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, to cut \$1.6 billion starting April 1 means that we have to make some long range decisions. If we make cuts at the sharp end of the military, i.e. the ability of the military to conduct itself as a true fighting strength and discharge obligations that will be outlined in the defence review, then obviously we are hurting it before we actually decide on the policy.

(1500)

We are trying to deal with excess infrastructure and surplus capacity, much of which has not been dealt with by previous governments for obvious political and sensitive reasons. We hope to deal with any communities and individuals affected in a most sensitive manner.

I believe all hon. members of the House will probably support us in the drive to bring some efficiency and rationalization to the armed forces. Later this year the defence review will be able to outline the policies required for the military in the year 2000 but will have the ability to discharge those obligations.

\* \* \*

#### AIR-INDIA

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

On June 23, 1985 an Air-India flight was blown out of the sky off the coast of Ireland. The 329 people on board were murdered, the majority of whom were Canadian. It was the worst mass murder in Canadian history.

Press reports now indicate that one of the alleged murderers was trained at a Soldier of Fortune training camp in Birmingham, Alabama, and further that the U.S. government agreed to train terrorists at the request of the late President Zia of Pakistan.

Could the minister explain why Mr. Frank Camper, the operator of the Soldier of Fortune Training School, was not interviewed by the RCMP? Given the rather unfortunate and tragic history of this matter, would he agree that it is now time for a royal commission of inquiry as we promised in the last Parliament?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised an important question.

I am informed that Mr. Camper was questioned by the FBI on behalf of the RCMP. I am further informed that the RCMP investigation is still active and ongoing. Therefore I would like to keep the idea of a royal commission under consideration.

However because of the long and distinguished study by the hon. member into this tragic matter, I would like to have him meet with me as soon as possible so that together we can pursue the matter further.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Dr. Paul Robertson, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, prior to the tabling of the minister's statement, I would like to make you aware that by agreement of the House leaders we had hoped to have a copy of the statement three hours prior to its introduction in the House.

That was not forthcoming and we are very concerned. We understand this is a new process for a new government. We wish to be most co-operative, but we would expect more notice and to have these statements brought to our attention sooner in the future. If it does not happen then we will be bringing it to your attention, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I am sure the hon. House leaders and the whips have taken note of the member's comments.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table on behalf of government, in both official languages, the 1994 immigration levels.

**EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development):** Mr. Speaker, I am tabling, in both official languages, copies of Unemployment Insurance Developmental Uses: 1994 Expenditure Plan and copies of the annual report of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission Department for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993.

\* \* \*

(1505)

**IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of our government and accord our other political friends on the other side to respond with respect to the levels document I just tabled for Parliament.

Immigration policy represents one of the most important and complex challenges facing our nation. Perhaps more than any other area of federal public policy, it is closely tied to our history, to the development of our values and indeed to our cultural diversity.

*[Translation]*

I want to put in place an open and progressive immigration policy that does not close the door to those who need our help or plan to contribute to the growth of our country. This government is committed to maintaining a very dynamic immigration program.

*[English]*

I am also committed to a realistic immigration policy. In the 1994 levels plan we are presenting today, I have identified realistic targets and I will push the program and our officials to achieve these targets, something that has not been done in recent years.

The levels also take into account the views expressed during the consultation process in 1993 before this government assumed office. Nevertheless we have made important changes to specific components, and all of these changes reflect the commitment this party made in the red book during the recent election which fully supports an immigration policy firmly based on family reunification while at the same time promoting the economic benefits of skilled immigrants and maintaining our humanitarian obligations to those who seek legitimate refuge.

You cannot discuss levels, whether it is this year or next, without looking and talking about the long term policy directives of our government.

*[Translation]*

Like most Canadians I want our immigration program to be managed in a firm and responsible manner. I intend to prevent

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abuse, protect citizens' interests and limit costs. However, I do not agree with those who say that our generosity should give way to a tougher immigration approach.

[*English*]

Sometimes we forget or ignore the role that immigrants and immigration have played in the development of our great nation. Sometimes it does not take too long for the sons and daughters and grandchildren of immigrants, for instance, to look at the newcomers today and not see one of us but one of them.

Periodically throughout our history, especially during economic downturns—and we have lived through those in the recent years, to be sure—there have been calls to slam the door shut to immigrants and immigration. Regrettably that sentiment at various times has been translated by governments into restricted laws and policies.

Canada would not have flourished or progressed if we had locked ourselves into such a restrictive mindset that excluded the very people who have helped make us grow and prosper as a nation. At the same time, an immigration program must be effectively controlled and managed. Rules and regulations must and will be enforced. Attempts to abuse our immigration program at the expense of Canadians or at the expense of people who truly need Canada's assistance will not be tolerated.

Second, I believe decisions about immigration should be made from the perspective of a long term rather than narrow version. It is not enough to make those decisions with a view to short term gain or as a quick fix or to make decisions based on perception or mythology. Decisions made today have implications for future generations in our country. Therefore we need a clear and practical vision of the kind of nation we want to build and build for our children.

(1510)

[*Translation*]

Third, I think Canadians should be offered a better chance to participate in the development of this vision. Consultations have been too limited in my opinion. Too many Canadians did not have their say in the process. As our immigration policy takes shape in the next 10 years, we will be faced with issues affecting the lives of all Canadians.

[*English*]

Fourth, I am convinced that we need stronger partnership with all levels of government and private sector organization in the delivery of our immigration programs. Let me assure my colleagues in this House that in the first 100 days of this government's mandate we have already begun to forge those very and much needed partnerships.

All of these principles underlie the 1994 immigration plan. While these levels would normally have been tabled last June in a previous Parliament, that session was not recalled. Consequently legislation requires that in such a case the plan be tabled within 15 days of the sitting of the new Parliament, which is what we are doing this afternoon.

However, the government's commitments regarding immigration are already well known. They were set out clearly in the red book during the recent election. The 1994 plan meets our basic commitment to support a dynamic immigration policy that balances humanitarian concerns, demographic and economic needs and our basic capacity to absorb our newcomers.

The highlights of the 1994 plan are as follows: Planned immigration levels for 1994 will be set at 250,000, thereby honouring our pledge to maintain an immigration level of approximately 1 per cent of Canada's population. That represents an increase of some 5,000 over the actual numbers in 1993.

Second, in this International Year of the Family, the level for family class immigrants will increase by 1,300 over last year to a total of 111,000. Consequently the family class portion of immigration will roughly represent 45 per cent of the overall levels in 1994—again, another commitment that this government made in the red book.

Moreover, the level for independent immigrants, those selected primarily for their labour market skills, will be increased by almost 10,000 individuals for a total of 86,700. When we join this level—that is to say, the skills this economy needs together with the stream of business and entrepreneur immigrants—that will reflect a 44 per cent chunk of the overall immigration levels. This reflects this party's commitment to give priority to independent and family class immigration, something that was clearly outlined in the red book. We made that commitment and today we are honouring that pledge.

Third, I stated in our red book that sponsorship for refugees for resettlement from abroad will be encouraged. In 1994 the number of refugees resettled from abroad through government sponsorship will be increased by some 700 for a total 7,300, an increase of some 10 per cent. Private sponsorships will increase by 1,400 for a total of 6,000 refugees, an increase of some 30 per cent.

This is an olive branch to the communities that traditionally have come forward to sponsor refugees. We are saying, through this statement, that this government is back in the business of working with communities that come forward to sponsor refugees as a collaborative effort to celebrate that collectivity, but also because it is those communities that will be picking up the settlement costs rather than simply having the state do that. I assure those communities that have played a tremendous role in years gone by that our department will strive to process those

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applications much more effectively and efficiently than was the case in the past nine years under the Conservative government.

(1515)

The numbers for overseas refugee resettlement are at a ceiling if we are to tie the budgets that are in place for resettlement and integration programs. It would simply be irresponsible and misleading of this minister and this government to suggest any inflated figure for refugees without having respect for the fact that a proper level of integration programs is needed. This minister will not draw those invisible lines in the sand, as was the case in the last nine years. The Conservative government that preceded us would always put an inflated level of 13,000 to 15,000 government sponsored refugees and in the last years of its mandate delivered 6,000. Our number of 7,300 is realistic and will be delivered.

In addition, we will also be accepting an estimated 15,000 successful in Canada refugee claimants. Those are the individuals who apply for refugee status under our refugee determination system in Canada. Together the total estimated number of refugees for 1994 is 28,300, an increase of some 3,500 individuals.

This government intends to maintain its international obligations towards those who legitimately seek refuge in this country. We will try as much as we can to mobilize overseas sponsorship because it is cost effective, it is quick, and it speaks to those refugees who need help the most.

We are also doing other things that cannot be disconnected from any discussion on levels, but I am sensitive to the time we have for this ministerial statement. For instance, there are the work permits we announced last week, rather than individuals being forced onto welfare; or our action on deterring welfare abuse; or the review of how we can enforce those elements of the Immigration Act to keep out those individuals or criminals who wish to play with our system and abuse that very foundation; or the review we have talked about with respect to our humanitarian programs as well as a review of business immigration, so we can ensure that we are maximizing those job opportunities and economic benefits for all Canadians.

What about our special program for refugee women, which is unique in the world? What about pushing the international community to come to grips with the sea of humanity that is striving for things that sometimes you and I take for granted? We are not going to preach to the world, but we are going to tell that world that it does not make sense to have an international corridor of locked doors, that we are fooling ourselves if we think if we close our front doors we will not get pressure through our back doors or through our windows. We will tell those countries locking their doors that this is unacceptable and unfair to those countries whose doors are still open and whose doorsteps are therefore crowded.

We should move ensemble as an international community. If we move together, not only will we be addressing those individuals who clearly need that legitimate refuge, but as individual nations we will also be addressing the domestic pressures that obviously confront countries of the world.

The second part of the levels document we tabled this afternoon concerns how we consult Canadians. The government has decided to undertake a new kind of consultation. I am announcing today the establishment of a new 10-year strategic framework under which 5-year immigration plans will be outlined.

[*Translation*]

I know that there are many sincere but conflicting convictions on basic immigration issues and how to approach them. It is more important than ever for people to engage in an open, long-term and comprehensive discussion on immigration problems.

(1520)

[*English*]

We need a form of consultation in which the process is not dictated solely by the interests of one government but rather shaped by the interests of all of those taking part, provincial and municipal levels of government, non-governmental organizations, business entities and Canadians.

That is why I have asked the public policy forum to join us in designing and implementing this more democratic and consequently more effective way of discussing and talking to Canadians.

In early March representatives from a broad range of organizations within Canada as well as international experts will come together to debate and define the issues. They will also help establish a number of individual expert panels that will examine in detail the eight, nine, or ten questions that are the underpinning of our immigration challenges.

In addition, Canadians normally excluded from the process will be involved in regional, community and round table discussions. The results of these consultations will then be the focus of a major conference to be held later this fall so that it may be forming the basis of the next 1995 immigration levels.

More important, we must begin to answer the question of where we want to go as a country in the next 10 to 15 years and how immigration as one important tool of nation building can help us meet those goals and dreams.

In that regard this minister and this government look forward to working together with all Canadians and all members and all political parties represented in the House of Commons.

Canada does face some difficult problems. The economy has experienced very difficult times of late. Canadians are in a sense angry and frustrated over unemployment. They are concerned about losing or regaining their jobs. They are worried about the

diminished prospects of their families and they worry about the careers of their children, and they have every right to feel those pressures and those dilemmas.

In the process some are casting blame on governments, be they national, provincial or municipal. Some are casting blame on those well off, the powerful and the rich in our communities. Others are also placing the blame on immigrants, on refugees, on newcomers, that they somehow cost us jobs, that they somehow cannot adapt to our country, that they somehow are engulfing our social assistance welfare roles.

I have heard those voices and if we are honest today, we have all heard those voices. I am not questioning the freedom of those voices to ring in this place. I ask those voices in this place and across the country if you are to express those concerns, and we will have that debate, rather than only talking about the C.D. Howe report, also look at the Economic Council report that talked about moving toward 1 per cent gradually, that talked about the creation of jobs by immigrants.

I ask those voices to be concerned with the fact that immigrants are also consumers, that immigrants also become entrepreneurs. I ask them to understand as well if you are going to look at statistics, Canada's statistics show that on average foreign-born Canadians spend less time on unemployment insurance than native born.

(1525)

I am not castigating anybody, but we have to also speak to the fact that if we talk about the welfare rolls we also have to talk about the facts. In the province of Ontario, the province that receives the most immigrants and refugees, in 1993 had a case load of 615,000 individuals on welfare. The proportion of refugees on those rolls according to Ontario officials put to me in my meeting with them on Monday is 4 per cent, 20,000 to 25,000 people out of 615,000.

I ask my fellow Canadians, in the province of Ontario and elsewhere, are we really subsidizing those refugees or immigrants?

I have heard some of those voices and I am prepared to discuss with those individuals the concerns they are expressing. If we recall our history as a nation we know that such voices are not entirely new.

Many new groups of people have come to Canada over the years, each of them justifying its faith in our country. They raised families, they worked hard and they too sacrificed. They helped build our railroads, they helped plough our new frontiers out west and they helped raise the great cities of Canada. They, along with all of us, helped build the great country and nation that we are proud to call home.

### *Routine Proceedings*

Why should we believe now at this juncture of Canada's history and development that such nation building will all of a sudden come to a halt? Why should we contemplate now at this juncture of our history and development that today's immigrants, today's newcomers cannot be tomorrow's leaders? Our government and immigration are still about building a better and more prosperous Canada.

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### POINTS OF ORDER

#### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order, pursuant to Standing Order 33 and routine proceedings as referred to in Beaudesne's *Parliamentary Rules & Forms*.

I commend the minister on his remarks, but I ask for information on whether it is in order for a minister's statement to go over 25 minutes or 20 minutes in length. I quote article 348 of Beaudesne's:

Under Standing Order 33(1) Ministers may make a short factual announcement or statement of Government policy. Provision is made for replies by Members of parties in opposition to comment on the statement.

Article 350 on the same page states:

The Speaker has emphasized that both the Government and Opposition contributions should be brief and factual. The purpose of the ministerial statement is to convey information, not to encourage debate.

Perhaps I am rising more for direction, being a new member of this House of Commons, on whether this ministerial statement being 25 minutes long or thereabouts is a usual procedure of the House.

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to the hon. member.

His leader in the first days of Parliament said that this is an unconventional House, that we should not look to precedent. I mentioned to my opposition critics that this Prime Minister has told the House that important decisions, important announcements or important debates should happen here on the floor of the House of Commons.

(1530)

The tradition has been that ministers of immigration in the past tabled the report, as I did, for 30 seconds and then left for a press conference outside the House of Commons. This minister at this level has taken the opportunity under ministerial statements—and I grant the member it may have gone a little longer than is traditional—but I thought the issue at hand was worthy enough for us to make the statement. Regarding the time that I took, if it was 25 minutes, the hon. member, the immigration



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critic for his party, will have the very same time in order to address the very same concern.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** On the same point of order, Madam Speaker. I just want to clarify for the hon. minister that there may be a little problem with his assuming this is a reformer speaking here. He made reference to this person's leader, which I think he may have mistaken with the leader of the Reform Party. Also, as the hon. member at the back is an independent, there could be a little error there about giving an equal amount of time. I would just like him to clarify that.

**Mr. Marchi:** I think the hon. member is absolutely correct. I had assumed because of the positioning of the member that he was a member of the Reform Party.

The issues that I raised still stand, but I stand corrected.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I would like to read for the House Standing Order 33(1):

On Statements by Ministers as listed in Standing Order 30(3), a Minister of the Crown may make a short factual announcement or statement of government policy. A Member from each of the parties in opposition to the government may comment briefly thereon. The time for such proceedings shall be limited as the Speaker deems fit.

I thank both hon. members for their interventions.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa):** Madam Speaker, I listened very closely to the statement of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. However, I must deplore the minister's failure to co-operate with critics from the other parties.

We did not receive the text of his statement—a document prepared months ago—until 1 p.m. and we received only one copy, despite the fact that we had requested two. This is not the first time this has happened. The same problem occurred a few days ago when the minister gave a press conference. We received a copy of his statement only as the press conference was getting under way. What happened to the minister's promise to work with us? I must deplore this lack of co-operation.

Regarding the substance of his statement, I would say that immigration policy does represent an enormous challenge not just for Canada, but also and above all for Quebec. In referring to the new levels of immigration announced yesterday, the minister neglected to mention if he had consulted with Quebec. If he did, when did these consultations take place and under what circumstances?

The minister also broached subjects not directly tied to new immigration levels. For example, concerning criminals, I agree with him that Canada should not let them in, but I hope that he is not merely stating good intentions. Precedents in this regard were set by former governments, and even by this new government of which the minister is a member. We agree that immi-

grants and bona fide refugees should be allowed into Canada, but not criminals.

Regarding appointments to Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board, more commissioners are expected to be appointed in the coming months. We will be watching the minister closely to ensure that the appointments he does make are not based on political affiliation. I hope that he will consult with all interested parties, including Quebec.

(1535)

Naturally we share his concern about women refugees. This new issue is also a priority for us. We must protect women who have been persecuted, raped and abused and when appropriate, we must grant them political refugee status in Canada.

Madam Speaker, as you can see from my accent and my name, I am a Quebecer of Chilean origin. I came to Quebec 20 years ago following the 1973 military coup in Chile. I have to say that I was warmly welcomed by Quebecers, labour unions, religious groups and international co-operation agencies as well as agencies working in the field of human rights.

Before I arrived here, I was told I would be going to Canada and I was issued a visa. I was happy because in my mind, Canada was, and still is, a democratic country. However, when I arrived in Quebec, specifically in Montreal, I realized that there were two countries within Canada, two founding nations and peoples, two official languages and two cultures, each with its own history.

Then, I understood the great aspirations of Quebecers, their desire to defend the French language, their traditions, their culture and their history, all the more so because I came from a country where the people had fought for similar goals against powerful forces, against the penetration of English into Chile and throughout Latin America, and for the right to develop their own culture and traditions.

I became a sovereigntist. I have nothing against English Canada, where I have many friends especially within ethnic communities and within the labour movement. However, I support the creation of a country, Quebec, which is the deepest aspiration of Quebecers.

During my term in office, I plan to travel throughout Canada and discuss these ideas with my friends everywhere. When a couple has problems and cannot continue to live together, it must face reality. I think this analogy can be applied to Quebec and next year, the referendum will prove that this is so.

Like my party, I am a staunch supporter of immigration and I would hope that members of ethnic communities will not fear Quebec sovereignty as we sovereigntists feel that they will prove to be a formidable asset for Quebec and for Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

At this time, I would like to dissociate myself from the position taken by other members of this House who are afraid of immigration and afraid of refugees. At times they propagate anti-immigrant sentiment and demand not only that harsh restrictions be placed on Canadian immigration levels, but also that claims of refugee status on political grounds and under the Canadian Charter be denied. I wish to dissociate myself because my position is vastly different from that of members who view immigration and refugees in this light.

(1540)

The minister is not telling us anything new about immigration levels this afternoon. He is quoting the same figures as the Conservatives: 250,000 immigrants will be admitted to Canada in 1994. We have no qualms about this figure as long as Quebec can have its say on the numbers admitted to Quebec.

As far as the mix of immigrants is concerned, we are in favour of Canada and Quebec throwing open their doors to political refugees. Canada and Quebec must honour their commitments. Canada was a signatory to the Geneva Convention relative to political refugees and we have to meet the humanitarian assistance requests that we receive from all over the world, where over 20 million refugees live in various countries. We discussed the situation in Bosnia a few days ago and I mentioned at the time that Canada should be open to Bosnian refugees.

So, I maintain that Canada must also tackle the causes of this form of immigration, that is to say political or economic refugees, and try to solve the problem that exist in the countries of origin. People leave their countries because of problems such as racism, religious strife, poverty, the widening gap between industrialized countries and developing countries, political repression. We want Canada to be generous with refugees, while at the same time addressing the problems that brings them here in the first place.

Based on the minister's announcement, we can see that the number of refugees admitted will increase only slightly, by 3,500. We think that this is not enough, in view of what is going on in the world, in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and other countries, including El Salvador.

I questioned the minister about the situation of Salvadoran refugees, but I did not get an answer in this House. Today, we read in the papers that the expulsion order has been suspended. That is not what we asked the minister to do. We were asking for a policy stating that Salvadoran refugees would not be returned to El Salvador because there are violent troubles in that area. Last December, the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself was telling us that political violence had flared up again in El Salvador. Death squads are still active there. Reports from various organizations, Development and Peace, Amnesty International, the UN and even the Salvadoran Human Rights Commission, all note the violence with disapproval.

What the minister was asked to do was to apply to El Salvador the same policy as for Haiti, China, Iraq or Somalia. That is all we were asking and all the fifty or so Salvadoran refugees in Quebec were asking.

What the press reports today is that there will be a review, but that has already been done. What we asked the minister to do is to exercise his jurisdiction. He has that power, under the Immigration Act, to intervene on humanitarian grounds, and he should use it to resolve the case of these Salvadoran refugees.

(1545)

He announced to us a few days ago what he intended to do about work permits for refugee claimants. We agree, we said so, but we would also like the minister to act more quickly.

Why wait three months to give a political refugee claimant a work permit, as well as a medical certificate which he must have obtained before? This still takes a long time. If we do not want the refugee to collect welfare, he must start working as soon as possible.

So far, the minister has not answered requests that these permits be granted quickly. In any case, we know that these refugees will not compete with Canadian workers because refugees will usually get only low-paid unpleasant jobs that other people cannot or will not do.

I noted a glaring omission in the minister's statement, in that he said nothing about Quebec and the Ottawa-Quebec agreement. As you know, immigration is a shared federal-provincial jurisdiction. Quebec has always been concerned about immigration, even in the last century, because it is a vital problem for Quebec as it is for Canada. I would say that it is even more vital for Quebec because Quebec's birth rate is less than the Canadian average. Immigration in Quebec must make up this population deficit.

Immigration is also intended to ensure economic prosperity and openness to the world. Quebec is open to the world, but immigration to Quebec must ensure the perpetuation of the French fact. Quebec is the only French-speaking state in North America. We made demands, we fought the fight and in 1968 we created the Quebec Department of Immigration. In 1978, the Couture-Cullen agreement gave Quebec the power to choose its immigrants. Later, this agreement was improved by the ministers, Monique Gagnon-Tremblay and Barbara McDougall. Today, regrettably, the Quebec Department of Immigration and Cultural Communities has been merged with the Department of International Affairs.

But our main concern is the survival of French in Quebec, and it is closely tied to immigration. You know, as I myself have seen, most immigrants to Quebec integrated with the English-speaking minority. This has been aggravated by the federal government's policy of bilingualism in Canada.

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We want Quebec to have immigrants. We also want them to be French-speaking as much as possible or at least able to join the French-speaking community as I was. I speak Spanish; I learned French because I joined the French speaking majority in Quebec.

We also want immigration in Quebec to be regionalized. Too many immigrants are concentrated in Montreal, 90 per cent. That is why we say and repeat that bill 101 is absolutely necessary in Quebec and we would like English Canada to understand that.

(1550)

Since Bill 101 in 1976, our children must attend French schools. I hope that this concern for immigration in Quebec, a distinct society, will become part of the minister's message in the future. Moreover, we want the agreements reached between Quebec and Ottawa to be honoured. For instance, by increasing the number of people admitted under the family reunification program, the minister is imposing a burden on Quebec since Quebec has no say in this program. The federal government sets objectives and Quebec does not have anything to say about it. I hope that in the future you will pay more attention to this aspect of the immigration policy.

The final objective of our party, and of the entire sovereigntist movement in Quebec, is to put the immigration policy under Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction. Again, Quebec is open to foreigners and immigrants; we want to build a just, democratic and fraternal society that is open to the world and based on solidarity.

[English]

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do not want to interrupt my hon. friend from the Reform Party. I just wanted to respond to my Bloc critic who said that it was his understanding that he was to get the documents at noon. I believe my officials delivered them at one o'clock.

I want to tell the House that I told my officials to provide the reports to my critics at the traditional—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I am sorry, Mr. Minister. The point of order is out of order.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to reply to the minister's announcement.

This is a policy area of great importance to the people of Canada and to Canada's future. I hope the minister will regard the alternatives presented from this side of the House as constructive and will take them to heart.

I do not need again to point out that Canada is indeed a nation of immigrants. The country as we know it today would not exist were it not for the ambition, struggle and determination of millions of people who have landed on our shores in search of a better life.

Indeed, my parents were immigrants and as such I understand the desire for something better which has motivated millions over the years to come to Canada.

Along with the road to becoming a great nation built by immigrants, Canada has also gained the reputation as a compassionate nation. It is one that has opened its arms to hundreds of thousands of refugees, displaced persons and families wishing to be united.

We are a compassionate nation. We have stayed true to and even gone beyond the mandate created by the United Nations Secretary General regarding refugees. I am proud to be a citizen of a country that has gained an international reputation for its fairness, compassion and its acceptance of immigrants of all kinds.

Further, I represent a riding that more than any other in Calgary is populated by immigrants or the children of immigrants. During the course of my campaign I was fortunate to have had an opportunity to receive input from hundreds of newcomers to this country.

In short, I applaud the minister, who is himself an immigrant, for his dedication in this area and his integrity. Nonetheless, I must seriously question the policy which the minister has announced. This policy could be of more harm than help to Canada given our economic state.

(1555)

The minister has announced that immigration levels this year will be about 250,000, a substantial number I might add. Of those immigrants 111,000 will come from the family sponsorship class, 28,300 will be refugees and 110,700 will be economic and independent immigrants.

How does the minister justify this level of immigration? Is there a need at present for this number of immigrants? Upon what rationale does the minister base his numbers? The answers to these questions should be discoverable from the minister's statement today or from his press kit.

However when one searches the minister's statement regarding today's announcement one finds that rather than answers regarding the rationale behind this level of immigration being answered, more questions arise. The minister wrote that in 1994 immigration levels balanced humanitarian considerations with demographic and economic needs. Could the minister please explain to this House exactly what sort of a balance has been achieved apart from a strictly numerical one?

In fact, the minister's projected numbers continue the pattern of allowing numbers of family and refugee class immigrants that are virtually unheard of in the industrialized world today. Is this a balance? Very few other governments would agree. What exactly are the demographic and economic needs that Canada faces which this proposed number of immigrants will address?

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Further, the immigrants that Canada accepts do not settle in our sparsely populated regions. Rather they are attracted to our already overcrowded and overburdened metropolitan areas like Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Those areas are already polluted. Their landfill sites are overflowing, their traffic is congested, their crime rates are steadily increasing and their schools and hospitals are overcrowded and short of funds. I wonder if the Liberal government took these issues into consideration when they put together a policy that would add more than a quarter of a million new people to Canada per year, people who will be attracted to those overburdened metro areas?

Why then does Canada need the number of immigrants announced? Yes, there was a time when Canada needed vast numbers of people, people with very specific skills to open up our underpopulated areas. That time has long since passed. Even today as a percentage of our population Canada is still accepting more immigrants than any other industrialized nation on earth. Why does this government want to up the number even more?

The government seems to believe that with our fertility rate, which is currently about 1.7, the Canadian population will begin to decline at some point in the future and further, that the aging of our population will place increasing strains upon our social assistance systems and a drain upon our federal reserves as fewer and fewer young people in the population will be working to pay for these social programs.

It is as though the government is using a kind of social engineering to slow down the aging of the population through immigration. Had it studied the demographic projection model of the Economic Council of Canada, it would have discovered that the council's proposal recommends that immigration levels be set at the average of the last 25 years, which is .63 per cent of the population per year or about 170,000 immigrants.

Of the studies that the Reform caucus has examined even this number of 170,000 per year represents the high end. Compare that, Madam Speaker, with the 250,000 as the announcement indicates that this government proposes that we accept.

The government wants us to believe that we will reap enormous benefits by allowing this number of immigrants each year but it has neglected to mention the costs of immigration. A Southam study of literacy in Canada published in 1987 reported that about 34,000 functionally illiterate immigrants were admitted annually. Does this government not feel that there is a cost to be incurred by admitting tens of thousands of illiterate immigrants, especially with the cuts in English as a second language program that are being made across the country?

(1600)

The provinces no longer have the funds necessary to support a poorly thought out federal immigration policy. For example, the Government of Ontario—and the minister alluded to this—is straining with the acceptance of 59 per cent of all of Canada's immigrants and while receiving 39 per cent of federal funds.

These sorts of problems will only be made worse if we accept the flood of immigrants proposed by this government, especially when those immigrants are chosen largely from the family or refugee classes and not as independent immigrants chosen for their human capital; chosen for their skills, their ability to quickly and independently integrate into Canadian life as well as their ability to contribute to the economic needs of this country. Choosing immigrants on this basis is the policy of the Reform Party. It is one which we believe would turn our present immigration dilemma into a solution to some of Canada's economic woes. Just some.

On the other hand, the immigration plan put forward by the government will actually discriminate against those immigrants who could contribute most to Canada's growth and prosperity. It gives preference to those immigrants who tend to be a drain upon our social services and will lower the average skill level of our work force.

This government is saying that we need to take in our fair share of refugees when in fact Canada's acceptance rate for refugee applicants is already among the highest in the world. This government says that we need to make family class a priority when our family class acceptance system is already among the most generous in the world.

The government in its red book states that we must take humanitarianism and compassion into account in our immigration policy. We are already being more compassionate than any other nation in the world. Is it not fair to demand that this compassion be mated with practicality and a consideration of the other needs in the country?

I want to stress that the Reform Party does not oppose immigration. On the contrary, the Reform Party recognizes that Canada is a nation of immigrants, that this nation was built by immigrants and could continue to benefit from immigration, but only if the immigration is based on a sensible, well thought out policy that reflects Canada's needs.

The Reform caucus strongly urges the government to re-examine its immigration policy. We strongly recommend that Canada return to its traditional policy for determining the admissible number of immigrants by first determining Canada's real economic needs.

The government must also re-examine its refugee determination process. We believe that only genuine refugees should be

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welcome and that bogus refugees, illegal entrants and criminal offenders should be immediately deported. Further, anyone who engages in or encourages such activities should be subject to severe penalties.

I applaud the minister for his plan to open up to the Canadian people Canada's immigration policy. If a major overhaul is necessary, and it appears that it is, then it should be prompted by a national referendum. This would ensure that in the area of immigration the Canadian people and not special interests would shape this sensitive national policy.

\* \* \*

**CANADA OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS ACT**

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-6, an act to amend the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and the National Energy Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

(1605)

**CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT**

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-7, an act respecting the control of certain drugs, their precursors and other substances and to amend certain other acts and repeal the Narcotic Control Act in consequence thereof.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT**

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-208, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act.

She said: Madam Speaker, this bill deals with the pensions of parliamentarians and this bill prohibits double-dipping; that is, it prohibits parliamentarians from receiving a pension from the Government of Canada if that individual is receiving a salary from the Government of Canada or crown corporation.

This bill also prevents a member from collecting a parliamentary pension until that member reaches the age of 60.

As we saw during the last election this matter is of great concern to Canadians. Given the positions already taken by all sides of the House, I certainly look forward to this bill passing very quickly.

I wish to thank the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden for seconding the motion.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FULL EMPLOYMENT ACT**

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-209, an act to provide for full employment in Canada.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am delighted to table this bill today. This bill establishes that full employment must be the first objective of any economic and fiscal policy of the federal government. It is the surest means to lower a poverty rate of over 11 percent and to put an end to poverty.

[English]

This bill would require the Minister of Labour to prepare a draft plan for the achievement of full employment targets which the minister would then put before this House.

I am sure that all members of this House agree that we must in a systematic and dedicated way address the issue of unemployment and I seek when this comes for final reading the support of all members of this House.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

(1610)

**RECALL ACT**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-210, an act to provide for the recall of members of the House of Commons.

She said: Madam Speaker, I would like to table this. I appreciate the chance to introduce today a bill to provide for the recall of members of the House of Commons.

This bill would allow the electors in any federal constituency to recall their member of Parliament by circulating a petition containing the names and addresses of a majority of the voters who voted in that riding in the previous election. If a recall petition were to be deemed successful by the chief electoral officer a by-election would be called for that seat.

The bill also contains a number of limitations on the recall process designed to avoid superfluous and mischievous employment of this device.

I believe this bill would do more to ensure democratic parliamentary reform than any other single measure. I recommend that the government support this bill as quickly as possible. As the late Senator Stan Waters who said regularly:

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“Democracy delayed is democracy denied”. I hope we act on this quickly.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)** I move:

That no later than five minutes before the expiry of the time for consideration of Government Orders on Thursday, February 3, 1994, any business then under consideration shall be interrupted and all questions necessary for disposal of the motion of the Minister of Human Resources Development regarding a review of social programs, Government Business No. 4, shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment;

That no later than 15 minutes before expiry of the time for the consideration of Government Orders on Tuesday, February 8, 1994, any business then under consideration shall be interrupted and all questions necessary for the disposal of the second reading stages of Bill C-2, an act to amend the Department of National Revenue Act and to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof;

That Bill C-3, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-secondary Education and Health Contributions Act and;

That Bill C-4, an act to amend the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment;

That no later than five minutes before the expiry of the time for consideration of Government Orders on Monday, February 7, 1994, any business then under consideration shall be interrupted and all questions necessary for disposal of the motion of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons regarding amendments to the Standing Orders and other related matters, notice of which was given on February 2, 1994, shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment;

That any divisions requested on any of the aforementioned business shall be deferred until six o'clock p.m., Tuesday, February 8, 1994.

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS****HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty to present a petition signed by petitioners living in Parkdale—High Park and in other parts of Ontario.

(1615)

The petitioners state that the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is continuing to violate all fundamental and civil rights of the Vietnamese citizens through arbitrary

arrests, detention without trial and the censorship of peaceful expressions of political or religious beliefs.

The petitioners urge the government in their prayer to continue to make full normalization of relations with Vietnam contingent upon (1) the unconditional release of all political and religious prisoners in Vietnam; (2) the immediate cessation of punishment of critics through detention without trial; (3) the abolition of all political prisoners and re-education camps throughout the country; (4) the elimination of all regulations, codes and constitutional provisions prohibiting organized opposition activities that are commonly used to repress peaceful expressions of dissent; and (5) a formal commitment by the leaders of the communist party of Vietnam to create a pluralistic and democratic environment with free and open national elections under international supervision so that the citizens of Vietnam may determine the future leadership and orientation of their government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

CANADA POST

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park):** Concerning my second petition, these petitioners all reside in High Park in my constituency. They state in their petition that they are very satisfied with the service and location of sub-post office number 166, located in the High Park Pharmacy, which the previous government tried to close.

Therefore, the petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to urge this government to keep post office number 166 located in High Park Pharmacy operating in its present state and location.

VIOLENCE

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Pursuant to Standing Order 31, I have the privilege of presenting to Parliament a petition signed by many people from around my riding and around Toronto.

Whereas the incidence of violence against women and children is unacceptable, the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to accept legislation designed to eliminate violence against women and children, encourage and support women to report incidents of assault or abuse, provide assistance and support for women reporting assault or abuse, and also the need for abuser rehabilitation and a special effort on the training of police, lawyers, court workers and judges to become knowledgeable about women and child abuse and to focus public attention on this very important and long ignored problem.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**WAYS AND MEANS**

## INCOME TAX ACT

**Hon. John Manley (for the Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)):** moved that a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act, laid upon the table on Monday, January 31, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to).

\* \* \*

**SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM**

The House resumed from January 31, consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Madam Speaker, I would like to start by reminding hon. members of the purpose of the debate we are engaged in today.

(1620)

The debate is on a motion tabled by the federal Minister of Human Resources Development, that a committee of the House be directed to consult broadly, to—as the motion says—analyse and to make recommendations regarding the modernization and restructuring of Canada's social security system.

If this motion were tabled in any other Parliament, we would be inclined to think it was good news. In the normal course of events, a government may wish to review its social programs in order to improve them, to make them more productive, as they say, and provide more protection and security for those in our society who need it most.

Unfortunately, I have the impression that today, this motion is not good news for Canadian men and women. There may be some disturbing developments if we consider that since the very

beginning of the election campaign, the focus has been on the economy, to the exclusion of all other issues in this country.

As you know, Madam Speaker, whenever we talk about the economy, financial problems and challenges to social choices, the prime concern of the people who engage in this exercise is to cut social programs. The government must take on a very heavy financial burden to honour its commitments to the most vulnerable in our society, as expressed in the social programs put in place over the years by a succession of parliaments.

Inevitably, because of the very size of this budget item, whenever there is talk of cutting back and restructuring, social programs are the obvious target for all these people who can lobby the government and the Minister of Finance.

Listen to what the wealthiest members of the business community have to say about tackling Canada's budget problems. Most of them would tell you: Cut social programs. Too many people are abusing these programs. Too many people are getting around the system and drawing benefits without being entitled to them.

They will tell you also this is common practice and that there are welfare recipients in the provinces who abuse the system. They describe one or two or three cases of fraud with a great deal of emphasis, to show the system works and how taxpayers' money is wasted. That is the kind of answer you get, Madam Speaker, when you put this question to the people in our society who are well off.

When do you hear a wealthy businessman, the member of a wealthy industrial dynasty, say that 2,384 cases of fraud in such and such an area or over a year or over two years, together represent a quarter of a tenth of half of what he saves in income tax in his family trust or through tax shelters to which he has access? We have reached the point in this country where whenever a welfare recipient or a unemployed worker is caught in the act of trying to save his daily pittance and is tempted to defraud one of the social programs, such cases are given a lot of publicity. Every time they are right there on the front page, grist to the mill of people who argue against helping the neediest in our society.

(1625)

Tell me, Madam Speaker, when do you hear people wonder, worry, or rebel because some succeed in saving—I use the term saving out of politeness—taxes through all kinds of legal and sometimes not so legal ploys? In any case, our society treats like heroes those who manage to avoid paying taxes.

There are even companies putting ads in the newspapers saying: "Come and see us. We are experts on tax shelters. You do not want to pay any taxes? This is the place to come". Our society is now at the point where it puts on a pedestal those who somehow succeed in avoiding paying taxes and giving their due to the tax man. On the other hand, every time a welfare recipient

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living well below the poverty level manages to defraud the system, there is a general outcry right across the country.

In this context, and at this stage, we are concerned by the minister's initiative. We are concerned because we know those who support the members opposite. We know the economic interests which have brought this government to power; its supporters are among the wealthiest in our society and they have direct channels of communications, not with the secretaries of state, but with the senior ministers in the Cabinet. It is those people who hold real power and who influence the decision process.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** When a government is motivated by such partisan interests and when the people who support it have a perspective like the one I described earlier, it is a concern for welfare recipients who have no say in the decision-making process and no one in Parliament to inform the ministers of their problems.

When this session got underway a few months after we were elected to come here and work for the well-being of Canadians, our leader, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, told us and the press that our party would be the protector of social rights in Canada. He added that those who have no access to Cabinet or to the lobbies of powerful people with contacts and connections to influence the government would be able to count on the Official Opposition, that is the 54 Bloc Québécois members, to represent them.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** The government takes all these measures under the pretense of being short of money. The federal administration is in a bad financial situation. The government says we must not penalize those who will follow us, namely our children. How touching, Madam Speaker! When will the decision-makers in this government understand that it would be more appropriate to explore new options than to target the poor in our society and reduce the benefits of those who hardly have anything? We agree that the financial situation of Canada is tragic. We agree that the successive governments, starting with the previous Liberal administration in which the current Prime Minister was Minister of Finance, have generated deficits for Canada. Indeed, the Liberal government of the time was followed by a Conservative government which continued to put us in deeper economic trouble.

**An hon. member:** None of that is true.

(1630)

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Madam Speaker, truth hurts. See how the members opposite become vocal when we point to the

real problems, when we remind them that their Prime Minister, their leader, was Minister of Finance when the financial situation started to deteriorate seriously in Canada. Their leader was the one who, while he was Minister of Finance, never could redress the downward curve the country's economy had hopelessly taken. It hurts!

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** At a time when we are trying to solve the financial problems of Canada, the members opposite have only one suggestion to make: cut social programs, cut off the unemployed. There is no other way. This is the third federal government to bring us deeper into debt, the third one to add to the debt which has now reached \$500 billion. That is quite a debt! And they want to solve the problem at the expense of the have-nots of our society. Do you expect us to accept such unfair proposals without a word?

If they want to know where to save money, let us explore a few avenues before we cut social programs. Let us try to find solutions before we cut off the unemployed, welfare recipients and old age pensioners, let us try to find a way to trim the fat off government institutions. From the beginning of the election campaign, from the instant we set foot in this Parliament, the Leader of the Official Opposition, our leader, has been requesting the creation of a committee where elected members would examine government expenditures. Our role should be enhanced, they say; well, what better task is there for a member than to tell government which useless activities to cut or abolish in order to protect his constituents, especially those in need.

Three consecutive governments have failed in this Parliament; Liberals, Tories and Liberals again can be rightly accused of mismanagement and poor administration. Their inability to make the necessary decisions, their lack of political courage put us in such a difficult situation that today we have to call upon the disadvantaged of our society to make up for their incompetence.

They want to know where to cut? Well then, let the government members tell their Prime Minister that they are dying, as I know they are, to go through the federal government's expenditures, item by item. Let those members in power satisfy their burning urge to go and tell senior civil servants how harmful some of their department's activities are, how useless they are, what a total waste of money overlapping is.

I can see it written on the faces of some of you here, that you have the interests of your constituents at heart and would like to do your job as an MP properly and be able to save money, as any responsible parliamentarian would. Every time we save \$100,000, it is \$100,000 that will not come out of the have-not's pockets, we can be sure of that. And maybe they will get to keep it. Only then will we feel we are doing our job of representing our constituents.



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**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Madam Speaker, there is another problem which seems to go over the heads of every one on the government side in this House, and that is the issue of overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services. If I remember correctly, we have been here for three weeks now, and if we were to study the issues which have been of concern to us, the topics which have been raised the most often for the past three weeks, we would probably come to the conclusion that our overall concern is the overlapping and duplication we have been subjected to by the federal government over the years.

(1635)

This administrative overlap is not disconnected from reality; everyone recognizes that it does not make sense. In public management, every time we mention government deficit, we are told about private enterprise: "Look at how this or that company is managed". Then they give us examples: "Look at Alcan, at General Motors, at Chrysler, at Bombardier. See how successful they are". What did these companies do when they ran into economic problems? Very simple. First, they streamlined operations.

Every time a responsible businessman wants to take significant administrative measures, the first thing to do is streamline operations. For the benefit of the hon. members opposite, streamlining means eliminating all dual responsibilities, redundant organizations and non-essential services, simplifying administration and lines of communications to become more efficient and cost effective.

If this is good for private enterprise, if everyone sees it as the right approach, why should it not also be good for governments? Should the first step to be taken by a government wanting to turn around a disastrous financial situation not be to eliminate everything that is unnecessary, all overlap and duplication?

Before cutting into services and product quality, Chrysler Canada went through a crucial streamlining process.

The government is doing exactly the opposite. Instead of streamlining, they will cut into product quality, into social services, they will reorganize by saving a few billion here and there at the expense of unfortunate people. I am convinced that no administrative measure will be taken to eliminate this dual administration with provincial and municipal governments.

In the employment sector alone, just to show how political beliefs deeply held by the hon. members opposite prevent them from being efficient and seeing clearly, there is total unanimity in Quebec, except for Liberal members of Parliament who have managed to get elected in Quebec. Everyone else, including Liberal members of Quebec's Legislative Assembly, is convinced that employment responsibilities should come under

Quebec's jurisdiction. Even the previous Premier had understood this and taken a step in the right direction.

It is essential to convey our position to the members of this Parliament because it is shared by everyone and publicly defensible.

Do you know how many employment programs there are? Give or take a few, there are about 24 in the Quebec government and 27 or so in the federal government. An unemployed person who wants to get out of unemployment insurance or welfare in Quebec is faced with a total of 51 programs under two or three different administrations and in different buildings. They are not always consistent and he may well lose any hope of ever getting out of this vicious circle.

What are the hon. members opposite doing in this regard? We are looking at \$250 million a year. It is an impressive amount: \$250 million a year. Have you ever thought of renouncing your crippling brand of Canadian nationalism, with your tentacles reaching into every Canadian province and territory, this kind of new disease that makes Canadian federalists want to keep a finger in every pie, because the truth lies in this Parliament?

(1640)

Do you realize that, if we did without, we could save—and by acting diligently we could also solve an extremely serious problem—\$250 million a year?

Instead of making cuts on the backs of the poor, in benefits to less fortunate Canadians, old age pensions, unemployment insurance or federal transfer payments used to pay for social assistance, we could at least manage to save that much, and this \$250 million could stay in the pockets of people who really need that money.

Madam Speaker, you are signalling that I am running out of time. I would have liked to take each area of duplication and demonstrate, with figures to back it up—because it can be done—how many millions of dollars could have been saved, how much streamlining of the government system should be done and how much simpler relations between Ottawa and the provinces could be made. By taking these steps, we would have done the very first thing any sensible manager does. Without sacrificing quality, we would have cut the fat and taken a hard look at administration and bad management.

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis):** Madam Speaker, I listened very attentively to the remarks of the hon. member opposite, and I was somewhat surprised. Surprised because the words never change. We are always covering the same ground in this debate.

I want to ask the hon. member who gave him the right to say that only his party speaks for the most disadvantaged in society? His party represents only a portion of this country. The Liberal

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Party of Canada represents all Canadians and all of the disadvantaged people in this country.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mrs. Bakopanos:** As a Quebecer and as a member of a community that is not one of the country's two founding communities, I get the feeling from the hon. member that he thinks the people on this side of the House—and let us not forget that we are all well off—that we come from a segment of society that does not understand the problems of the less fortunate. I was rather insulted by what he said because I believe that the Liberal Party of Canada and its leader tried to field candidates who represented all segments, races, languages and economic levels of our society. When our party speaks, it does so not only on behalf of the wealthy. It speaks for everyone.

Besides, who said anything about cuts? We have not yet made any decisions about cuts in this House. The Minister of Human Resources Development has yet to make any announcements about cuts. Instead, he has welcomed a debate on this issue. He has asked members to think about the future of the services provided here in Canada. The hon. member has already decided that we are going to make cuts, but we have not yet decided anything of the sort. We are in the process of holding consultations. We have not yet made any decisions. We want to consult all Canadians, not just one group or one province, but all Canadians. Then we will make our decisions.

We are not going to reduce pensions. If the hon. member had taken the time to read the Liberal Party's red book, he would have seen that we stated clearly that we would not cut pensions or target the most disadvantaged members of our society.

(1645)

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments, for this question and for her assessment. Of course, far be it from me, if she ever took it that way, to say that the people opposite were all rich and disconnected from the middle class in this society.

What I said, however, is that I tried to explain in this House that normally, when you want to find out what motivates a particular group, you look at the hand that feeds them. If the hand that feeds them is a certain type of people in society, if those who support their political party, those who get a good hearing from each of the hon. ministers of this government, those who are known to be friends of those in power—I am not at all calling into question the hon. member—I say that the backers of those who are in government and the supporters of the political party from which the government is formed have well-defined and clearly identifiable interests. That is just what I mean, no more and no less.

I would simply say to the hon. member that I do not think that broad based geographical representation is enough to represent

adequately the interests of a certain category of people in society. Rather, it is the policies proposed which show who represents whom.

When the hon. member says that there were no cuts and that no decisions have been made, I am sorry, I must tell the hon. member that I disagree. I noticed that our colleague, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, just before the opening of the session, in a speech here in Ottawa, not far from this Parliament, said as seriously as could be that 20 per cent must be cut from the cost of health care in Canada.

I really like the hon. member, I take her word, I wish that she had the same weight in cabinet as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, but she does not. He intends to cut 20 per cent from health care. He said so.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Madam Speaker, to begin, I found it difficult to follow the logic of the previous speaker because at one point in time he was asking why the government would not operate the same as a business.

The fact of the matter is that in the case of many of the examples the member for Roberval used in his remarks, such as Chrysler, Alcan and General Motors, over the last 10 years when these corporations ran into difficulty, they came to government and asked for help in the interest of keeping their people employed. In most cases—I believe in all these three cases—in the interest of keeping these organizations vibrant, alive and keeping their skilled labour forces active and competitive, the Government of Canada supported these organizations.

The same thing happened with those organizations in relation to the tax act. Many of these organizations have tremendous tax preferences and tax grants. I find it inconsistent that the member would say we should try to operate this place like a business when in fact business gets into trouble, especially big business, and usually the first place they come for help is the Government of Canada.

I am happy to have eight or nine minutes to speak on the initiative of the Minister of Human Resources Development to attempt to reinvent our social net, not cut or trash it but reinvent it, so we can make it much more effective and productive for those people in our communities who need it the most.

(1650)

The reason I personally have such great confidence in this exercise is because I had the opportunity of working with this minister during the last great recession we had in this country. That was in November 1982. I would like to share with the House and with Canadians a very specific initiative that the then Minister of Employment and Immigration—today he is responsible for human resources—put forward.

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It was November 10, 1982. I went to the Library of Parliament on Monday morning to pull this out. It was called the New Employment Expansion and Development Program.

This was an effort by that young minister to try to put unemployed Canadians back to work quickly during that very tough recession. I am going to talk for a few minutes about this program because I believe this program can work today, and I hope that as we go through renewal we would consider going back to some of the good things we have done in the past and consider them, especially if they worked.

What the minister essentially said at that time was that it costs on average, using today's dollars, approximately \$17,000 to \$20,000 a year to keep a person on unemployment insurance or welfare. Why would we not take that same money and work with the small, medium and large businesses of this country in a joint venture program to help put people back to work? They would have to put in a percentage as well.

At that time it was approximately 70–30. In today's terms that would mean we would divert the \$20,000 for the person unemployed and the company would put in approximately \$10,000. In a five-month period under that NEED program we put close to 300,000 Canadians back to work.

What I liked about that program was the fact that it used the private sector as the operational unit. This was not creating a new bureaucracy. This was not using the institution of government. This cut out duplication. The Bloc Quebecois always comes back to duplication and multiple programs, and quite frankly, I share their view. One of the worst states we have in this city is the way the bureaucracy has institutionalized itself on so many different programs, where 50 cents on the dollar goes to supporting the bureaucrats and the end user gets only 50 cents.

If we ran anything like that in the private sector we would in fact be trashed. We should be trying to make sure the end user gets a majority of the money rather than the bureaucrats and their institutions and their paper pushing mechanisms.

Those small and medium sized businesses also had a crisis of confidence at that time and were reticent about putting people on the payroll, because it was a tough time in 1981 and in 1982 as well. The beautiful thing about the NEED program the minister instituted at that time was the fact that this money, which would otherwise have gone to a person on unemployment, was there as a lever to get people into productive capacity, and the fact that they only had to put in approximately 30 per cent of the wage was a catalyst. There was very little paper involved.

(1655)

I believe what the minister was trying to say to us this week was that we have to go back to the drawing boards. We were elected to put people back to work right away and to do that in the most cost effective way we possibly can. I believe that as we are going through these programs and as we do this analysis, we should not just throw everything out the window. We should also take a look at some of the things we have done in the past that have worked well for Canadians. If we can see that they worked, as the NEED program worked, then we should consider them again.

What I like about this program is that—and I say this to all members—we do not need to reinvent the wheel; we can bring it up to date.

One of the flaws in this deal, in my opinion, was that they allowed government organizations to participate in this program at the provincial and municipal levels. I suggest a modification would be that it should be only private sector employers and only small, medium and large-sized businesses.

I believe that with the success rate the minister had in 1982 with the NEED program, where in a five-month period he put close to 35,000 people back to work, if we use that same kind of creative thinking today, that notion of reinventing, then there is great hope for us to put people back to work quickly. That is the kind of thing the minister is hoping we will all participate in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Prior to going to questions and comments, I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement government orders will be extended by 52 minutes.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Madam Speaker, I too remember the NEED program.

As the hon. member mentioned, there definitely is reason to resurrect some of the programs that worked. But if we are going to resurrect and not reinvent the wheel, we had better go back to the marketplace and discuss with people who actually use the program what happened as a direct result of the use of some of these programs.

One of the problems with that particular program was this. When the government is prepared to pay 70 per cent, what happens is that people get laid off and others get rehired to replace them. That may not be the way the program was designed but that was the effect of the program.

I would suggest further that if this kind of thing is done it should be exactly reversed. The majority of the income an employee would get would have to come from the employer, and if the government was going to top up anything, it would have to be the minority amount and not the majority amount.

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**Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, through you to the member for Edmonton Southwest, that is where we have an ideological difference.

I am speaking now as someone who has the experience of living in a city like Toronto, where we have about 650,000 people unemployed. It is the worst unemployment in the country right now and it is something we as a city are not used to. We have never had a crisis of confidence like the one we are going through right now.

Part of my reason for going to this NEED program was that a couple of my constituents reminded me about their success in being on the program.

(1700)

We are so desperate to get people back to work right now, I am afraid that if we only come up with 30 per cent of a person's wage, I am not sure that would be enough to mobilize the 650,000 small businesses in my province that we really depend on. That is the case not just in my province, but all across the country.

Maybe I am being a little too generous on this, but I believe that the dignity of a person working is very important. We are already disbursing close to \$20,000 when they are sitting at home doing nothing. Maybe we could make this a national exercise and maybe only have it in operation for about six months, not forever. Maybe we could have a couple of million signs sent to every small business person in Canada saying: "Jobs Canada, six-month period, here is where it is. You must take advantage of it in that six month period to get people back to work again or the opportunity lapses".

If we could build in the kind of protections the hon. member is talking about we would be able to meet both our objectives.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. member and I asked myself a few questions. We know that in the past, some programs for re-entry into the labour force enabled employers to hire new employees whose salaries were paid in part by the government. Unfortunately, they were often laid off when the government grant expired. Today, in my riding and the neighbouring ridings, people are telling me that they do not want short term employment, jobs partly paid by the government to give the illusion that workers have been rehired, have been made to re-enter the labour force.

Although I agree with much of what the hon. member said, I would not want people to be fooled, I would not like to see companies firing their employees once the government funds run out. Beyond that, I did not sense in that speech—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The question and comment period has expired.

[*English*]

We are now returning to debate unless we have unanimous consent for a comment.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** We do not have unanimous consent.

**Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating all my colleagues who were elected to the House of Commons on October 25. I would also like to thank the constituents of Lincoln for electing me to office. I consider it an honour and will do my best to serve them. I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and also the many volunteers who worked so very hard during the election.

For those hon. members who are not familiar with my riding of Lincoln, it includes part of east Hamilton through to St. Catharines which encompasses Stoney Creek, Grimsby, Beamsville, Vineland and Jordan.

Lincoln's workforce combines the industry found in Hamilton East and Stoney Creek and the farming area for which the Niagara Peninsula is so famous. Both of these industries have been under severe pressure due to increased global competitiveness. That is why I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the hon. members on some of the means by which this government will effectively manage its labour and employment programs despite the continuing financial constraints.

At the outset I want to acknowledge the Minister of Human Resources Development. My colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, is playing a strategic and visionary role in leading our government on these critical matters.

(1705)

As the Minister of Human Resources Development has pointed out, in developed societies like ours the primary source of income is derived from paid work. Earnings are distributed among family members and savings are put aside for education, retirement and the unforeseen contingencies.

In the same way our social security network allocates funds for the benefit of children, the unemployed and our senior citizens. Learning, training, income security and old age pensions are all inextricably intertwined and this is a reality that we must face as we approach the whole question of social reform in a rapidly evolving society.

We cannot do this in piecemeal fashion, as there are many considerations we have to take into account. While this government must and will take the lead in this process it is vital that all affected parties, particularly labour, business and special interest groups, be involved in the consultation process.

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Recent history shows that countries best able to contend with economic changes are the ones committed to strong labour-management partnerships. These types of networks and alliances set up by consistently successful industrial nations illustrate how critical consultation and co-operation are to achieving that competitive edge.

Human resources are at the very top of this government's list of priorities with respect to restoring Canada to a leading industrial nation. Our focus is to get Canadians working. To get Canadians working the contribution of skills development to economic performance must be emphasized.

One of the pivotal factors leading to improved productivity, trade performance and creativity is the enhancement of those proficient skills. These skills are the key to our long term competitiveness, both in specific industries and in the entire economy. The very nature of employment is changing.

Most income securities were designed in an era of strong demand for labour at all skill levels. It was possible for individuals to leave school at almost any age or to arrive in Canada from any country and find work quickly. The prospects that work would pay reasonably well and would lead to a career with the same employer were quite good at that time but the economy and labour markets have changed since the mid seventies. Traditional sources of high wage and high benefit employment such as large companies and government are cutting jobs.

Most jobs now being created require relatively high skill levels. Often these are difficult to fill because too many of the applicants lack the required proficiency. This has led to a disproportionate impact on two groups of workers. One comprises of the older workers whose skills are now obsolete and whose wage expectations are high, and the other group is made up of young people who have not undergone the training necessary to move into these positions.

We all know that young people are facing hardship today. They have the highest rate of unemployment in the country and in Lincoln, in particular, the unemployment figure for youth is close to 22 per cent. We cannot permit this new generation to reach adulthood without any sense of achieving employment security. It has become increasingly evident that market forces alone will not solve our problems. We must focus our attention on providing Canadians with the opportunity for meaningful employment, employment that contributes to the growth and development of our economy.

There will be employment gains made in some sectors of the economy. For example, the service sector, including both the high tech and the more traditional service industries, is expected to continue to grow in the 1990s as well as the small business sector.

Almost half of the new jobs created between 1979 and 1989 came from firms with fewer than 20 employees. The economy is creating jobs that demand more education. Between 1990 and 1993 jobs from university graduates increased by 17 per cent, while those for high school graduates remained about the same. More important, jobs for high school dropouts dropped by 17 per cent.

At a time when jobs that pay well require higher skill levels we have almost 40 per cent of Canadians with limited or no reading skills.

(1710)

The statistics are quite alarming but the difficulties that they reflect are not insurmountable. Working together we can galvanize our intellectual resources and face these daunting challenges as we have done in many areas of endeavour before.

It will take a collaborative approach with the provinces, the private sector and communities across the country. It will also take creativity and courage to change our preconceived notions about how to go about changing the business of the activating of our work force and instilling it with confidence.

Through consultation with all members of the House, small business, labour and other interested parties, we will ensure labour issues are dealt with in a manner that provides for the highest possible standards, consistent with progressive training and leading-edge technology.

Through consultation we may devise restructured working arrangements to better accommodate work and family responsibilities. This could well involve reducing the number of working hours or bringing in shared employment to protect jobs and ensure the equitable distribution of the total hours of work available.

In conjunction with the provinces, private sector, unions and local communities, this government will strive to improve the income security programs. A comprehensive and integrated approach to reforming the whole raft of national and provincial social programs is necessary to restore the hope, confidence and pride of the Canadian people.

These redesigned programs will better meet our current and future needs within the context of providing work incentives rather than disincentives. The government is undertaking the redesign of programs because it has a vision. The vision will have the objective of encouraging individual incentive, promoting the creation of wealth, and establishing a robust export-oriented economy which will benefit Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** We will now move to the question and comment period. The hon. member for Portneuf has the floor, since I interrupted him during his first comment.

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**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Madam Speaker, this is very kind of you. In a way I am glad you interrupted me, because the hon. member has said things I did not hear in the speech of the previous speaker who has now left.

The hon. member spoke about training. He was proposing that manpower be upgraded to a level which would allow it to fill the more technical jobs now offered. In that sense, I quite agree with my colleague, the hon. member for Lincoln.

This being said, I am sure that the hon. member will agree that, in Canada, industries and companies differ according to the local natural resources or the contacts with our neighbour to the south of the 47th parallel. Therefore, the needs are different.

Is it possible to direct an operation of such complexity and such diversity from Ottawa? I do not think so, but I would like the opinion of the hon. member on that.

I would like to mention a solution that works in Quebec, but would probably work even better if the federal government was willing to follow up on it. Perhaps he heard about the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre. This organization would be more than willing to undertake precisely what he mentioned. In my opinion, it is high time that his colleagues in the Liberal caucus take into consideration his brilliant ideas, especially the previous speakers. I wish he could propose a regionalization of actions with the help, for example, of the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre. I would like to hear the comments of the hon. member for Lincoln on that.

[English]

**Mr. Valeri:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond. I should also state that training is a shared responsibility. Through consultations like today, I am sure we will investigate the various opportunities available in order to deal with the training.

(1715)

As a government we are promoting a national objective. We want to increase employment. We are looking at the portability of these skills so we can break down interprovincial trade barriers and have the movement of skills and capital throughout the provinces.

Although the hon. member is indicating that the skills and training should be taken care of by the province of Quebec, we as a government are pushing for the reduction of those trade barriers and increasing employment. We are also taking other measures besides the national apprenticeship program. We are bringing in, as we have announced, an infrastructure program right across the country to increase employment. We believe that by breaking down these barriers and allowing the transfer of skills across the provinces we will achieve success.

[Translation]

**Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to what was said by the last two or three speakers and I would like to say I agree entirely with the statements of the member for Roberval. On the other hand, I am concerned by what I heard coming from the government members who have not been reassuring since the beginning of this debate. True enough, nothing has been decided yet as regards cuts in social programs, but I can tell you that this morning's *La Presse* outlines major problems in the area of social housing in Valleyfield, in my riding. Compared to the average of 16.9 per cent for the province, in Valleyfield, 19.3 per cent of the people have to give more than half their salary for rent.

There is nothing reassuring in the government's remarks on the next budget as far as social housing is concerned. The situation is disastrous and urgent; the government must immediately find a solution and restore financial assistance for social housing.

As far as the workforce is concerned, we have been talking about this for a long time now. Quebec has its own manpower development programs. I see no need for a continuing debate or discussion between the two levels of government since it could slow down the implementation of those programs. I regret that the federal government is asking Quebec for Canada-wide manpower programs. We have our own programs; all we need now is the money to implement them.

You say my time is up, Madam Speaker, but I wanted to stress these two points.

[English]

**Mr. Strahl:** Madam Speaker, I would like to advise the House that pursuant to Standing Order 43, our speakers on this motion will be dividing their time in half.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville):** Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the Minister of Human Resources Development for his commitment to the process of change. I find his remarks both refreshing and encouraging. This commitment to the process of change that the government proposes generates genuine hope for the future.

However, I wish to remind the government of the hope we had in 1985 when a new government launched a royal commission on unemployment insurance. Then in 1986 those hopes were dashed when the Forget commission issued its final report and dozens of good ideas were disregarded because of opposition attacks on a few ideas that needed a bit more work and more input from common sense Canadians. Adversarial politics reached its zenith in the 1980s. Canadians expect that Parliament in the nineties will be both different and better. Canadians expect that the good ideas brought forward in Parliament should be implemented regardless of which member or which party initiates them.

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(1720)

In my reply to the speech from the throne last week I talked about how our safety nets are catching more people than the fish nets in Newfoundland have been catching cod in the past few years. While many people have been saved by our safety nets, there is a growing number who are caught and trapped in them.

W5 reported last Thursday night that one in every four people in Toronto is dependent on transfer payments from the government. Even in my home province of Saskatchewan where our unemployment rate is always low because many people move out of province when they become unemployed, the statistics are still alarming. Spending on social programs has increased seven times between 1972 and 1992, and as of September 1993 there were almost 40,000 welfare recipients in Saskatchewan, a 13 per cent increase in the last year.

The tragedy here is that 49 per cent of welfare recipients were considered fully employable.

Our challenge is to give Canadians new hope for the future. Can we give them new hope by going deeper into debt? I think not. For years the cry from special interest groups has been to spend more and more money, and it has not helped. The problem is quickly going from bad to worse.

The Newfoundland Economic Recovery Commission recently published a report called "A Proposal for a New Income Supplementation Program and Other Reforms to the Income Security System". Page 2 of this report outlines some of the weaknesses in our current income security system. First, the system discourages self-employment and small scale enterprise. Second, the system undermines personal and community initiatives. Third, the system undermines the importance of education. Fourth, the system distorts the efforts of local development groups. Fifth, the system creates disincentives to work. Sixth, the system impedes productivity for employers.

Page 6 of the same report states: "On the whole the current system has induced an unconscionable degree of dependency which is unfair to contributors to the unemployment insurance fund and in light of recent fiscal restraints is not sustainable".

In order to address this crisis, Newfoundland has proposed to replace both unemployment insurance and social assistance with an income supplementation plan that would direct over 85 per cent of the money currently spent on these programs to the people in Newfoundland who need them most. I agree with the thrust of the Newfoundland proposal, which would basically eliminate the duplication of federal and provincial programs that have ended up serving much the same purpose and many of the same clients.

Last week my hon. friend from Medicine Hat outlined some key principles that should govern this process of modernization and restructuring of the unemployment insurance program.

First, he stated that all stakeholders must have a real voice in the process. Second, decisions must be made in the long term best interests of the country. Third, decisions should take into account the current economic, social, cultural and political environment. Fourth, the programs must have clear, measurable objectives. Fifth, all programs must be user friendly.

Some of the people in my constituency say our UI program is not user friendly but maybe it is a little too friendly to the users.

Sixth, all government programs should treat all Canadians the same, regardless of where they live. Finally, he said all government programs should promote and encourage personal responsibility and initiative.

Some principles of my own that I would like to add to my hon. friend's list are as follows:

(a) Our social programs must be financially sustainable in the long term.

(b) Our social programs must make people less dependent on government. There should be incentives built right into the system that would wean people off the system and not make them more dependent on it.

(c) Our social programs should be designed so that there are incentives for the public service when the program objectives are achieved. For example, public servants should be rewarded for reducing spending. They should be rewarded for lowering taxes, rewarded for increasing the number of new business starts and expansions, and ultimately rewarded for lowering unemployment.

(1725)

(d) Our social programs should be designed to eliminate all duplication among the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

(e) Our social programs should learn from the lessons of the past and be designed to eliminate the abuse to the system and the outright fraud that hurts every Canadian taxpayer and robs them.

(f) Our social programs should be targeted to those who most need them.

(g) The need for social programs should be based on family or household income and be administered through the income tax system. I believe we should have one income security program that would replace all others.

(h) Our final proposal for reform of our social programs should pass regional fairness tests.

(i) Whatever the final package of social reforms looks like, the majority of Canadians should be in favour of it.

How we manage this process of change will go a long way to determine how successful the end result will be. The process has to be truly open to new ideas, even radical new ideas. The

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process should be open to new ideas from all Canadians, not just the so-called elite.

The best design for our social programs will come from an open bottom up process. It is time to start putting our trust in the common sense of common people. As we embark on this process of change, we could learn something from the private sector.

Every year the Fraser Institute holds an economy-in-government competition. This competition is open to all Canadians. Canadians are asked to submit ideas to the Fraser Institute on how to save government money without reducing services. A panel of experts reviews the submissions and selects the finalists, and the finalists submit complete proposals. The panel reviews the proposals and selects the winners, who win substantial cash prizes.

The whole process works much like a suggestion award program. The Fraser Institute publishes the winning proposals and sends them to the federal and provincial governments. I recommend that the government seriously consider this kind of approach to kick off this process of reform.

This suggestion award approach would be exciting. It would permit all Canadians to get directly involved in the modernization and restructuring of our social programs and it would reward those Canadians who come up with the good ideas that government implements.

If the government is interested in the grassroots approach, the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development could design and administer the suggestion award program.

In conclusion, fishermen in Saskatchewan have designated many lakes as catch-and-release lakes. This means one can catch as many fish as one wants but one releases them so they can continue to grow and propagate, providing more fun and relaxation for sport fishermen and, I might add, generating more revenue for the government. Maybe we should start a catch-and-release program for those unfortunate people who have got caught in our social safety nets so they can be retrained, find work and, I might add again, generate more revenue for the government.

I look forward to participating in this exciting process of change.

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, in my time I would like to address the remarks made by the member.

I have to say that on a number of issues I would agree in terms of where the speaker would have us go. He mentioned things such as a consultative process that would buy Canadians into the new programs the government will get to. He mentioned the

need for a consolidated income program, which I would also support.

The difference, however, is what would motivate the direction that is proposed. I made note of the fact that he mentioned that the UI program is unfair to contributors—or there was a reference to that—or that sometimes UI is too user friendly. As a contributor to unemployment insurance, I would rather be me than most people in Canada who have to draw on that benefit.

(1730)

If there is an unfairness out there, if there is someone who needs relief and needs the government to take their side, I really believe it is the people on the other side of the spectrum who need my contributions, because I really believe they are a lot worse off than I am.

Having said that, I look forward to the debate. I think it is important that Canadians buy into the programs they are called upon to finance and support. It is important for the people who receive benefits from these programs to know that Canadians support these programs as well. I welcome the opportunity to debate this. I suspect it is going to be an interesting debate.

In large part the kinds of change promoted by the previous speaker and the kinds of change promoted by the government side are similar. Maybe it is just the motivation that is a little different in terms of who it is we are trying to help.

**Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the comments that have just been made. I also appreciate the atmosphere that exists in this House at the present time. It is non-confrontational and we are working together. We do not have all the solutions, but I think we can work together toward some of them.

One thing mentioned was the unemployment insurance. If we had taken some of the recommendations of the Forget commission and implemented them, if we had put UI on an actuarially sound basis where the premiums paid for it and employers and employees were responsible for administering it, we would not have the deficit or the debt that we have at the present time. It is good to implement some of these recommendations and not just throw out the baby with the bath water.

I look forward to working together on this. I do not know if there was a question asked, but those would be my comments. We should try to get some of these plans on a more financially sound basis. We cannot continue to go into debt at the rate we are now. It is going to threaten all of our social programs. The interest payments, over \$40 billion, are horrendous, and that is going to bring this country to its knees. We have to do something right now to preserve our social programs by being careful about how we spend our money.



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**Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North):** It is a privilege and a great honour to stand and address the House. Again I would like to thank the citizens of Surrey North for providing me with this opportunity.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to you on your successful appointment to the position of Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons. It is a challenging role at the best of times but even more so now, with over 200 brand-new members of Parliament here. I am confident that we will receive the guidance and direction needed to participate successfully in the ways of the House. I wish you every success in that role.

Today I will address health care. Specifically I will direct my remarks to the national forum on health and to women regarding health. My remarks on both topics will be brief and general in nature in order to comment on both today.

First I would like to congratulate the hon. member on her appointment to the position of Minister of Health. I wish her success in her new and challenging role.

Since health care is a major interest of mine, I shall be following closely the activities of the government in this field. I can assure the minister I will assist her to meet the health care challenges ahead by providing constructive criticism and alternate options whenever it seems necessary.

I commend the government on its decision to recognize health care as a high-priority social program. I think very few, if anyone, could find fault with that decision. Its agreement to continue to support and fund this program is encouraging news, and its objective to seek more efficient ways to spend our tax dollars in this field is even better news.

The question before us is the nature and effects of these more efficient ways. The establishment of a forum on health as a vehicle to gather data from as many sources as possible, to identify these more efficient ways, has been mentioned by the government in its red book, in the speech from the throne and in the minister's speech here last Friday, to name but a few occasions.

(1735)

I think we can safely say that this will come to pass in the near future. It seems a main objective of this forum is not to change from the five main principles of our health care system, but to identify alternate methods or to streamline the existing ones so as to allow us to continue with and even enhance our health care programs while maintaining these five main principles.

In her speech the Minister of Health offered some suggestions as to how this may be achieved, and many of her suggestions are echoed by other groups such as the Canadian Nurses Association. In a brief prepared by this association entitled *Nurses Make a Difference*, reference is made to such things as better use of

health resources, greater public involvement, more equitable access and so forth.

I understand there is a project presently under way at the University of Ottawa that is being funded by both federal and provincial funding sources as well as from some professional associations and private enterprise sources. This group is examining specifically cost effectiveness in our health care system and is also offering suggestions or recommendations, some of which are very similar to those made in the speech by the Minister of Health.

Opinions and options about health care have been expressed by health care professionals, other professional groups, the general public and our colleagues in this and other Houses across the nation. Potential solutions range from managing our resources better, changing the structure of transfer payments, increasing the provincial jurisdiction over health, and increasing public awareness, to name a few.

I welcome the decision to establish a national forum on health care so that these and other possible options can be identified and debated to produce a solution to our economic difficulties in maintaining a high standard of health care for all Canadians.

I return to the Canadian Nurses Association brief once more. It also mentions the need for national health goals, and that nurses and nursing associations across our country support this. It seems that in September 1991 an agreement was obtained from the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of health to establish a process to develop national health goals. To date little action, if any at all, has been taken to this end. I recommend to the Minister of Health that the development of national health goals become another objective for the national forum on health.

I shall now turn to my second topic. Reference has been made to women as having special conditions or requiring special attention in the health care field. The Minister of Health said: "Women do have special conditions, from osteoporosis to menopause, and they merit equal attention from research to treatment, to care and prevention." One could say the same thing about men, by changing two words, women to men, and menopause to prostate.

I caution our use of the word special in this context. Special tends to imply a situation or circumstance that differs from the norm or status quo. The normal composition of the human race is female and male or women and men. The biological nature of the body structure and, to some extent, the physiological aspects are the reasons for the two categories or components.

I advocate that neither one of these components, the male or the female, should be seen as special unto itself, but both should be seen as equal parts of the whole of the human race, and that our health care system should be addressing the needs of the

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human race as a whole by meeting the needs of both components and not singling out one over the other.

Today we recognize this as a weak area in our health care programs, a weakness in the sense that our main focus has been and still is more on one component than the other. I believe that applying the word special to this weak area in our system, in this case the programs for women, will lead to approximately half the Canadian population being seen as a special needs group, a special interest group or possibly even a minority group. Such a concept will be detrimental in successfully achieving equal status for and equal attention to the needs of both sexes, genders or components, and thus the entire human race. I repeat that we should use caution when using the word special so as not to single out one component or sex over the other.

(1740)

My time for speaking is slipping away rather quickly it seems. In closing I would remind the government that the promotion of health and the prevention of disease must continue to be the major focus in our deliberations on our health care programs.

I also advise the government to employ a wellness approach versus an illness approach as we seek solutions to manage our health care resources more efficiently and effectively. In this time of fiscal restraint we face many challenges in our nation and an efficient health care program is but one, and a very important one, for the well-being of all Canadians.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the first speech of the hon. member and I would like to express my congratulations to her on her comments.

I listened to her speech very carefully. I want to ask her about what seems to me to be a lack of a recognition that much of the health research over the last decades in this country, and maybe the industrialized world, has been focused on men.

For example, I believe there is much more information on heart disease in the male than there is in the female. I do not think in our program we are talking about distinguishing between men and women in terms of the care they need when something is wrong when they are sick. I think we are focusing on the fact that there is not enough data and not enough history available on the special health needs of women.

I wonder if the hon. member would explain in more detail what she meant and whether she is prepared to recognize that there is very much lacking in our database and in our research with regard to the health needs of women.

**Ms. Bridgman:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments on my first speech. I would also like to say that possibly we are saying the same thing but using different words.

I agree with him that today and in the past the emphasis has been on men in health care. I personally can recall that the average height of a human being when I was studying was that of the average man and at that time he was considered to be 5 feet, 7 inches tall.

What I am saying is that the component of women and women's needs have not been addressed. It should be seen as a weakness in our overall assessment or how we are approaching health care. Instead of looking at this as being a special area it should be looked at as being part of the whole. At the present time we are much better with our approach toward the male body than we are to the female body.

My fear is that we may go through the next 100 years by putting women's health before men's. Let us get matters even and look at it as a whole. There are two sexes.

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to commend the hon. member for Surrey North on her first speech. I will be very brief.

She mentioned consultation in regard to the national health forum. I would like to bring something to her attention and get her reaction. In my constituency of Fredericton—York—Sunbury we are holding a forum of our own on February 27 that will involve probably 100 residents of the riding. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and the minister of health in the province of New Brunswick have agreed to be there. In that way we intend to promote participation in this debate of all the people that can make it. It will be a televised discussion in the riding. My guess is that we will have between 100 and 200 people there. We are going to prepare for it with a lot of background information. Many of the stakeholders are participating, but also health care consumers and many people with alternative ideas on how health should be dealt with. I would welcome the member's comments on that.

(1745)

Just before I sit down, the member mentioned her support for the five principles of the Canada Health Act. I welcome her support for our position against user fees being used in the provinces. I would also like her to comment on that.

**Ms. Bridgman:** Mr. Speaker, first I will comment on the health forum. It is not a new role that we are looking at in relation to gathering data on health problems or situations. In my address I said that there were already a great number of people out there who have seen the deficiency in the economic situation, have already been conducting studies on it and have

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been offering recommendations either at a federal or provincial level. I have named two such groups.

Instead of reinventing the wheel over the next few months, we must make sure that these groups are part of the national health forum and that many other new ideas are brought forth from other groups or forums such as the ones the member is talking about. Maybe this is something that we should all be looking at to get the data. However there are people out there already who have some tremendous ideas that certainly should be in front of the forum.

As far as the five basic principles of the health care program are concerned, I do not think anybody is arguing them. They are the basis for Canadians having one of the best health care programs in the world. User fees come into it as they are a component of one or more of those five principles. That aspect goes more to the management of achieving those five components and providing the service than being one of the five components.

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South):** Mr. Speaker, I noted the member for Surrey North indicated in her comments that the average height of a man was five feet, seven inches. I would be interested in what the average weight is at some point.

I have been sitting here trying to sort out exactly what it is that I want to say in only 10 minutes. This is an immense topic. I have spent most of my working life in what we are defining as the social services.

As a teenager I worked in the core area of my city in settlement houses. I have worked with handicapped people, the disabled and emotionally disturbed kids. I ended that portion of my career as the director of child welfare in my province. I have wrestled with some of these issues for some time.

It is interesting in a sense when I reflect on how I became involved in politics. It was in the mid-1970s. I received a call from a friend of mine who worked in an agency that was similar to the one I was directing at that point. He said that a politician wanted to speak to us, that he wanted to meet with a few people to talk about social policy.

I was a little unsure just what that meant because my view of politicians was like that of most people who are somewhat removed from the system, but I went. I was maybe a little in awe that somebody who we see on TV and who sits in a legislative chamber would want to talk to me. That night I met the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. We spent an entire evening just sitting on the couch with a few people talking about what was happening in social programs in the city of Winnipeg in 1975.

As we talked we sort of wrestled with what are the things that are helping people, what are the things that are supporting people, what are the things that are showing signs of success and

what are the things that need change. Therefore when I see Lloyd stand in the House—

**The Deputy Speaker:** You must refer to the member or the minister but not to the member by name. That is a strictly enforced rule in this place.

(1750)

**Mr Alcock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I cannot even argue the rule at this point. When I see the minister stand in the House I see him making the same offer. He is not standing to put on record a whole bunch of Liberal Party rhetoric. He is making a very genuine request: "I ask members of the House and all Canadians to work with my government to develop an action plan".

Obviously this is an area that interests me, so I read very carefully what the Leader of the Official Opposition and the lead speaker of the Reform Party had to say. I must say I was a little disappointed in what I heard coming from the Official Opposition. When I meet with members of the Official Opposition, when I talk to members of the Official Opposition, I hear them saying some fairly progressive things about social policy. I think they have a fundamental understanding of the issue. However when I heard their leader speak he said something I have become accustomed to hearing from the New Democratic Party in my province: "Don't touch anything. Don't change anything. You dasn't muss a hair of this program". That is unfortunate because I think there is a great deal of wisdom to be shared with the House as we search for a solution to make the lives of Canadians better.

Frankly I do not know how to respond to the intervention by the Reform Party. I read it several times and made some notes on it because I was trying to figure it out. It seemed to say we have to cut everything today so we will have it tomorrow. There is a curiousness in the logic there that escapes me somewhat.

These are serious problems. They affect the lives of real people living in our communities. We have right now a tremendous opportunity. In the mid-1960s in Canada and the United States, at a time when government had huge revenues, we created the social safety net or the core of it. Some pieces were already in place. Canada has been a progressive country for a long time. We created a network of services that was the result of our best thinking at that time. We have had experience with it. We have learned over time that some of the things we did were good and that some were not so good.

We learned, for example, that a lot of the services that we provide tend not to empower people. They tend to remove their ability to function independently. We confronted that in the provision of services in a great many communities.

We have a fiscal crisis right now. If we want to look at the glass half full side of the fiscal crisis, maybe it is a good thing the crisis is forcing this debate. Maybe we will finally challenge some of our assumptions about how we provide help to people.

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However let us do it from the perspective of providing some assistance.

I want to make a few quick suggestions to frame out some of the structural issues that I think confront us. Technology offers a tremendous opportunity right now. We now have the technological capacity to begin to understand what is happening out there and to look at the ways in which our services collide. Over the years we have built up a patchwork of services.

The classic case in the business of child welfare that I know best is when one calls for a consultation on a particular individual and 15 agencies show up. Obviously there is an abuse, a misuse or an inefficiency in the way in which we use the resources we have. Technology gives us some opportunities to identify that, to iron that out and to understand not the reality presented in the newspapers every day. If we read the newspapers every day we see terrible problems. In fact when we begin to look beneath the headlines at how people are doing we forget that the murder rate is going down, that people are getting healthier and that people are living longer. In fact we forget that we have succeeded enormously in the programs we have delivered.

We forget it was only a few decades ago when to be old meant to be poor, to be old meant to be living in substandard housing. Today they cannot rent out all the bachelor apartments in housing for the elderly. The elderly have now achieved, because of the programs we have created, a certain level of wealth that has allowed them to live independently. That is a good thing, not a bad thing. That is a thing to be proud of as a Canadian, not to be afraid of.

The Official Opposition presented some interesting issues about interjurisdictional areas.

(1755)

The minister whom I cannot mention by name has made comment in the past that when he was a minister in a previous government between 1980 and 1984, he often spent more of his time debating interjurisdictional issues than he did debating problematic issues.

Maybe it is possible to look at the fact, for example, that the federal government delivers support to people directly. It does right now through unemployment insurance. We forget that we give support in many different ways through student aid, pensions and half the income security costs. Maybe we should look at providing a basic level of support, maybe a guaranteed annual income or a basic level of living support to people who require it. That may be a good idea. Maybe we should allow the provinces to look at the services that get added on to that to reflect local needs. It would be a very radical change. Maybe it is time we begin to think about it.

The last couple of Reform speakers mentioned the income tax system. That is an idea that is worth exploring. It is interesting there has long been a concept called negative income tax. It says that we make our tax system very progressive: when we earn money we contribute to the community, we contribute more as we earn more and when we do not have the capacity to earn for whatever reason we receive basic support. That support increases as we move further and further into difficulty. A proposal like that was put forward in the 1970s by Richard Nixon. It was very progressive. I see the member sort of struggling with it, but I think there are some aspects to it worth exploring.

I would genuinely like to see us sitting here struggling with how to make the lives of Canadians better, how to help them. The speaker before the last one said that we needed radical new ideas. I would like to hear a radical new idea from the Reform Party on how we help a million children living in poverty. I would like to hear an idea like that.

On the one hand we talk about a new form of debate, but on the other hand we have the same old kind of politics of just sitting and picking little holes in things. Let us get some radical ideas on the table. Let us make this a better country for the people.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member for Winnipeg South. I would like to make a few comments on his speech. Obviously there are political disagreements in terms of philosophies in the House, but I want to ask the member a couple of questions about some of the things he said in his 10-minute usage of time.

He attributed to my leader words to the effect of "cut it now so you will save it later". We in the House need to budget our own personal finances in such a way that they do not come after us. We need to live within our means. Do we then just spend it all now? What happens later?

Let me use the analogy of credit cards. Is the member then saying that he would be happy or he thinks it is advisable for those of us in the country who are responsible for social policy to use our American Express card to pay off our Visa?

Somehow this vicious cycle needs to end. Having worked in the child welfare system he realizes how important it is to look after the lives of children. What if his government that is responsible for the funding came to him in the province of Manitoba and said: "The gig is up; there is no more cash?" How is he going to protect the lives of the children? Should we not specifically target spending to make sure that the people who absolutely need it will get that funding? How will American

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Express paying off his Visa bill make sure that we do look after one million poor children in Canada?

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to an opportunity to debate this question at great length with the member for Beaver River and other members of her party in the House.

The problem is twofold. Frankly I hear very simplistic things coming out of the Reform Party. I hear this constant noise about this being like a business; that if we are going to run it like a business and we have no money, we should cut off things, fire employees or lay people off, downsize. That is a fallacious understanding of how the economy works.

(1800)

In a business you do not set the interest rate. You do not set the exchange rate. You do not set the regulatory environment. You do not have a myriad of levers to pull or buttons to push in order to affect the lives of people. That kind of analogy is just a non starter for me.

The second thing is that it is a little like trying to change wheels on a moving car. You cannot abandon everybody who sits out there, everybody who receives support and help right now while you try to move to this brave new world. You have to move through some kind of transition.

There are tremendous opportunities to create efficiencies in the current system. The problem the member references in terms of the size of the economy and the size of the debt is a very serious one. Everybody in this House acknowledges that and it is one that must be confronted. I believe there are ways to find significant resources in the social policy envelope without harming a single individual.

If we step aside from some of the antiquated ways in which we have delivered services and move into the 1990s or if we even moved into the 1980s it would be an improvement. We could find some resources. There are other ways to find resources and they are in the management of this economy. They are in putting people back to work. They are in helping to revitalize the business community. Simply stepping back from the responsibility as a government is not good enough. It does not work.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked if there were anyone over here who could give him a radical new idea to support the millions of children who are living in poverty. This is a serious question.

**Mr. Alcock:** I am listening.

**Mr. McClelland:** What can we do to insure that the people who have children, particularly the fathers, support those children?

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my remarks empowerment and how we have tended through our programs to take power away from people. One way to empower people is to hold

them responsible for things. In my province we brought in a very aggressive policy of enforcing child support payments. That is a policy that could be looked at nationally.

I do not think you let people off the hook and buy them a free lunch or any of that kind of stuff. You have to treat them like powerful individuals, provide them with some supports and let them get on with the management of their own lives. You have to be there for them at times.

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the motion on the modernization and restructuring of our social security system which costs Canada at all levels of government \$130 billion a year.

We in this House are keenly aware of the dual mandate we have been given by the Canadian people. On one hand we are told to live within our means and cut the cost of government so as to reduce and ultimately eliminate our national fiscal deficit.

On the other hand we all know well that we must continue to provide the kinds of opportunities and services Canadians expect from their government to reduce or prevent the human deficit. I believe we can follow through on both orders. The two are interdependent.

What are the objectives of the review? We would like to find out what really works, to eliminate disincentives to work and training, to head off the alienation of youth and perhaps transform unemployment insurance as an instrument of re-education. We must synchronize our social security system, definitely not to reduce the spending per se but put more people back to work. The objective of the process is to allow a partnership among all of us in the review of the system and to seek the agreement of the provinces and thereby achieve a truly participatory process.

Why the need for this review? The realities are there. We have seen the increasing numbers of users of the system, the difficult transition to work, the duplication of government programs that we feel are no longer responsive to the needs of the day. We have noticed that there have been too many disincentives to work and so we would like to modernize the system.

(1805)

The ultimate objective at the end of the review is to have a modern social security system that sustains the ethic of work through its incentives and at the same time guarantees the security of citizens in their hour of most need.

I said earlier that the twin challenges of reducing the fiscal deficit and reducing the human deficit are interdependent. We cannot cut the fiscal deficit in isolation without due regard for the anguish of the unemployed, for the pain of the poor and their children, for the fear of the student facing escalating tuition fees, for the anxiety of seniors about their pensions. We should not betray the seniors who trusted their governments during

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their working years. Nor can we disregard the decay of our cities and municipalities which help secure our streets and our homes.

Cutting the fiscal deficit without taking heed of the human dimensions of cost cutting would be utter insensitivity and would constitute inept governance. At the same time, spending on economic and social programs for our citizens without attention to their efficiency and effectiveness, even in times of plenty, is poor stewardship and particularly in times of fiscal restraint would also constitute inept governance.

Our social assistance programs which include old age pensions, aid to education such as student loans, the Canada Assistance Plan, unemployment insurance, training grants and medicare ensure that there exists a form of social justice in Canada. Very often there is unfairness.

It is not fair when you have skills, education and qualifications and are denied employment opportunity due to a lack of available jobs or to discrimination, be it traditional or reverse, or to the inability to have one's credentials recognized in another province.

It is also unfair when immigrants and new citizens find no orderly process for accreditation of their foreign obtained credentials. It is unfair when you are unable to work because of an illness, injury or physical disability and are not provided with a means of overcoming it. It is unfair when after 65 years of paying into a pension plan your monthly cheques do not reflect the many years of hard work to earn your retirement.

The social justice contract under which this nation operates dictates that Canadians share their privileges and benefits so that no one is left stranded in times of great need.

Unemployment insurance is similarly designed for periods of crisis, to ensure that basic necessities continue to be provided for those who lose their pay cheques.

The idea is to see to it that misfortune, in and of itself, does not result in a loss of personal dignity. Social programs are not a haven for dependency. They exist to serve our fellow Canadians in their acute and genuine continuing needs.

This is the commitment of people and therefore of government, which makes such privileges possible. It is to people and to government that we must turn to fix our distressed social security system.

The numerous privileges our social security system offers are accompanied by a number of equally important obligations. It is incumbent on all members of society to use the system only

when needed. Abuse of the security net ultimately results in the funding hardship we now face.

We must remind those who are inclined to abuse the system through a public information program that the people footing the bills for their actions are their neighbours, their families, their parents and their friends. We must appeal to Canadians' innate sense of good citizenry.

It is crucial that people come to view social assistance as a treatment for the symptoms that ail them, and not as a definitive cure. Permanent relief can only come about after we have attacked the root causes of financial difficulties.

How can this be accomplished? A Canada-made modernization of our social security system should reflect our values, our priorities and our interests, thereby fostering pride in our citizens, who will then be loathe to abuse it.

The system might include measures such as the income supplement program being considered today in Newfoundland and which has been piloted in New Brunswick.

(1810)

It could also include provisions for an income contingency repayment plan for student loans and other programs such as the guaranteed annual income supplement. Let me reiterate that the key to achieving a successful betterment of our current social security system lies in our willingness to seek the input of Canadians.

As people on social assistance take on jobs not only will their self-esteem be restored but they would then begin to contribute to the growth of the economy as consumers and to government revenues through the taxes they would pay.

In conclusion, I would like to convey a message to my constituents and to all Canadians that we on the government side can achieve the dual mandate issued to us by voters. We can eliminate our national fiscal deficit while at the same time ensuring opportunities and services for Canadians in their hour of need. Citizens and government can work as partners to defend and strengthen our shared social values of equity, fairness, co-operation and generosity.

Then and only then can we help ensure the security and sensitivity of Canada's social programs for the present and for the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond):** Mr. Speaker, speaking as a woman who is aware of the problems of social development, I welcome this opportunity today to take part in this debate on

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social programs. In the riding I have the honour to represent in this House, like all regions in Quebec and Canada, we see daily so many examples of social problems that are unacceptable in a society that ranks among the wealthiest in the world.

The lingering recession in Quebec and Canada has added to the ranks of the unemployed and welfare recipients whose numbers were already unacceptable, considering the standard of wealth in our communities. That the federal system has failed is reflected in Quebec's high unemployment rate, low job rate and unusually high percentage of Canada's poor. According to the latest figures from Statistics Canada, nearly one-third or 31.82 per cent of low income families live in Quebec, although we represent only slightly more than 25 per cent of the population of Canada.

In the course of this debate, the Official Opposition intends to condemn any attempts to cut social programs targeted to the neediest in our society, while the government tolerates unfair taxation, the underground economy, costly and counterproductive government spending, and programs where taxpayers' money is being wasted, as a result of duplication by provincial and federal governments. The government is mistaken if it thinks it can deal with its financial crisis by drastically cutting social programs that are essential to maintaining a minimum of human dignity among the neediest in our society.

I would urge hon. members on both sides of this House to look at the many pockets of poverty that have emerged in their respective ridings during the latest recession, and realize that we must deal with the problem through effective programs instead of cutting into the basic essentials these people need. We believe that cutting social spending is the easy way out, to deal with budget problems caused by previous governments' failure to act. I would ask this government to use a little more imagination and provide some hope for the neediest in this country who are often the victims of government inefficiency.

What must be addressed are the real dangers that threaten the economies of Quebec and Canada and which, especially in the case of Quebec, are holding back economy recovery. We can point the finger at unemployment, the monetary policy, unfair taxation, duplication of services, which is not only costly but also inefficient, lack of expenditure control, and the unbearably high deficit the federal government unloads on Quebec and the provinces. Those are the many evils which put counterproductive pressures on social expenditures, and prove, beyond any doubt, the failure of the Canadian federalist system whose unchanging characteristic is that it cannot be renewed, in spite of the many attempts to do so.

(1815)

Fifty years after the publication of the first report outlining the premises for our social policy, things have not changed that

much. Due to poor management in the past few years, the state of our social security system is giving rise to a growing concern.

For social programs to be better integrated and more faithfully reflect national policy, we need uniform standards regarding efficiency, fairness, consistency and work incentives. These are the characteristics which should still be guiding us today. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

In the last few years, the federal government has in fact cut and altered social programs. Moreover, it has reduced transfer payments to the provinces and Quebec for their social programs. And, as I mentioned earlier in this House, neither Quebec nor the provinces are asking for charity in this respect. All they are doing is demanding what is owed them under a duly signed agreement, let us not forget that.

By raising the standards for unemployment insurance eligibility with Bill C-21, and later on, by imposing new conditions for entitlement with Bill C-113, the federal government gave notice that it had little respect for those who were the hardest hit by the recession.

While doing the less affluent such injustice, at the same time it made Quebec and the provinces bear a heavier portion of income security expenditures. In spite of further tax increases, the federal contribution to provincial governments for health care and social programs has drastically declined, shaking the very foundations of the system.

Between 1978 and 1993, the federal contribution for health care and post-secondary education dropped from 47 per cent to 34 per cent. This means that less money is channelled back to the provinces for established program financing. However, the standards that have to be met in the management of these programs are not being adjusted.

It is not surprising then to hear about user fees. By unloading its financial problems onto Quebec and the provinces, the federal government sees, as a result, the principles underlying the Canadian health policy being undermined.

Quebec and the provinces are faced with increased health care costs. This increase is due primarily to the following factors: the aging of the population, new medical technologies that are more costly and a significant increase in spending for pharmaceutical products.

Canadian and Quebec taxpayers give the federal government large amounts of money, some of which is earmarked for health care under the agreement of 1977. The problem is that, for the past 10 years, the federal government has not been giving back to Quebec and the provinces the portion that is rightfully theirs, thereby depriving them of the funds intended for health care. Instead, it transfers its deficit to Quebec and the provinces, all because of the inability of previous governments to control their spending. The federal government must be aware that, by increasing the tax burden for Quebec and the other provinces, it would create a two-tier health system, where the rich will be

able to afford health services while the underprivileged will tend to delay or forgo medical treatment.

(1820)

We believe in the basic principles of universality, integrality, accessibility, transferability and public management of the health system. What we are criticizing is the fact that these basic principles are being threatened, in every province including Quebec, by the inability of the federal government to honour its commitments.

If you decrease or freeze the federal transfer payments, you jeopardize our health system, which is the one component of our social programs we most rely on. In Quebec, according to the established programs financing legislation, 45 per cent of health cost was to be picked by Ottawa. However, faced with the economic crisis of the early 1980s and the disastrous state of our public finances, the federal government decided to unilaterally opt out, so that by 1992–93 the federal transfer share of health expenditures had dropped by 33 per cent.

This opting out process, often described by the Quebec government as unacceptable, unfair and incoherent, was not followed by a reduction in terms of federal intervention, since Ottawa is maintaining national standards and undertaking parallel programs, hence causing overlap problems. The end results, as I said earlier, are steady pressure for users' fees or other forms of billing, the delisting of some services, a service tax on drugs, drastic cuts in hospital budgets and outrageous waiting lists in many specialties.

Thus, the very foundation of our health insurance plan, that is free, universal and accessible care, is in jeopardy. That brings me back to my starting point: it is always those most in need who are the worst affected.

How can anyone speak about social programs without crying out against a level of poverty so high that 4.2 million people live in poverty in Canada, with Quebec being the main victim? There are 1.2 million children living in poverty and that hard core poverty is the fate of a large majority of single mothers and women raising a family alone. Let us turn now from the current costs of that unusual situation to assess the real issues underlying that crisis and its long-term impact.

Beyond the figures and the statistics, there are real people out there who hurt, who are sick and who go hungry. Those people wish the government would act responsibly, quit squandering money and find lasting remedies. We readily admit that people in government need to travel, but how many families could we get out of the mess for good with what it costs for a single Challenger flight? Every little bit helps.

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Many studies demonstrate a clear relation between poverty and bad health. According to a study by Health Quebec on the 25 most common health problems in Quebec, almost all of them were more acute among low income people than among wealthier people. Poor people consume more medicine than rich people and require more health care.

A report made public by Campaign 2000 revealed a 30 per cent increase in the number of children living in poverty in Canada. In addition to being a bigger drain on the health care budget because they get sick more often, these children suffer more often from learning problems and are more prone to becoming school dropouts, twice as often as the children of the wealthy. Finally and most regrettably, they are more likely to become dependent upon social assistance than to participate in development.

(1825)

In order to better control the global state of health of the population in Quebec and in Canada, and hence to limit health care costs, we must first wage a merciless war against poverty. Therefore, those considerations have to be taken into account in the review of our social programs. Ignoring them would have the effect of worsening the spiraling deficit and the spiraling poverty. We have more than enough of one tragedy already.

The only effective remedy against poverty is the creation of long-term jobs for people who will have first enjoyed adequate benefits. In this context, the direct duplication of similar federal programs and provincial initiatives is an absolute waste of public money and is also, in most cases, counterproductive. Quebec wants an end to this mess in the manpower and job training sector which costs its taxpayers \$250 million every year.

In this area, as in many others, the existing rivalry must be replaced by effectiveness and efficiency. Our debt as well as the chilling reality of the unemployment rate and the number of welfare recipients do not allow us to condone waste through sheer stubbornness. Administrative overlapping generates real costs, one of the most important of which is the inability to solve the problem of poverty, especially in Quebec.

Poverty, especially in the case of young people, leads directly to welfare, drug and alcohol consumption, sometimes jail, and even despair and suicide. The fact is that the drop-out rate in schools is alarming. In some districts of the island of Montreal, close to half of the students quit school without any diploma and, as we all know, dropping out of school leads directly to poverty, since the job market massively rejects people without diplomas. According to Statistics Canada, 65 per cent of the new jobs between 1990 and 1993 were filled by university graduates. No speech made by governments on employment makes any sense if it is not supported by an energetic program to change



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the objectives and the education system itself. Young Quebecers and Canadians must have access to a very high quality education to be able to take advantage of the need for a highly-skilled manpower.

The federal and provincial governments cannot afford to waste time and energy in futile bickering over who has jurisdiction, at the expense of a coherent and structured financing for post-secondary education.

We believe it is more urgent than ever that a House committee look into government spending in order to eliminate waste and duplication, and to reduce operating expenditures. This would enable us to allocate the budgets necessary to maintain social programs.

We also believe it would be more appropriate to cut military spending rather than reduce the budget for health care. We also propose a courageous tax reform to eliminate tax evasion, unfairness, as well as tax shelters such as family trusts, which only benefit the wealthy. This type of reform, and not a charge led against the poor through cuts to social programs, would get our support.

Those are useful solutions to help solve the budget crisis which we are concerned about. However, we will strongly oppose any violation of the commitment made by this government during the election campaign not to dismantle social and health programs.

In conclusion, there is no doubt whatsoever that the health of Quebecers and Canadians is closely related to poverty.

(1830)

This House and the government have the moral obligation to put in place the necessary mechanisms to provide for the urgent needs of more than four million people, mostly women and children, for whom poverty has replaced hope.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Environment and Deputy Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I could have sworn that I was in the Quebec National Assembly listening to PQ members. The same fancy words, inconsistency, unfairness, inefficiency. Sure, and the hon. member who just spoke and her colleagues are the only ones who possess virtue. They are the only champions of the cause of the poor and the disadvantaged and, of course, any federal initiative by definition does not work.

I would like to remind the hon. member that it was a federal Liberal government that instituted universal medicare in Canada as well as old age pensions, the Canada pension plan that the Quebec pension plan takes after, the UI program and guaranteed income maintenance programs for the less fortunate element of our society and our seniors. If you check in our red book, our electoral platform, every subject you have raised is in there:

education for young people, apprenticeship programs to start doubling the number of graduates immediately, childcare programs, pre-natal nutrition programs for women, with a focus on the underprivileged, as well as a full range of social, education and training programs. This entire book deals with just that. You say that this government has two months and a half—

**The Speaker:** Order. I must remind the hon. member that members are to address only the Chair, never one another.

**Mr. Lincoln:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member being a paragon of virtue stated that all the faults of government, our common government, at the federal and provincial level, would of course fall back on the provincial government. I sat for nine years in the Quebec National Assembly. Problems arise in areas of common jurisdiction. We all know that there is duplication and that adjustments are needed. Just this morning, the Minister of Human Resources Development, responding to questions from the opposition, said that he was negotiating to avoid duplication in the area of manpower.

The other day, the Minister of Finance met with his provincial counterparts and managed to come up with a tax equalization payment program guaranteed for the next five years which was approved unanimously by the provinces, including Quebec.

Two and a half months later, the hon. member comes and criticizes us for having done nothing. But that is what this debate is all about, to hear constructive ideas, not only the destructive ones, to talk about previous governments from 1978 to 1988 that her leader was a member of. He too flew on a Challenger and had extravagant expenses when he was ambassador in Paris. Perhaps those amounts should be transferred to the less fortunate as well.

The hon. member and her colleagues must also keep in mind that this debate is an opportunity for us to find together the remedies we will take to help the underprivileged. Criticizing, being destructive and saying that the federal government is at fault, while they, over there, are all virtuous, will not resolve anything. You solve problems by working together, in partnership, by making constructive suggestions.

(1835)

Having listened to the hon. member for 20 minutes and heard nothing but a litany of criticism, I could have sworn this was the same speech I had heard back in the days when I was sitting across from the Péquists either as a government member or as a member of the opposition.

Everything and anything that goes wrong in heaven or on earth is the fault of the federal government. That may not seem to change, but we will change. We will listen patiently and try to work constructively, in partnership—and I hope that the opposition does not expect us to act on our own—to solve the problems of the less fortunate members of our society. We will solve them

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together with constructive solutions, and that is what this debate is about.

**Mrs. Picard:** The policy that the hon. member has just alluded to is outmoded. The fact of the matter, as I mentioned clearly in my speech, is that Quebec and the provinces are facing a different situation. With respect to health care, I stated that health care costs had increased because of the situations I described earlier. The problem right now is that the government is not channelling back to the provinces the funds that are rightfully theirs.

As a result, the provinces cannot balance their health care budgets. Take, for example, Sainte-Croix Hospital in my constituency. It is experiencing an acute crisis because it is underfunded. This facility serves a population of 80,000 and has a shortage of 100 acute care beds. Hospital equipment is outdated and there is shortage of specialists. The situation is growing more critical by the moment and it is always the less fortunate who suffer.

That is what I wished to say to my hon. colleague.

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte):** Mr. Speaker, during the presentation of my hon. colleague, the member across the way, there were a couple of points that became very obvious, the first being the reference to programs currently not working in Quebec and also that federalism had failed.

I would suggest that with the minister's tabling of his report and his release on Monday of this week that the exact opposite has occurred. There is no question as the old saying goes, at least in my riding, if it ain't broke don't fix it.

My hon. colleague's statement that in Quebec it is not working quite obviously there appears to be a need to upgrade, to review, reform and make better the programs that we have for all Canadians and that is exactly what the minister stated.

I would like to quote once again from the minister's own words. He said: "I am asking the House, our colleagues in the Senate, our counterparts at the provincial and territorial level, members of business and labour sectors, the leaders of our communities and indeed every Canadian to throw out the old ideas, put aside vested interests", which the hon. member referred to, "and begin thinking of the kind of ground rules we need in Canada to restore fairness, hope and a sense of security".

I would ask the hon. member to refer to those in light of her suggestion that federalism has failed and the programs are not working in Quebec.

I believe just the opposite with the minister's statement here in the House and she has an opportunity to relate, to provide the input that the minister is asking for.

(1840)

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for St. Catharines, may I first congratulate my fellow colleagues for being part of the 35th Parliament of Canada.

As this is my first speech in this House, I would particularly like to congratulate the hon. member for Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold on his election as Speaker of the House. I have had the personal privilege of knowing and working with the hon. member for many years and I know that he will continue in the tradition he has set as a parliamentarian in this Chamber.

I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the constituents in the riding of St. Catharines. The city of St. Catharines, better known as the Garden City, is located on the southwest shore of Lake Ontario in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula.

The famous Welland ship canal runs through our community bypassing Niagara Falls and linking Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The riding is surrounded by vineyards, tender fruit orchards and the picturesque view of the Niagara escarpment.

St. Catharines is also home of the great educational and cultural organizations. Brock University has gained recognition not only in education but through its national basketball championship team. The folk arts festival held in May celebrates with 35 local ethnic organizations and is always one of the high points of the year.

The city is also home to the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta and the famous Niagara Grape and Wine Festival. In all modesty I suggest that St. Catharines is a microcosm of Canada. We are proving daily that people can and do live in harmony.

Over the years I have had the pleasure of serving my community as director and chairman of many organizations. My involvement in these organizations will I am sure assist me in serving my constituents more effectively.

Unfortunately the difficult economic times experienced by Canadians in recent years has hit St. Catharines and the Niagara Peninsula particularly hard. Unemployment in St. Catharines has reached record levels. Automotive and small manufacturing businesses, the major employers in the area, have seen major restructuring and downsizing. The St. Catharines private shipyard has been forced to downsize its work base from 1,100 to some 200 employees. "Job loss grows in Niagara" read a recent headline in the St. Catharines *Standard*. Statistics show that joblessness is not only more prevalent today but joblessness also lasts longer.

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Many of the social programs set up in the past decades no longer serve Canadians as they should. The result is a misalignment between what the government should be doing to assist Canadians and what the outdated programs are providing.

We are here today in the House of Commons to discuss the motion of the Minister of Human Resources Development that a committee of this House consult with Canadians and make our recommendations on modernizing and restructuring our social security system.

Our challenge is clear. We are committed to maintaining Canada's social programs but we are also faced with the economic reality of the national debt which absorbs almost 25 cents of every government dollar.

It is clear that a fundamental change in our social programs must occur if we are to effectively put people back to work and reduce the deficit. As a former executive from industry, I would like to focus my remarks on education and training and the importance of co-operation between business, industry, government and the educators in setting priorities for change.

My background in industry has taught me the importance of education. Future economic health means investing in people. That is the key. The question is this. How do we train and retrain Canadians so that they are effective and active members of the work force?

Do we need to spend more money? Canada presently spends more than \$44 billion a year on schools, colleges and universities. We devote 6.2 per cent of the gross domestic product on education, ranking fifth among OECD countries and despite these high expenditures rising unemployment rates create a growing concern that our system is off target.

(1845)

It has been mentioned many times before that youth unemployment is of special concern. In June of last year while the national unemployment was some 11 per cent, unemployment for young people between the ages 15 and 24 was approximately 18 per cent. In 1993, 400,000 young people were looking for work each month.

In theory the employment system assists in the retraining of the unemployed for greater long-term employment. In reality most funding goes directly to pay unemployment insurance benefits with a small portion remaining for training.

The financial overview for 1993-94 shows that while unemployment benefits will be approximately \$18 billion, spending on training and other active measures totals \$3.6 billion. We are spending. We need to spend more effectively and setting priorities for effective spending for future jobs cannot be accomplished blindly by governments. Educators, business and industry must be involved.

In the mid-1980s Canadian business spent .25 per cent of gross domestic product on training and education. In Germany this figure was 1.96 per cent, in Great Britain 2.17 per cent, in Japan 1.4 per cent and in the U.S., .66 per cent.

Business must realize, and some do, that the future is at stake. Poorly trained employees cost business money. Business must participate not only in the funding of programs but in the reform of the process being started by the government. More and more education will be key to competitiveness as higher levels of education are required within the work force overall.

In 1986 just over 45 per cent of jobs required less than 12 years of education. That figure is estimated to drop to just over 32 per cent between now and the year 2000. Conversely, jobs requiring 17 or more years of education represented only 22.4 per cent of jobs in 1986 but should rise to almost 50 per cent by the turn of the century.

The government's election platform in the speech from the throne reaffirmed the commitment to investing in people. We will work with business, educators and Canadians to ensure that a final plan for modernizing our social programs is a workable solution. Specifically we must work with the provinces and the private sector to help youth be prepared for the transition from school to work.

The youth service corps is a priority and the Secretary of State for Training and Youth has already completed a round of consultation on the corps. Apprenticeship or internship programs prepare youth for the work force. We are committed to bridging the gap between education and employment.

Training and skills development must also extend into the present work force. Several minutes ago I spoke of the increased training levels required for jobs of the future. An enormous portion of the present work force will also require retraining and educational upgrading in the future.

As the Minister of Human Resources Development said in the House this past week: "If we are to speak of reform of the social safety net we must include in that discussion the issues of training and education". Unemployment insurance, social assistance and education are all interconnected. We must address all of these to create, in the minister's words "a total fabric of opportunity".

Better trained employees create better systems. They reduce waste, they make business more competitive and in the end reach that objective of creating more jobs. The changes must be comprehensive. It must include Canadians; Canadian business, Canadian industry, Canadian educators and it must be done immediately. In the Niagara area, the Niagara Peninsula Industry Council is just beginning and is starting to make improvements in our area.

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(1850)

Today we begin an action plan for reforming our social security system. I am pleased the minister has asked me and members of this House to participate in the working groups. We have a lot of work to do, but I join my colleagues in welcoming the challenges ahead. I encourage all Canadians to participate in this process.

In closing, I would like to thank my constituents in St. Catharines, my family on whom I rely, my wife, Carol, daughters, Tamara and Virginia, and all of those in the riding who worked tirelessly to give me the opportunity to serve in this Chamber.

The riding of St. Catharines has been represented by some very effective members from my party, namely Jim McNulty, Harry Cavers and the Hon. Gib Parent. It is a proud moment for me to join my predecessors in service to my city of St. Catharines. I look forward to representing St. Catharines in this great House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the comments made by the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis a few moments ago. I had the honour of serving with him in the National Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Order. You can only ask a question or comment on the speech of the hon. member for St. Catharines. Do you have a question?

**Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Very well, Mr. Speaker.

Then I will simply follow your instructions and comment on this debate and on the position taken by our party and by the government. Obviously, we would like our party and the Reform Party to reach a consensus on the big issue of the allocation of public funds.

We know that Ottawa collects roughly \$28 billion in taxes from Quebec each year and we would like to know how this money is redistributed. For the past several years—and the \$500 billion debt confirms this—we have been making suggestions. We are always accused of harping on the same old Péquiste arguments. However, if the government accepted our suggestions, then we not go over the same ground again and again.

We are calling for an end to duplication of services. This is nothing new. We are calling for an end to cuts in social housing. The situation is pitiful in my riding. There is a shortage of social housing and yet the government is poised to make further cuts in this area. A decade ago, the soup kitchen in my region served up about 35 meals a day. Today, it serves up 400 meals a day. This is completely unacceptable.

We have made suggestions to the government as to what measures should be contained in its upcoming budget. We proposed the elimination of family trusts and we targeted such areas as duplication in the taxation and services fields. For the

sake of greater efficiency, we are asking that the federal government withdraw from manpower training programs and hand this responsibility over to Quebec.

In conclusion, let me say that Mr. Le Hir, the president of the Association des manufacturiers du Québec, as well as Mr. Ghislain Dufour, the President of—

**Mr. Dingwall:** Question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Mr. Speaker, there was a report in this morning's edition of *Le Devoir*. The hon. member is upset by the truth. These people are not Péquists, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Why have you called for order, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** I have no objections to what the hon. member is saying.

**Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** I am prepared to co-operate, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Perhaps the hon. member has a question.

**Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** I do have a question, Mr. Speaker.

Why is the government not willing to follow the recommendations put forward by the opposition party, the Bloc Québécois? Why will it not eliminate trusts, end duplication of services and tax large corporations? Why?

(1855)

[English]

**Mr. Lastewka:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the questioner. I think all Canadians have come to the point where they have had enough of paying taxes. I agree that we need to take a look at the various systems and the waste in the systems. However, we cannot forget about the important item of trying to improve the system. We need information and consultation from all parties and from all Canadians.

This a process the minister has started. I think it is important for us and for Canada that we continue to have debates and consult back and forth and that the people of Canada have an opportunity to provide input. Let us not forget that I am here representing St. Catharines and Canadians. Canadians feel it is important that we do something, that we eliminate the waste right across Canada.

I agree with that. However I have to do it for the good of all Canadians, no matter what province they live in. I am proud of my province of Ontario, but I am also proud of Canada. It is important, as we consult and debate, that we get input from coast to coast and that we make a better system for Canada on a continuous basis.

Let us not be afraid. For the next two or three years, let us make continued improvements for Canada.

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**Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka):** Mr. Speaker, with this referral of the review of social policy to a standing committee, our government is about to embark on what I consider to be the most important undertaking during its first term.

If we are to bring about social justice to this country, if we are to have any ability to bring our financial house in order, if we are to find new and innovative ways of conducting business in this country, then the reform of our social policy is absolutely essential.

Our government is committing itself to a most extensive public review process. This issue will be debated not only in this House, both during the preliminary stages and later when legislation is actually tabled, but also through the parliamentary committee to which this review is being referred. In addition, we will be dealing with both the political and bureaucratic components of the provincial government and, through a series of consultative processes, with constituency groups, the general public, and in particular those individuals presently charged with delivering our various and sundry programs.

In referring this matter to the standing committee, it is vital to outline what I believe to be important governing principles that should be considered in the deliberations. These principles include equity, effectiveness, co-ordination and accountability.

Whatever system we develop must be equitable. To me this means we recognize that as Canadians, as a government and as a nation we have a responsibility to each other.

Going back to at least World War II, there has existed in this country an unwritten but very clear social contract between Canadians and their government. This contract essentially says that on the one hand Canadians will tend to pay more for government than perhaps their counterparts in the U.S. and other nations, but on the other hand, in return for this we as Canadians and as a government have a responsibility to ensure that we will not allow individual Canadians to fall below a certain level. We have determined as a country that we will not allow people to die for lack of medical service, to go hungry for lack of food, to be exposed for lack of shelter.

This contract is basic to what Canada and Canadians are. Whatever the result of our social policy review, it must maintain this basic concept of equity that our parents' generation formulated, that our generation has attempted to maintain, and that we must protect for our children and our children's children.

The second governing principle that must be adhered to in our deliberations regarding social policy is effectiveness. Whether we are speaking about income support, job retraining or life skills development, we must ensure the program provides full value for each dollar that is spent. We need to set as an objective

not a decrease in the number of dollars that are placed in the hands of individual Canadians but rather an objective that sees a reduction in the number of programs, a reduction in the administration costs and a reduction in the duplication of services. We do not need more money, we need money better spent. We need to bring to an end the bureaucratic practice of territoriality, we need to bring to an end the turf wars that consume so much of our precious resources, and we need to design our programs so that they put the necessary financial and other resources in the hands of recipients in a manner that does not require a massive bureaucracy be maintained.

(1900)

The third principle that I believe should govern our deliberations is co-ordination; that is, co-ordination within our own government, co-ordination with other governments and co-ordination with the private sector. We must bring to an end the massive amount of duplication of services that presently exists in the area of social services.

If individuals today wish to receive training, the largest challenge they will face will not be the actual course they might take, but rather finding the correct entry point into the system. They will find that they have to choose from several entry points and sometimes from dozens. Our system must be designed so that individuals have one entry point into the system and one exit point.

Does it make any sense that our income support system is made up of numerous programs and that these programs are delivered by various levels of government and in some cases duplicate programs are delivered by duplicate levels of government? Income support should be provided by one system, administered by one bureaucracy and developed in as simple a manner as possible, one that reflects the economic realities of the 1990s and not of the 1950s or 1960s.

I can see absolutely no sense as to why an individual who has lost his job receives his income support in one form from one level of government for a period of time and then receives his income support from a different level for another period of time, administered by a different bureaucracy. We need one income support program, administered by one level of government and delivered in a cost efficient way.

The final governing principle that I believe should be adhered to in our deliberations is that of accountability, accountability both from government who administers the program and from the individuals who utilize the program. As a government we need to design our income support and training programs with clear objectives as to what they are attempting to accomplish. The effectiveness of these programs should be measured on an ongoing basis, both by this Parliament and by the people of Canada, as to whether they are achieving their objectives. We

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should be prepared to change programs that do not work or amend programs that are in need of revision.

But accountability is not just on behalf of the government which delivers the programs, but also on behalf of the individuals who utilize them. Individuals who receive income support must have as their objective, where possible, re-entry into the work force and the ability to become self-sufficient. Their objective should not be to maintain an alternative lifestyle that entails perpetual government assistance from cradle to grave.

We do have individuals in this country, unfortunately, who will need our support not just in the short term but perhaps for the rest of their lives. But we also have individuals who, with properly designed programs and with the correct incentives, can become productive members of society, and we must ensure that our social policy review results in a system that will mandate this to happen.

In conclusion, let me simply state the one governing principle that I believe distinguishes a Liberal approach to the issue of social policy reform as opposed to one that has been pursued by the past government and that I believe is being pursued by some of the members opposite.

As Liberals, we start with the needs of individual Canadians, with the dignity of men and women, the importance of the human spirit and the sanctity of human values. From this will flow jobs, from this will flow renewed economic activity, from this will flow new personal and business prosperity.

If we begin the process with our concern being solely one of economics, solely one of business profits, solely one of bottom line, and we ignore the basic component, which is the individual Canadian, then we will continue to take us down a road that we have travelled for the past decade, which will create more hardship, more unemployment, less economic development and a nation that will not be living up to its true potential. It is the first option that Canadians have demanded and it is this option that we as a government intend to pursue.

(1905)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech by the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. I had the chance to listen to the previous Liberal speakers. We heard three speeches and three different positions. One Liberal member who spoke a while ago was sensitive to the needs of the population and focussed on the poorest members of our society. Another shared most of the concerns expressed on this side of the House. Then we gradually moved away from this position with the address by the hon. member for St. Catharines.

I will keep my question short. It is fortunate that I still have my sight because I could see that the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka was on his feet but I was hearing what sounded like a Reform speech. Could the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka tell me what distinguishes his speech from those made by Reform members? He seems to be putting a great distance between himself and some of his colleagues who have spoken, it must be said, from the back benches, not his colleagues from the front benches who are conspicuous by their absence from this debate. We are fortunate to have a minister present in the House. It is interesting, but the viewpoint from the back benches seems a little pro forma and at times sounds like what we heard at the Spicer Commission, a kind of cantina where everyone brings their own wine and where the bill is prepared in advance. While we are talking, I am wondering whether the policies have not already been drafted.

My question to the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka is this: Is there a difference between his own personal position and that of the Reform Party since this is an open debate?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

There is indeed a great deal of difference between my point of view, which is a Liberal point of view, and that of the Reform Party. It begins with where we start. If we begin our deliberations from a simple bottom line, which is need, then we are going to end up where the Reform Party is going to end up.

Liberals do not do that. We begin with the need of the individual Canadian. We believe in the dignity of individual Canadians. We believe in that unwritten social contract of the last 50 years where we as Canadians have believed that we have responsibilities to each other.

As I said in my speech, we believe we will not allow Canadians to fall below a certain level. People will not die in this country for lack of medical services, they will not go hungry in this country for lack of food, and they will not die exposed for lack of shelter, because Liberal governments in the last 50 years have constructed a social policy in this country that has protected individual Canadians, and we as a government in 1994 are not going to try to dismantle it but find a way to make it continue so that we will continue to serve Canadians. We will continue with that social contact so that my children and my children's children will enjoy the benefits of what Liberal governments for the last 50 years have been able to accomplish.

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed listening to the hon. member and I would like to ask a simple, straightforward question.

Our country continues to plunge into debt, and it appears that before we can wrestle the deficit out of existence we could hit \$650 billion of indebtedness. As each year goes by, we lose a little more of our ability to help the poor, whether it is the needy

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refugees coming into our country or any other poor within our society. What would the member suggest? How would the member suggest we help the poor in this country when we lose the financial and economic ability to do so?

(1910)

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, the way we are going to help the poor in this country is with what has been said for the last three weeks over and over again. We are going to help the poor by getting them back to work in this country, by giving them jobs, by creating jobs, by creating an environment in which the small business sector can create jobs.

That is how one gives them dignity. That is how one is able to afford it. The red book has outlined a policy through 122 pages. It details very clearly how we are going to renew the economy in this country, how we are going to put people back to work and how the poor will take care of themselves when they have those jobs.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, I consider it a privilege to debate the reform of social programs in the country. For many here today, reforming them to ensure both their sustainability and their availability to those who need them is a significant reason to have run for Parliament in 1993.

We feel grateful that the government has given all members a chance to air their views on this issue before legislation is introduced. I am sure that all members share my desire that backbenchers and constructive opposition members alike will be able to see reflections of these debates in the legislative program to come.

Certainly there is general agreement in this country on the need for reform of our social programs. Members on both sides of the House again agree that cosmetic changes are not enough.

Questions are being asked that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. Is there a better way to deliver this program or service? Do we need it at all? Are there built-in disincentives to people who need to be fully self-supporting? How much do programs cost? Can we sustain them?

Watching the finance minister's pre-budget consultation in Calgary on the weekend, I was struck by widespread agreement on these issues. Almost everyone said that our current method of funding social programs is killing jobs and export opportunities, that less government intervention is better and that government needs to spend less, spend smarter and tax less.

Spending less does not mean taking Canada back into the dark ages. What it really means is that funding must be refocused and it is incumbent on this House to lay down the principles that will

guide a rechanneling of program assistance in a way that is fair, effective and compassionate.

Other speakers have already discussed a number of principles. One of them is that spending in the future must be based on need rather than entitlement. People with high incomes do not need the same kind of help as those with low incomes. Therefore the fact that they belong to a particular ethnic or demographic group should not automatically entitle them to extra government support.

We feel that tomorrow's programs will be delivered more in concert with private groups. People in need will work with a community based network rather than those who are simply paid to supply them a service. These private groups may be part of the answer in helping an individual emerge from this chronic position of need.

There should be also a stated objective of other programs that recipients be required to undertake training or community service that will enable these people to acquire the skills that will reduce their future dependence upon governments.

These principles are significant. I have the privilege of addressing the most important principle this afternoon and this evening. That is the position of the family in relation to the state. This principle is important because it questions the assumption of the welfare state that has become entrenched in the post-war era, the assumption that has spurred this magnificent fiscal situation in which we find ourselves today.

I am speaking of the concept of the paternalistic state, the notion that the state or the government has the capacity or even the duty to somehow replace the family as the basic unit of nurture in our society.

This sentiment, while never accepted by most Canadians, was heralded when Bonnie Kreps announced to *Maclean's* magazine in 1969 that her group's objectives included getting rid of the conjugal family unit. For decades this idea has occasionally found its way on to the desks of government policy makers. Many feel today that families have been unappreciated and under supported as a result.

While the role of the family has been questioned, the concept of the state is also changing.

(1915)

People are disillusioned. They no longer believe it is possible for government to provide all of the solutions. Certainly its scope is shrinking because of its financial problems. In a way this could be a positive thing because with a little help human relationships could fill in the gaps left by government programs.

The basic unit of care should not be a government cheque or the department of something or other or a social worker. The

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unit must be the family. Society has yet to develop a better way to care for the young, protect the weak and attend to the elderly.

People who come from dysfunctional families need special help at times and then the government must step in to do the best it can for the individual, realizing that it will always be an inferior choice to a functioning and loving family.

In some ways governments have even played a part in encouraging dysfunctional families because they support people without reference to their family ties. An example is a young person who rebels and leaves home only to end up on some kind of government assistance, or the husband who moves to another province to shirk his responsibility to pay for court ordered support.

Governments should require people to demonstrate at least this minimum level of responsibility toward their relationships and this might even lead to an increased incentive to make families work.

There are other positive things government can do to encourage strong families. I would like to see some aspects of our tax structure changed, especially encouraging couples with children. Last year's tax ruling against married couples in an Alberta court sent a mixed message to Canadians. Incredibly, the courts ruled that while married couples have suffered tax discrimination in years past, it is acceptable because families have suffered less discrimination in the past than other stereotyped groups. Surely this was and is wrong.

Another positive change could involve day care. Those who advocate the welfare state would like to see government workers control the care of children. However, the Reform Party prefers a de-institutionalized setting that gives the choice to parents.

As Margaret Wente mentioned in her column in Saturday's *Globe and Mail*, if we really want to help parents, why not put extra money directly into their pockets and let them figure out how to spend it? The government's role would be relegated to licensing and monitoring day cares, allowing parents to choose their own system, be it a day care, a nanny or some other personalized arrangement.

I want to touch for a moment on the reasoning of the welfare state and why it can be damaging. Advocates of government solutions feel that the government is somehow objective and that families are unobjective, unenlightened bastions of conservatism.

While it is probably true that families are more conservative than your average university professor, I do not believe that there is any such thing as a value neutral objective authority. If the authority of the state replaced that of the family it would simply teach and impose its own values through that system.

It is quite clear to me that the values of big government are frequently a fundamentalist mish-mash of left wing, politically correct dogma that in its own way is far more conservative and

legalistic than that held by most families. Any concerted, large scale attempt to replace the authority of the parent with that of the teacher, the social worker or even the courts will be resisted on this side of the House.

Where is this debate going to take us? We have heard some discouraging debates in the last few weeks, talk of maintaining universality regardless of need or broadening the tax base and changing RRSP rules. Each of these proposals would adversely affect families.

How will they hurt them? By maintaining or adding new programs at the urging of special interest groups or failing to address our debt and deficit problem squarely and honestly, by refusing to prioritise the dwindling resources of our government we will harm the most vulnerable in society, including young families, in the years to come.

There have also been glimmers of hope during these debates. Speaker after speaker has begun his or her speech with passionate thanks to the people who count the most to them, their families. During the one minute presentations that precede Question Period, many single out family members for special recognition. Honourable mention for the international year of the family continues to sprinkle our discussions.

The death certificate of the family has been written prematurely. Statistics will show that Canadians, especially our youth, hold a strong family life as a measure of true success. It is my conviction that history will judge legislators, at least in part, by the way we treat our families.

(1920)

I would like to read a quote from someone who shared this concern: "Men say to us, 'there is this problem with the family. How are we to preserve it? It seems to be dissolving before our eyes'. This has been true perhaps always and everywhere. Everywhere good things have seemed to be going. Yet everywhere they are merely struggling to their new birth".

The family has been under many stresses in this generation but it cannot be extinguished. It is merely struggling to its own sort of new birth.

Our social programs as well need to struggle for a new expression in order to serve the needs of Canadians. We have been discussing principles upon which this rebirth can stand. I would suggest to this House that any principle upon which our social programs are reordered must strengthen the social unit which forms the historic bedrock of our nation and that foundation upon which all strong nations are built, the family.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with great interest. He emphasized the family as a basic core for the way people live and come together in Quebec and Canada. He is quite right, the family is a fundamental value. He also highlighted the fact that governments, our government, are jeopardizing this family unit. He



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even used an expression, "The death certificate of the family has been written prematurely".

There is another kind of family in this country, namely the provinces. Indeed, does Ottawa's passion for centralization not endanger not only the family unit but also the provinces' ability to meet their responsibilities for their own people? Of course, I am talking about Quebec, but not just Quebec—all the other provinces. What is his experience? What is the hon. member's experience in his community?

[*English*]

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments and thank the member for the encouragement. He is taking quite a leap here from my discussion of family into the constitutional swamp, as we have talked about before, of trying to relate that somehow to Quebec and its relationship to Canada.

I would say that for many of us in the west if you are asking for the British Columbia perspective, or the perspective from where I come from and where I have been elected from, in many ways we do see Canada as a family in the sense that we think Canada has 10 parts, 10 equal members, 10 siblings, 10 people, all part of this family that together forms a country.

In many ways there is a support in the west, in B.C. particularly, for the idea that when you have a family everyone is treated equally. No one is put down and no one is elevated because a family works best when 10 provinces or 10 people are treated the same.

Although there are different programs and different priorities in different areas, and that is as it should be just as 10 children are unique, they are not treated specially, they are part of a 10 member family.

I will take the leap with the hon. member and I will talk about the family in that sense. Certainly, as has always been said in a family, all members are always welcome and all members are discouraged from leaving.

**Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened attentively to my colleague in his remarks. He went on at some length with regard to his high regard, and compliment him, for the family. Perhaps he would take a moment or two and explain to the House the definition of family to the hon. member but more important to the party which he represents.

Second, while he is on his feet if he would indicate to the House the role that he believes the state should play in facilitating and assisting the family. I refer specifically to the role of the Government of Canada.

(1925)

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. Most of my discussion tonight was about my concern for families and the tax disincentives. For example, the court decision I quoted was that in the past somehow married couples were not treated the same as couples who decided to live together. That is what the court ruling referred to.

I have been talking about the need for the state through its tax laws and through other means to monetarily encourage families especially while they are raising children. That is basically what I was talking about. We have to find ways to make sure that we do not penalize people for trying to raise a family.

I do not have the motion in front of me, but it refers to children, young adults and families. I do not think anyone will dispute the idea that we need to support families because families are our future.

We see the government's role as supporting the financial needs of people rather than picking a program and stating: "This is the program you have to try to fit into, whether you are a square peg in a round hole". Instead we should say: "If you have a financial need, then the social contract is there to make sure you do not fall through the cracks and be left to your own devices".

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca):** Mr. Speaker, tonight I am going to speak about a subject that is dear to everyone's heart and in particular to our electorate in this country.

When I was running for office I found, as I am sure many members did, that one of the biggest considerations and concerns of Canadians was what was going to happen to their health care. There were a lot of concerns and a lot of problems and nobody knew which way to go. Canadians are very concerned about what is going to happen to their health care in the future. To that extent I would say that their health care is probably the most valued thing they have in their lives.

The greatest guardians to good health that exists is our personal responsibility for a healthy lifestyle and our national health care system. The first one the government can do absolutely nothing about, but in the latter the government certainly can.

I believe as a physician and a consumer that our system is the best in the world. It is the envy of people outside of our country. We just need to look at the United States to see how they look enviously at our country to emulate for their new health care program.

Canadian citizens receive the best health care free of charge. They are governed by the five basic tenets under the Canada

Health Act. They are: universality of care; comprehensive coverage for all essential services. I underline the word "essential". It is a very important point to remember. It also provides reasonable access by health care providers as well as consumers; portability of benefits from one province to another; and, the administration of health care by a public agency on a non-profit basis.

To give an idea of what we are talking about in terms of figures, in 1990 over \$60 billion was spent on health care alone in this country which represents almost 10 per cent of our gross domestic product.

The financing of the system is divided between the federal government and the provinces. The provinces manage the actual day to day affairs and how the money is spent but they have to do it under the Canada Health Act; otherwise the federal government will withhold funding. In other words, the federal government takes their money and uses it as a wedge or a threat to the provinces regarding what they can and cannot do.

Over the last decade some situations have occurred in this country that have greatly jeopardized publicly funded health care which will ultimately lead to the collapse of health care as a publicly funded system. Not only health care but every social program in this country will be jeopardized by the following situation. This has been spoken about quite eloquently by my colleagues in caucus today as well as other members in the House.

The escalating debt over the last 12 to 14 years that we have, which has risen from \$125 billion to \$500 billion today, is the biggest threat to health care and social programs in this country.

To give an idea of what has occurred, back in 1984 28 cents out of every dollar was spent just to service this debt. Today it is about 33 cents. By the year 2000 at the current rate of spending 40 cents out of every dollar will be used merely to serve the debt. As can be seen we have less and less money to spend on other things such as social programs. This is a system that cannot last.

(1930)

The other side of the health care situation is that expenditures are escalating dramatically. They are growing at over four times the rate of economic growth. There are a number of reasons for this. Briefly, number one is the ever-increasing aging population which consumes over 70 per cent of the health care dollar. Two, our technologies and intervention and therapeutics are becoming more advanced and more expensive all the time. Three, there are new diseases such as AIDS which are increasing in frequency tragically which also cost a significant amount of money.

If we accept the facts as I have outlined them today the system that we can see now is living on borrowed time. The dwindling funds and increasing costs are going to crush this system in the future. That is inevitable.

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Despite this fact, that the writing is on the wall, the federal government continues to hamstring the provincial governments by preventing their ability to get their health care under control by forcing them to adhere under the tenets of the Canada Health Act and threatening its contribution to financing health care under the health act.

There are a number of things we can do. Not to do this will contribute to the suffering of the Canadian people.

What can we do? We need to modify the Canada Health Act to stop penalizing the provincial governments when they try to get their health care costs under control. We need to strike a committee to define what essential health care services are, which means delisting some services.

I put to you, Mr. Speaker, that those services which the public and professionals decide to delist will not be essential for health. These will not be essential for a good life or for having adequate treatment in hospitals.

We need to set up an accountability system on the part of the consumer. Currently very little value is placed on a system and it is doomed financially unless there is some value placed on this by the consumer. Therefore I would suggest to the provincial governments to entertain the thought of such ideas as modest user fees and deductibles for some groups.

People believe that the Canadian public does not want this but recent statistics show that over 80 per cent of the people in Quebec for example, and some studies were done to show this, would not mind paying a \$5 to \$10 user fee. The lowest socio-economic groups I would emphasize would be treated regardless. These tenets are still consistent with the ideas of universality of coverage and access.

We also need to concentrate on education of the public in terms of the costs. One of the things we can do is to have statements of account at the time of consumption preferably or during the course of the year.

We need to emphasize health education, especially in the early grade school years. This will pay off dramatically in the future. We need to focus on preventative medicine, on leading a healthy lifestyle with the aspects of drinking excessively, smoking and diets. From a physician's point of view it is amazing and also profoundly tragic the lack of knowledge that some children have when they get into the teenage and adolescent years and we all know the manifestations of that.

Health care professionals must be educated in the cost of technologies and interventions and therapeutic options that they have. I can say again as a physician that we have not done a good enough job on this at all.

I would also suggest that health care professionals be allowed to run private medical services. This would enable some people to get health care services done in a private situation, but all people, whether they are in a public or private situation, would have their health care services done earlier. This would decrease

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the amount of pain and suffering in the community, decrease the cost to the economy, decrease insurance costs and so on.

It is in fact a win-win situation. To anyone who would argue that this a two-tier system, I say to them that anybody in this country involved in health care will say that there is a two-tier system in this country right now.

The most important thing that the government needs to do with respect to health care is as I said before get their fiscal house in order. Until we get our spending under control as a nation we simply cannot afford to support social programs in the current state of affairs that we have. To not do that I think would be morally reprehensible and a tragedy for the Canadian people.

(1935)

The last thing I would like to touch on for a moment is decreasing tobacco taxes. I feel this is an indefensible situation. Every year the cost to the country in terms of smoking is horrendous. It costs billions and billions of dollars. There is a loss of productivity and an increase in health care costs. Over 40,000 people in this country die of smoking related illnesses.

To increase the cost of cigarettes has resulted, as has been proven, in a decrease in consumption especially among the young. Therefore I suggest that instead of decreasing taxes on tobacco that we maintain them; and instead of caving in to the criminals who are engaging in this smuggling activity I would also suggest that we add an export tax to cigarettes going into other countries.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I enjoyed the member's remarks but my curiosity was peaked by his comments about the Canada Health Act. It brought back vivid memories of the election campaign last fall when underlying many of the public meetings we had in our riding were questions about the future of our health system under a regime which might include Reform Party proposals.

I would ask the member to tell this House if he really believes that weakening in any way the Canada Health Act, in any way dismantling the thrust and the strength of that legislation to protect this country, that we can put our full faith in the provinces to maintain a national system.

**Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comment.

As the elected members of the provincial legislatures are answerable to the Canadian public it would be political suicide for them to create a health care situation where the people who elected them to office would suffer.

It behoves every elected individual in this country to face the writing on the wall, to realize that we have a situation where health care costs are increasing at four times the rate of economic growth and governments are dealing with deficit spending with less and less money being applied to health care.

We have to face up to this. It is not just dismantling or destroying the Canada Health Act, it is modifying it to make it a better situation. To accept the current situation as it is now is to merely stick one's head in the sand. It is incumbent upon all of us to do something about it in order to preserve essential health care services for all Canadians so that they are not going to suffer, they are going to have their operation and they are not going to die as they do down in the United States due to lack of care.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has replied to the question I put to his predecessor who, by the way, left his parents to get married. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca said:

[English]

“The federal government is preventing the provinces from putting health care under control by threatening to cut transfer payments”. And he is right.

[Translation]

I like what the hon. member said because it is exactly what we feel in Quebec. This means that, both in the West and in the East, the federal government threatens the very principles of universality and accessibility. And that is a serious problem. A few moments ago the question was asked as to whether the provinces were in a better position to maintain these principles. Let us take a good look at the situation: in the last ten years or so, the federal government has been systematically cutting transfer payments and has now become the biggest threat to universality and accessibility.

(1940)

[English]

**Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for the hon. opposition member to understand that health care services are pulling the wool over the eyes of the Canadian public by instituting a concept called rationing. That means they are telling hospitals how many hips or bypass surgeries they can do. As a result the Canadian public is being deprived of service under the guise of so-called universality. In this current situation people who need essential health care services are not getting them because of the rationing and the withdrawal of services.

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We in the Reform Party are trying to say that people who are sick are not obtaining services in a timely fashion. Let us recognize that. Let us do something about that with the amount of funds we have now.

**Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, this evening I had the pleasure to listen to members of the Reform, the Bloc and the Liberal parties put forward their presentations. It is refreshing that people have come here with an honest concern for considering the social aspects of the society in which we live.

I have had experiences working for three years in a boys' school that I will likely never forget. I guess another name for it would be reform school. Hon. members would like me to recognize the school was for wayward people who were to be straightened around. I did not want to tell them but it is true.

One young fellow who was there while I worked there ran away to his home in North Battleford. He visited me while I was attending university. He wanted to know what he should do. We sat there for two hours, at the end of which time I said: "Make up your mind. If you want to go back I will take you back". He decided to go back and serve his time, which he did.

On returning to the institution one of the people working there called him a stupid so—and-so and said: "What are you doing back here? Why didn't you keep running?" Those were the people who were looking after him. Those were the people we entrusted with our young people.

As I travelled to Moose Mountain after the election I picked up a young fellow in Grenfell, Saskatchewan. He was from Richmond, B.C. He was 18 years old and did not even have a grade nine education. He was going to Winnipeg to get a job as a salesman. Now it is true some people would say that is fantastic. I tried to encourage him to go back home to his parents and improve his education. I hope he does.

I bring before us these analogies of the problems that face us all. We elected four Liberals from Saskatchewan. They wanted to make sure there was a balance so they put a teacher on the ballot. I know that one of those four, a fellow member, is a lawyer. He feels there is an equal balance now: three lawyers and one teacher.

With regard to human resource development we are honoured to have the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre as minister in charge. My constituents have made clear in many meetings and discussions that they have many concerns regarding our social programs, a fundamental part of our country that requires review.

On the issue of fiscal relations and federal spending power, concern revolves around our ability to form a partnership of fiscal cohesion throughout the country to deliver social pro-

grams. When one considers that federal spending on social programs is between \$70 billion and \$80 billion annually, which equals as much as two-thirds of program spending at the federal level, there is a level of dissatisfaction among the voters of Souris—Moose Mountain over the manner in which our social programs are structured. I would like for a moment to discuss some of the needs we see in regard to the Unemployment Insurance Commission programs. We feel we need to move toward a level of maximum payout so that there is a ceiling on earnings one can make during a year in order to be beneficiary of UIC. In my opinion seasonal jobs which continue to require a payout year after year need to be reviewed. We cannot constantly require a higher contribution from both employer and employee in particular seasonal occupations.

(1945)

Also we have to allocate earnings more effectively to those who are receiving unemployment so they can be actively doing something, performing some type of work or receiving some form of education during the period between jobs. If we can improve their educational background we can provide them with the additional incentive to be able to enter the workforce in a productive nature.

As well, we have to encourage employers to retain staff so if they wish to downsize they do it through natural attrition rather than make thousands of Canadians face job loss and uncertainty. Nowhere in the history of Canada have we seen so many people going to work day after day fearful of losing their jobs.

I would like to highlight those students completing degrees and looking to go into the workforce but are unable to find work. They should have an opportunity to work as assistants to senior people in their chosen fields. This would help them gain some credibility and obtain a work record. This would also help them to enter into the job placement process.

I would like to address a concern of mine regarding education and young people receiving assistance in the form of student loans. We have to ensure that their expectations in terms of paying back their loans are reasonable. We must frame it in a manner in which repayment of the loans is reasonable and they have some certainty of a place in the job market when they have completed their degree. As well interest rates must reflect the ability of young people to pay. If we want our young people to be educated and our human resources to be competitive restructuring of the student loan program is essential.

When we review social security programs some very serious facts need to be addressed. My riding includes seven First Nations bands. I know their hopes and aspirations. They hope for recognition as a First Nation and for self-government. They too search out in hope for the best for their families.

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We now find that families in which both the husband and wife work outside the home are nearing 60 per cent of all families in the workforce. There are many latch-key children, youngsters leaving home for school likely with no breakfast, returning home at noon likely with no lunch and coming home after school with no adult to greet them.

This is a very serious problem. I am not questioning the actions of parents. Many families would much sooner have one parent at home. However the reality is that they need two incomes just to keep the family together and to pay the bills. We see many single parent families headed by women. They are growing at an ever increasing rate. We have the highest incidence of low income in this group. The needs of these families are real and great. The demands placed on single parents are even greater.

The schools could have a great deal to do with before and after school programs. The infrastructure and the schools are there. They are heated. We could create programs within the structure to assist parents requiring assistance with their children while they must be at work. What about the children of the next generation? We know that 1.1 million people live in households with social assistance as a way of life. We also know that in March 1993 three million Canadians required social assistance.

(1950)

This year is significant in that it is the International Year of the Family and the International Year of Indigenous Peoples. For each member of the 35th Parliament, our concerns for these groups are very real and growing. We must address their concerns and we will. For the young, we must address their family needs; for youth, the need for jobs; for seniors, a social safety net whereby they are assured their pensions will not be eroded. We cannot allow the poor and the disadvantaged to go unheard. We must assist.

The payouts for these programs are significant: \$7.4 million in welfare payments. When we take a look at our red book we find that our proposals show a strong desire to return hope for desperation, to remove fear and to provide a decent way of life for Canadians. The challenge is tremendous.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** As hon. members are aware, the debate will be extended until 8.52 p.m. Since we have five minutes left for questions and comments, I now recognize the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

**Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of the hon. member who just spoke. In his speech, he showed his concern for people who are employed but are afraid of losing their jobs. I

must say I share his concern because we have a plant called Expro which manufactures military equipment. Not so long ago, the plant had 1,000 jobs, and now there are only 400 left.

As part of the pre-budget process we are involved in today, I would like to make a suggestion and also put a question to the previous speaker. Would his government be able to do what was done in the United States by Bill Clinton, who set aside a certain amount of money in the defence budget for reconversion of the defence industry? Now that the cold war is over, we do not need as many plants. Orders are shrinking, and that is what causes lay-offs. In the United States, they set aside a certain amount of money in the defence budget to be invested in converting defence plants to civilian production.

Does the hon. member who just spoke agree with this suggestion? Would he be willing to put this proposal to his government so that we could convert defence plants to civilian use?

[*English*]

**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Speaker, I respect the question of the hon. member. I feel that he is as competent as I am in making that suggestion to the government. As I see the 35th Parliament, all of us are that government. Each of those suggestions have merit. Why not put it forward? I certainly have no problem with that.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the hon. member for an excellent presentation. I am sure many people on this side of the House agreed, as did I, with virtually everything he said. It is probably because he came to the Reform honestly, as did I, except that I attended reform school when I was about 12. That was when I got started in Reform.

I wonder if the member would mind expanding on student loans. This is an extremely important situation facing thousands of graduates who are going into default because they cannot get jobs and therefore cannot pay back their student loans.

I wonder if, from the member's side of the House, he could start to do something and we could carry forward a student loan repayment package, perhaps as promulgated by the Canadian Students Association.

**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Speaker, having a son who went through nine years of university and accumulated well over \$50,000 of debt and happens to live in Alberta, I appreciate what the member is saying. I agree wholeheartedly with him. We have to assist students. We do not want to throttle them so they have no chance of getting a job and repaying their debt. Therefore I support the member wholeheartedly. That is the way we have to go. Otherwise we are going to frustrate young people so that they have no thought about even going into the educational field or any post-secondary field because of the problems they are going to be confronted with.

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(1955)

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert):** Mr. Speaker, congratulations again to the member for Souris—Moose Mountain on an excellent speech. I notice his real concern for the families and the young children of this nation. His concern is that there are so many families with single parents and the fact that their incomes are low.

He also mentioned that he thought perhaps the school system should be used to provide after school care for families that do not have a parent at home. There are a large number of families in this country with both parents working who do have a very high standard of living. It is their choice not to be there at home.

Is he suggesting that this nation again subsidize those people who can well afford to look after their children and provide that kind of care after school? Does he feel that we as a society are obligated to provide that to anybody who would like it just because the kids do not have someone at home when they get home?

**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Speaker, as an educator for over 31 years I had the opportunity to deal with the rich, the poor, the wise and those who were not so wise. I was happy to have them all. I say to the hon. member that if I knew of one youngster who needed my attention, rich or poor, I would want to be there as an educator, as a parent and as a citizen of this country.

The day we start elevating those who are rich and distinguishing between rich and poor, we are in a real problem state. I say to the hon. member that this is the problem in education. We have lost our commitment that we do have something to give these youngsters. If any one of them stayed away from problems because I looked after him, I would feel that is one thing I did to help him along the way in life. I see no problem there. I want us to have those opportunities for them.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis):** Mr. Speaker, as the education and youth critic for the Official Opposition, I wanted to take the opportunity afforded by this debate on social programs to draw the attention of hon. members to the alarming situation prevailing among young people in Canada and in Quebec.

In Canada, to recall a few statistics, 17.5 per cent of young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 are now unemployed, which means more than 600,000 young people; 30 per cent do not finish high school; 51 per cent of high school graduates earn less than \$10,000; and only 11 per cent earn over \$20,000. More than two million young people are living in poverty. Furthermore, 12 per cent have serious drug problems.

Since the government has often said it wanted to give Canadians and Quebecers renewed hope and dignity, it will have to do something about these alarming statistics. After all, our young people are our future, are they not?

Another disturbing phenomenon is the increase in violence and intolerance among young people. According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, the number of young people accused of violent crime has increased by an average of 14 per cent annually since 1986. Considering the problems we mentioned earlier, this should come as no surprise.

In the past weeks, a number of members raised the issue of stricter treatment of young offenders. I agree it is necessary to send a clear message to young criminals. Their crimes should not go unpunished, but we believe it is absolutely essential to examine the social context that breeds violence and intolerance among young people.

Second, I would like to talk about the situation of young people in Quebec which is even more alarming and distressing. According to a recent report by the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse du Québec, nearly 40 per cent of young Quebecers live in poverty and 50 per cent do so for at least five years. More than 150,000 young Quebecers are on welfare.

(2000)

The Quebec coroner's office has recorded an average of some 350 suicides by young people every year since 1987. The youth unemployment rate in Quebec is nearly 20 per cent, or over 137,000 young people just in Quebec. At least 45,000 jobs would have to be created annually in Quebec to absorb the young people arriving on the labour market. The high-school dropout rate is now 32.2 per cent in Quebec.

Vocational training is also deficient. Most of the 26,000 people waiting for training to improve their chances on the labour market are young.

The alarming situation of young people affects not only their own future prospects but also the economy. More and more, young people must face the same prejudices as all unemployed people and welfare recipients. The confidence and dignity of our rising generation suffer greatly as a result. The vicious circle of unemployment and poverty—I realize that this does not seem to interest the people opposite, but I would not like us to be drowned out by their laughter and their talking. They are disturbing us.

It is not easy to get out of the vicious circle of unemployment and poverty. It leads to an extreme loss of motivation which can increase the social problems of our young people. The situation of young native people is even more alarming and requires more specific help that is better suited to what they are going through.

In the speech from the throne, the government said that it was considering self-government for native people. It could start by

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giving them the necessary resources and support so that they can take better care of their young people too.

One of the most important aspects of the reform of social programs proposed by the Minister of Human Resources is consultation. Taking so much time and resources reminds me of the operation which followed the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and led up to the famous Charlottetown accord. The more things change, the more they are the same. One could say that this government does not know how to learn from past failures. If only we were assured that the consultations will proceed in the spirit of openness described in the speech from the throne. But judging by previous consultations, that will surely not be the case. If the consultations preceding the speech from the throne are any indication, how does the government intend to ensure the openness described in the Speech from the Throne?

I would like to mention here something that happened to me on January 15. Having learned the day before that the Secretary of State for Training and Youth was holding consultations in Quebec City, I contacted her office to be invited as an observer in my capacity as opposition critic for training and youth. No way, I was told, it was by invitation only, and they did not even tell me where it was taking place, even though Quebec City is across from Lévis, right near my riding.

Since this consultation was for all young people in Quebec, I later contacted the main youth organizations to find out if they had been invited. None of these groups, except the permanent council on youth, a Quebec government agency, had received an invitation. Invitations were made over the heads of the umbrella groups, sometimes directly to some member organizations or to organizations which have nothing to do with training. As if that were not enough, student organizations were completely overlooked, and students will soon be on the labour market. Is that how this government intends to consult? That is a fine way to consult!

Another gem about the Secretary of State for Training and Youth is her statement last Monday on Quebec. She said: "I have been to Quebec twice and I have a fairly good idea of what the people there want". I have been to English Canada several times myself, and in all modesty, I cannot say that I know very well what the people in those provinces want. If you think you know what Quebec wants after two visits to Quebec, I think you are fooling yourself.

(2005)

Even if there are at least a hundred federal programs available to young people, very few are reserved specifically for them and when they are, they are inadequately funded.

The worst thing that happened to young people during the Conservative reign was not the elimination of the Katimavik program, the demise of which went virtually unnoticed aside from the remonstrations of Senator Jacques Hébert. No, the worst thing was the elimination in 1987 of a provision which gave priority to young people in so far as federal programs were concerned. Another dramatic situation that young people face is when they are caught in the middle, that is when they meet neither the criteria of the federal government, nor those of the provincial government. These young people do not have access to occupational training if they do not receive unemployment insurance or social assistance or if they have not been out on their own for at least two years.

Even though the federal government does not seem inclined to respect provincial jurisdiction over training, it could at least respect existing structures before creating new ones, especially given the context of budget cuts. Consider the example of employment development agencies and agencies that sponsor training extension programs. There is a comprehensive federal network in place in Quebec and elsewhere and I think these structures should be strengthened before new ones are created.

In point of fact, the demands of young people have been well known for many years in Quebec. A national youth summit was held in 1983 and more than 133 agencies participated in public hearings in 1989. One very important fact emerged from these consultations, namely that jobs were a priority. According to young people and to groups that made representations, the ultimate goal that the government should be pursuing is full employment.

In pursuing this objective, consideration must be given to the characteristics of the various groups of unemployed people and to the realities in the different regions. People in the community must be involved to a greater degree. Without regional solidarity, there can be no worthwhile job creation plan. Young people are also critical of the multiplicity of programs and of the way in which resources are allocated. Specifically, they lament the fact that each time a new government comes to power, the names of the programs change.

Quebec youth want a quick end to duplication and to futile struggles between governments. They also want to be involved more in the process. Young people have set up youth consultation forums in the regions but they need more money to support their action. They are also hoping for improved funding of local youth community organizations.

To help young people the government intends to create a Youth Service Corps, an initiative that should give them the opportunity to undergo a training period to acquire experience and build up confidence. This project is strangely reminiscent of the old Katimavik program abolished by the Conservatives in 1986. The Youth Service Corps does not stress second language learning as much as Katimavik but it does not offer any new

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solutions to young people's problems; it is recycled material. The Youth Service Corps mostly offers occupational activities without direct links to the workforce of today and tomorrow.

Again, instead of creating a new program and a new structure, we should better support youth organizations by giving them extra resources to adjust to today's reality. It would be a unique opportunity to combine job training with regional development. Young people should have a chance to become familiar with new computer and other technologies while helping their communities.

In conclusion, I would like to add a few comments: even if the youth service corps appears at first glance to be motivated by good intentions, it hides in my opinion an effort to gain time before tackling the real problems of young people. It is a flashy operation that will reach very few young people, 10,000 in three years, when there are over 600,000 unemployed Canadians between the ages of 16 and 24. The youth service corps is merely a recycled Katimavik program. This is an old remedy for a new problem. It is also one more incursion into an area of provincial jurisdiction. The only positive side that I can see is organizing activities for young people who want to take a sabbatical before making a permanent career choice. However, this is certainly not a priority compared with the needs already identified by organizations involved in training young people.

(2010)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the hon. member but I was particularly interested in his criticisms of the proposed Canadian youth service. He makes a somewhat disparaging reference concerning the Katimavik program which was cut by the previous Tory government. I believe if Katimavik had not been cut we would have seen, with experience, that program blossom into a very useful and very helpful program for young people.

I want to ask the member if he does not believe it is helpful for young people at the critical age of 18, 19, 20 to maybe get out of the home. If they do not have an opportunity to work in a community near their home, they could work in another part of the country. If they are from B.C. they might work in Nova Scotia or Quebec; if they are from Quebec they might work in Ontario or Alberta.

Does he not think it would be very helpful to these young people to have a real work experience even if it is not in their ultimate area of professional expertise later on in life?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. Obviously, if we were not in a particularly tight financial situation, an experiment like Katimavik would be entirely praiseworthy, and I agree with what he just said.

However, when we compare the need for personal development and experience, travelling and all that with the other needs of youth—needs that I have described in the first part of my speech—young people who are living in extreme poverty, who are desperate to get some kind of occupational training after dropping out of school and then after a while want to get into the labour market and still do not have the proper training and experience they need, when we compare that with the experience of going to another province or another part of one's own province to do the kind of things described in the Youth Service Program such as cleaning up the banks of a river or doing various jobs to beautify the environment, we realize there is no future in cleaning up the environment with brooms and shovels. It does not provide a direct link with the labour market. This kind of work tends to be done by volunteers rather than employees. These jobs are typical volunteer work. In my riding, civic-minded residents do this kind of work for a couple weeks in the spring as volunteers. In fact, it is all part of environmental awareness.

It may have worked from 1980 to 1986. Perhaps the financial resources were there at the time, but we should remember that even in its heyday, the number of young people involved in Katimavik did not exceed 10,000, at a cost of \$10,000 per person.

You may consider this is a stiff price to pay for the experience of living in another province for nine months, as described in the youth service program, Sir—oh, I am sorry—Mr. Speaker, since I am supposed to address the Chair while trying to get the hon. member's attention. Trips and room and board are expensive.

(2015)

So if we consider other training needs, it seems to me that we must get our priorities straight. If it were up to me personally, obviously I would be more inclined to favour those who will have to enter the labour market. And I would do that because I have looked at various reports and heard the demands of youth organizations which are saying: jobs come first.

During the election campaign and in the throne speech, the Liberal Party told us that jobs came first. Occupational, recreational, leisure and cultural activities are all very interesting, but not in the financial situation we have today.



*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Lévis for his fine speech.

I noticed his concern for the need to create jobs. He said there are about 45,000 jobs that had to be created in the province of Quebec to help the young people there. A great social cost is being handed from generation to generation as these people lose hope and motivation.

These things all take money. Education takes a great deal of money. The province of Quebec is a net recipient of equalization grants. I wonder if the member for Lévis is looking toward the federal government to pay for education, to pay for job creation, to pay for the social problems that exist in Quebec. Where else is the money going to come from? I would like to hear his point of view on that.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I will simply repeat the message that this side of the House is desperately trying to send, namely that duplication and overlapping must end. As regards job training, if the present government delegated the responsibility, and the related budget, in accordance with the established jurisdiction of the provinces in the field of education, it would eliminate duplication and save Quebec taxpayers \$250 million. In fact, by eliminating duplication and overlapping, the federal government would save a lot more than that, probably an amount equivalent to ten times the cost of running the Youth Service Corps for the first year.

If you include all the provinces, the savings would be close to \$1 billion dollars. The \$250 million figure for Quebec was never challenged. Nor was the \$1 billion estimated by the other provinces. Such savings would be made by simply putting an end to duplication and bringing the program closer to the regions which, by the way, consult each other more and more and are better able to identify the training and employment problems facing young people, and that is very important.

Moreover, the problem with the Youth Service Corps is that it creates yet another structure and, of the \$10,000 which will supposedly be allocated for young people, \$4,000 will be reserved for administration purposes. It is a very good idea to set up a program to help young people, but such a measure should not be an excuse to create a new structure absorbing \$4,000, or 40 per cent of the amount allocated. I believe that all sides in this House should agree to avoid creating new structures and instead strengthen social programs by using existing ones.

We also say this to the government: "Respect your areas of jurisdiction; respect the areas of jurisdiction of Quebec and of the other provinces". By simply doing this, savings will result.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time for questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate. I must apologize, with all the members surrounding the member for Lévis, I forgot the next speaker on the list; it is unfortunate since he is a former professor of mine. I apologize to him.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra):** Never mind, Mr. Speaker. I enjoyed listening to the member for Lévis. I really appreciated his remarks.

*[English]*

I am reminded it is a long day. My day began 12-1/2 hours ago with a regional caucus meeting. One of these days somebody should write a book on how Parliament makes a law. We would discover in empirical fashion that it is not made in the give and thrust of debates in Parliament, in the Chamber, although that is important. It is made in the dialectical processes of exchange of views and compromises and give and take in committees but it can be the committees in which they have all the parties fully represented. That is where we reach our compromise and our consensus and that is how we make laws.

(2020)

I suppose it is an interesting lesson in our approach to this problem of social policy. I am most impressed by the statement by the distinguished Minister of Human Resources Development and one has to remind oneself that however important a portfolio is it is not an island to itself. We are reminded again of the Liberal Party program which for better or for worse was to accept the grave problem of the deficit that exists. One must do something about it.

One will solve it not by cries of despair alone but by trying to create employment, the jobs, the flow of revenue and maintaining our comprehensive social security network in which we lead the world and of which we are very justly proud.

If we approach the issue of human resources and what the ministry should do, it is concerned with many facets of cabinet operations and many portfolios.

I am reminded of one of those distinguished papers which I reread quite recently issued in the Second World War by Archbishop Temple who later became Archbishop of Canterbury on the need for reconstruction in the post war period. He was emphasizing then that you must use your human resources and to get an economy moving you must create employment. It is an older truth but it is still true today.

When I look at the situation in Canada today the most obvious need is for a long term strategy and the long term strategy in terms of human resources is to create globally competitive industries, leading edge technology that provides not simply short term jobs for tomorrow or even the day after tomorrow but 10 years from now.

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In a very real sense this is the challenge for my own province of British Columbia as we have tried to escape from an original primary resources based economy to a more sophisticated post industrial economy that recognizes the glut in primary resources around the world that you cannot base your economic well-being on primary resources any more alone, although I must say with imaginative management policies and investment in the search much is being done to remain ahead of the rest of the world.

You must invest in industry and leading edge industry and that means an relationship not merely between the ministry of employment but the ministry of education. These go together. The Japanese miracle is to understand that the post modern society's technology is based on research and that is based on education and on universities but universities of the 21st century.

For those who have spent, as I suppose most people here have, much of their lives in universities we would have to recognize that the dead hand of tradition lies very heavily on universities. There are obligations to stay abreast with the scientific technologically based community in which we are living. Universities need to move into that threshold between pure study and application and in some ways the technische hochschule, those technical universities in continental Europe, give us a lead which the Japanese took up and which is the explanation of the Japanese miracle.

In our attempt in British Columbia to escape from the primary resources based economy we have invested heavily in education, in science, in pursuit of advanced technology and the jobs that flow from that.

If I may I will refer to a case study, as it were, of this. I would stress, though, that science is not simply the cataloguing of dead knowledge from a past era. There is a poetic element in the great scientists that distinguishes the Einstein from the ordinary scientist. Those inductive leaps into the future require that element of vision.

(2025)

We are very fortunate in British Columbia to have had a scientist of the calibre of Erich Vogt who has that poetic vision and a strong university president who recognizes that if you invest in the science of tomorrow, you may have to wait 10 years for the fruits to come back. But they will come back in a much better and a much larger quantity than if you are simply looking for results that will show on balance sheets next year or 18 months from now.

It is what Dr. Strangway, the very brilliant administrator at the University of British Columbia calls the development in North America of "hot spots". One of the interesting things is the development of pharmacological research with its offshoots into

applied industrial development. It is a feature of that area of land that encompasses British Columbia, Oregon and Washington. These universities and the communities co-operating together are pushing the world community to the advanced frontiers of pharmacological research, one which by the way yielded a Nobel Laureate for Canada several months ago by the name of Dr. Michael Smith of the University of British Columbia.

New technologies, pion therapy for example for brain tumours or the superconductors which are the product of the TRIUMF project at the University of British Columbia are not projects created in the abstract, pure ventures in science that do not have a spin-off. For example KAON and TRIUMF spend approximately \$30 million a year for research. The spin-off to industries such as the Ebc Industries Ltd. in Richmond, British Columbia, a company that started as a small tool manufacturing company developed by two German immigrant brothers has been converted into a \$100 million a year export industry as a direct result of the TRIUMF research and the spin-off secondary industry resulting from it.

If British Columbia and Canada are to create the jobs, to create those incomes and the flow of revenue to reduce the deficit, this is the way we should be going, investing in that frontier of science and knowledge, investing in education. It does mean, and I do not wish here to get into constitutional issues to which I have given a good deal of my professional life, but I do think we are looking at a stage at which national norms with a large element of imagination and leadership in them are required. Whether that is reached by strong federal government alone or in co-operation with provinces is an matter we will be discussing with the minister in charge of intergovernmental relations in the future.

I am a little concerned, and I have voiced this in other arenas than the present one, with the possibility that TRIUMF and its progeny the KAON project, because of under funding by the Canadian government, by foreign governments that perhaps are not kept fully to their obligations by pressure from our own government, might fail. I would view that as a tragedy in the sense that a thousand scientists from around the world grouped together in a Canadian university community, researching together on common projects, the spin-off in those small commercially usable cyclotrons, the objects of this sort that are the rich product of that investment in money and research. There is a case for pure science. The federal government has led here in the past and I would hope it will do so in the future.

The investment is worth the trouble. The investment in some senses is a challenge to the Canada of the 21st century that the present government committed itself to building. We will conquer the deficit by new jobs and the new jobs will be leading edge technology with the education to support it.

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(2030)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est):** Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciated the comments made by the hon. member from British Columbia.

I gathered from what he said that he was a university teacher for a number of years, like me I might add. I especially appreciated his comments on education. I agree with him totally when he says that education is fundamental, essential, and that we must do our utmost to have a good education system because it is really basic, not only if we want to create lasting employment, but also if we want to promote a more democratic society, an imaginative and innovative society in all areas.

Of course, much could be said about education. I disagree however with one of his remarks. I have no doubt that the hon. member is an experienced teacher as well as an intelligent man, but I have some difficulty with this idea of national standards in education. Certainly not at the university level. There is no need for that whatsoever. Several Canadian universities excel while relying on their own means to achieve high levels in research and quality. That is a given.

In fact, academic work is clearly one of freedom and independence. I see absolutely no value in national standards. Even at the high school or elementary level, it seems to me that one of great things about education is this freedom of expression, this freedom to discover, this freedom enjoyed even with the teacher.

I find that, in Canada, we have too many standards, too many national standards, too many government-imposed restrictions as it is. We do not need more national standards, we need less. We need teachers, at all levels, to be freer to provide young people with the kind of education that best relates to their life experience.

**Mr. McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the speech by the hon. member of the Opposition. As you will undoubtedly remember, I was a special constitutional advisor to a few premiers of Quebec, Ontario and other provinces. I have always advocated a pluralistic federalism based on co-operation and consensus.

I never suggested that standards should be imposed by a federal government or authority. I only said that, in setting scientific standards, we are often behind other countries with a strong national consensus. These are scientific matters. It is not an ideological or constitutional issue in my opinion.

I never insisted on the application of a consensus by a sovereign and higher authority. Consensus means something else. I am not too happy with the National Research Council, which is overly centralized in Ottawa and does not fully meet the needs of British Columbia, for instance.

My position is much more pluralistic in this respect. I call for the co-operation of the hon. members from Quebec and the other provinces. Nothing in current government policy seems to reflect this. If I may give a further explanation, nothing in my speech implies a constitutional theory, much less an overly centralized federalist policy. I am a constitutional pluralist.

(2035)

*[English]*

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, the fact I am likely the last speaker today I think you will find the best has been left for last. Since there are relatively few members here to witness this just keep it to yourselves.

I want to thank the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra. I always appreciate hearing his interventions. They are well thought out. Although I would add to his comments about the relevance of debate in this place vis-à-vis the relevance of compromise and discussion in committees.

He will agree with me that it is the debate in this place that really focuses one's attention and really focuses the thinking that needs to surround the very important subjects that we must deal with.

The member for Lévis was talking about the relationship of youth, employment and the social safety nets. It really struck home that this whole discussion and exercise is about the relationship between jobs and the social safety nets.

If everybody were working we would not have need for a social safety net. If there were nobody working we could not afford to have a social safety net. It is really impossible to participate in this discussion without linking at all times jobs and the strength of the economy, which defines the level of our employment, with our ability to provide those social safety nets, those supports for those who for various reasons cannot work, whether they are too young, disabled, too old or they are just not in a position to find employment because of the economy of their area.

In linking jobs to the whole question of social safety nets, I doubt there is really anyone here who has a full grasp of what our social safety net situation is like in this country right now. It is a huge monster in many ways. I feel it is madness to suggest that we should not completely review our social safety net programs. They have evolved over the years by piecemeal additions of one program or another, changes here and changes there, some good and some bad. If we do not take the opportunity now to totally review these programs we are just going to make the problems more difficult to tackle later on.

Many of these programs were instituted by previous Liberal governments, and wisely so, but times have changed and we are the first ones to recognize it. I really pay tribute to our Minister of Human Resources Development who has demonstrated

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tremendous leadership. As I review the consultation plan that he has put forward I marvel at the breadth of the program.

If you look closely it is a three pronged approach involving the standing committee and members of Parliament, as members of the committee and as representatives of their ridings. It involves consultations with the provincial and territorial governments as a second attack. Third, the minister will have a special task force of non-partisan professionals who have been dealing with these issues for years to also provide advice.

This three pronged approach will conclude roughly the end of March and will tie into the government's action plan which will be the subject of scrutiny until this coming September and then the parliamentary debate and review later this fall and into next year which involves the two years that the minister talked about.

This is such a comprehensive set of consultations but it really bespeaks the kind of government that we are putting in front of the people, a transparent government, a government willing to listen to people and the fact that we are having this debate here.

(2040)

We really are putting a new face to the people of Canada and giving Canadians a chance to have confidence again in their government.

The first 100 days of the Liberal government have demonstrated that we are serious. There will be some mistakes, no question about it. With due respect to opposition members when the score is counted at the end of another four or five years we will be judged well in our efforts to listen to the people and try to develop programs that make a lot of sense.

Our social safety net is full of holes, unfortunately. Imagine being a trapeze artist with a safety net below you that had holes in it. One would not feel too excited about taking that next swing under the circus tent.

There are young people, seniors and people with families in this country who are very fearful about those holes in the safety net. Like most of us, I am not fully aware of all the elements of our safety net programs.

It really behoves us to look at it all so that we can identify those holes. I will talk about a few as part of my intervention.

In my riding of Algoma we have a single industry town, Elliot Lake, which has virtually lost all of its uranium mining. It is now struggling, struggling valiantly, and doing well to diversify its economy to take advantage of the beautiful natural resources in the area along with the tourism and so on.

The neighbouring communities along the north shore are struggling with the problems that face single industry communities and areas. The problems that come with major shutdowns

require a certain kind of response from federal, provincial and local governments.

Those kinds of responses are different than what is required in other areas of the country like the Manitoulin and north shore areas of my riding where we have systemic unemployment and seasonal employment, or seasonal unemployment to look at the reverse.

Tourism is wonderful but unfortunately until we can expand our tourism to all four seasons we will end up with seasonal employment. We have tended over the years to look at joblessness as one kind of problem. Past governments with all due respect have tried to deal with this on a piecemeal basis.

I would like to pick out a few of the holes that have crept into the system. A few years ago in 1985 the previous government made changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act which changed the application of severance pay as it related to unemployment insurance.

Severance pay was intended when it was first designed to allow laid off workers a bit of breathing space while they moved, retrained or made the necessary adjustments in their families to deal with being laid off.

Lo and behold, about seven or eight years ago the previous government changed the definition or the application of severance pay so that it had to be used up as income. There in one fell swoop severance pay was changed from an insurance against loss of employment to simply another form of income that the government took advantage of.

That was a tremendous problem for laid off workers in Elliot Lake and other parts of the riding of Algoma. There was a tremendous hue and cry. That is a major hole in the safety net that we have to deal with as part of our overall review.

How many of us have met people who have been laid off from a certain type of industry and are being retrained in another field for which there is absolutely no prospect of employment. There are cases in which major industries have shut down in the community and we retrain people as welders. However, there is no chance of there ever being employment in any major way for welders in that community again.

We really have to do a better job of matching the jobs aspect of our economy and the safety nets aspect of our economy. When we allow some people on UI to be retrained and others not to be retrained because some are in this part of the country or have faced a designated lay off, when we discriminate between one kind of unemployment and another, then we have problems.

If one is not working, one is not working. It does not really matter in the long run how one became unemployed. We really have to be more fair to our workforce, to individual workers.

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(2045)

The holes in our safety net often leave our seniors behind. How many poor seniors do we have in our economy? There are far too many people facing retirement with little prospect of any kind of comfort in their twilight years. We owe them much more than that, having really counted on them to build the country. We really owe them much more than pushing them off and leaving them to try to survive on limited incomes.

Throughout the campaign last fall I met many young people. It hit me so graphically that unlike when I went to university back in the late sixties and early seventies, believe it or not, young people who are now looking at going to university or college in the next year or two may face a situation where they are competing for fewer seats. Our support programs have withdrawn seats from our post-secondary education institutions.

When I think back to when I was in high school the fact is that I could enjoy high school. I could do a reasonable amount of homework and at the same time prepare for the future socially and scholastically. I look at these young people now and they are under so much pressure to get high marks to go to university that they are almost losing their teen years. When those years are gone, they are gone. The economy has deprived them of that.

Our social safety nets have yet to respond to the big problem, the total problem. I do not believe the debate here is necessarily the place in which to put forward solutions, although many of us have. I have been quite impressed with the level of debate, but I point out that there must be a linkage between jobs and the safety net. We cannot divorce the two. We cannot discuss one in isolation from the other.

As we look forward with some anticipation to great challenge, the most valuable attitude we can have toward our future planning is that of being creative. We must do some lateral thinking: think about things that perhaps we would not have thought about before, think about solutions that maybe we would not have considered five or ten years ago. Now we have to put everything on the table. We have to consider seriously, maybe for the first time in our history, where we are going.

I will conclude my remarks by suggesting to the House that the government was elected fundamentally on its ability to project hope. I suggest we can build on that hope by building on the people who make up the country. It is the people who have jobs. It is the people who fall into the safety net. That is the common denominator. We would not be here if it were not for the people.

It boils down to some very simple points. I believe more members should take the opportunity to share their views and to share in rebuilding the country.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech made by the hon. member for Algoma and I join with him in praising the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra whose speeches are indeed impeccably thought-out and delivered.

What I appreciated the most about the remarks made by the hon. member for Algoma was their great sincerity as well as the fact that they touched upon a great many of the real issues confronting us. However, there is a point on which I disagree and that is the three-step consultations that his party is proposing.

I could introduce the hon. member for Algoma to a fair number of residents of my riding who do not need lengthy consultations to tell you what the real issues confronting us are. As we speak, there are 25,000 people waiting for training in Quebec, and I would imagine that the situation is the same elsewhere in Canada. As we know, if you do not have adequate training, you cannot find a job, so you are unemployed and then you get health problems and so on. You are locked into this vicious circle.

I would like the hon. member for Algoma to tell my constituents, who are probably watching us at this time of day, and to those in Bloc Québécois ridings throughout the province, in what way delaying these three-step consultations further will help solve the urgent problems facing these 25,000 young people waiting to be enrolled in classes, which the SQDM would be prepared to arrange immediately but is unable to due to this government's inaction.

I hope that my colleague from Algoma will be convincing because I, for one, find this situation extremely difficult.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Algoma has been invited to address the voters in the riding of the hon. member for Portneuf.

*[English]*

**Mr. St. Denis:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments and questions by the member for Portneuf, my good neighbour.

Eight weeks is not very long. Ten years or twenty years is a long time, but eight weeks is not so long. The first stage of the consultations will be completed by the end of March. As part of the consultations I want to have some meetings in various areas of my riding of Algoma. I suppose I could advertise those right now while I have the opportunity. There will be more information on them in the local newspapers in the very near future.

We want to hear from the unemployed in our communities. If we attempt to move forward without taking some serious time, even if it is only eight weeks at this stage, we will make a serious mistake. Over the last 10 years we saw some pretend consulting. I say to my good friend, the member for Portneuf, that the next

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eight weeks we will see a major step forward, what I call the scoping phase of the consultations. The member may choose to have consultations in his riding. I suspect he will, even if it means talking to individual members of his communities.

In those eight weeks the standing committee will start its work. The minister and his task force will start their work. Individual members will start their work. The discussions with the territories and provinces will continue. By September we

should have something on the table for Parliament to discuss, which is not such a long time. It is very important we take that time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 8.52 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8.52 p.m.)

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