



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, March 5, 1996**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

## CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 5, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions presented during the first session.

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership and associate membership of various committees. If the House gives its consent I intend to move concurrence in the second report later this day.

\* \* \*

### FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-222, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning on alcoholic beverage containers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is in the same form as Bill C-337 at prorogation of the last session. I request that it be reinstated, pursuant to the special order of March 4.

I want to thank the House and particularly the Prime Minister for extending to private members the privilege of bringing the business of private members through the House to show that all members can contribute to the building of Canada.

• (1005 )

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-337 was at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 35th Parliament.

Accordingly, pursuant to order made Monday, March 4, 1996 the bill is deemed to have been read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

HEALTH

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while this petition has already been processed through the normal channels, I want to bring it before the public today.

The petitioners point out that over 25 million Canadians have access to supplemental dental and health coverage. They point out that any taxation on this type of coverage would have an adverse effect on the overall health of Canadians.

They point out that the focus right now is on the prevention of disease and family affordability. They want us to keep what we have because they think it is really quite good. They believe that we have the best oral health in the world.

CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to the House two petitions from concerned residents of my riding of Cambridge and surrounding areas.

*Routine Proceedings*

The first petition, with over 600 names, opposes section 745 of the Criminal Code.

## RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is sent from Cambridge Right to Life, appealing to the House to protect the rights of unborn children.

## TAXATION

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition signed by constituents of Lambton—Middlesex and outlying areas. It is duly certified by the clerk of petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36.

In view of the fact that Canadians are paying approximately 52 per cent of the cost of a litre of gasoline in the form of government taxes, that the tax increase by 1.5 cents per litre in the last budget and that over the past 10 years the excise tax on gasoline has risen by 556 per cent, the petitioners request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next federal budget.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today pursuant to Standing Order 36. I wish to present a petition which has been circulating across Canada. This petition comes from Delta, B.C.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society. They also state that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families that make the choice to provide care in the home to preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families that decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition also has been circulating across Canada. This one comes from St. Catharines, Ontario.

The petitioners would like to bring to the attention of the House that consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems or impair one's ability and, specifically, that fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol related birth defects are 100 per cent preventable by avoiding alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to enact legislation to require health warning labels to be placed on the

containers of all alcoholic beverages to caution expectant mothers and others of the risk associated with alcoholic consumption.

• (1010)

## TAXATION

**Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure to present a petition on behalf of 175 signatories from the riding of my colleague, the hon. member for Victoria, urging Parliament not to increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next federal budget.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, on behalf of petitioners who call on Parliament to oppose any amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which provide for inclusion of the phrase sexual orientation, I present this petition to this honourable House.

[Translation]

## EMPLOYMENT CENTRES

**Mr. Gilbert Filion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure of presenting a petition concerning the closing of the La Baie employment centre.

“Whereas a considerable portion of the population to be served by the Canada Human Resources Centre is located at a distance of over 50 kilometres from the planned point of service;

Whereas it is essential for resources to remain in the community so as to have a proper grasp its specific dynamics and to be in a position to make informed judgments and decisions;

I hereby request—and I support this petition—that the minister take the specific characteristics of the riding of Chicoutimi into consideration and consult local decision makers before reaching a definitive decision”.

## TAXATION

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am today presenting a petition on behalf of the people of my riding, who are requesting that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next federal budget, because we are paying approximately 52 per cent of the cost of a litre of gasoline in the form of government taxes, because the excise tax was raised 1.5 per cent in the last budget and because, over the past ten years, the excise tax on gasoline has risen by 566 per cent.

[English]

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and honour to present a

petition duly certified by the clerk of petitions on behalf of 673 constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and surrounding area.

The petitioners' prayers call on Parliament to enact legislation to reform the justice system and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act addressing the following principles:

A just and safe society. That the safety and protection of the public precedes over the protection and identity and statutory release of dangerous criminals and pedophiles of any age. The rights and protection of the victims precedes over the rights of the criminals. To simplify and speed up legal procedures to eliminate stall tactics in the defence of criminals. Eliminate the drunk or drug defence. The incarceration and prosecution of dangerous criminals to precede over victimless offenders.

When a young offender commits an indictable crime of violence, a serious crime, he or she be tried automatically in regular court without lengthy hearings and appeals which take years in juvenile court.

Finally, that justice reform can be achieved with no erosion of civil liberty of law-abiding citizens. A person's freedom and rights stop where another's start.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition duly certified by the clerk of petitions which I would like to present on behalf of 62 constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and surrounding area.

The petitioners request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline and strongly consider reallocating its current revenues to rehabilitate Canada's crumbling national highways.

[Translation]

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present today a petition signed by a group of constituents in my riding of La Prairie and the city of Laval. They are opposed to an increase in the federal excise tax on gasoline, for the following reasons:

"In view of the fact that the availability of sources of affordable fuel is a natural advantage to Canadians in reducing the high cost of shipping between source and market;

In view of the fact that Canadians are paying approximately 52 per cent of the cost of a litre of gasoline in the form of government taxes;

In view of the fact that there was a tax increase of 1.5 litres in the last budget;

In view of the fact that a parliamentary committee has recommended an additional excise tax increase in the next federal budget; and

#### Routine Proceedings

In view of the fact that over the past 10 years the excise tax on gasoline has rise by 556 per cent" as the member for Saint-Hubert has pointed out;

The petitioners therefore request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next federal budget.

[English]

#### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and honour to present a petition duly approved by the clerk of petitions. It is signed by 77 of my constituents mostly resident in the districts of Richmond and Fox Valley. The petitioners express their support of the Canadian Wheat Board and request that Parliament continue to give the wheat board monopoly powers in marketing wheat and barley for export.

● (1015)

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two petitions today.

The first petition requests that the Government of Canada not amend the human rights act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners fear that such an inclusion would indicate societal approval of homosexual behaviour. The petitioners believe that the government should not legitimize this behaviour against the clear wishes of the majority.

#### AGE OF CONSENT

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition concerns the age of consent laws. The petitioners ask that Parliament set the age of consent at 18 years to protect children from exploitation and abuse.

#### GASOLINE TAX

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present petitions from constituents on Vancouver Island.

The petitioners request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline and that the government strongly consider reallocating current revenues to rehabilitate Canada's crumbling national highways network. There have been a number of petitions on this subject and I hope the government is listening.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition on behalf of 500 of my constituents.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation that will ensure the preservation of medicare through adequate funding and

*The Address*

compliance with the five principles of medicare: accessible, comprehensive, universal, portable, and publicly administered.

## DISTINCT SOCIETY

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we know the government is always listening. We are not sure if it is acting, but we know it is listening.

I have a petition today from 813 people, most of them from my riding of Fraser Valley East, a few from Vancouver and even one from Goose Bay, Happy Valley in Newfoundland.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to ensure the equality of all provinces by refusing to designate one province a distinct society as such a designation confers special status or powers not enjoyed by all the provinces.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

## DEBATE RESUMED ON ADDRESS

The House resumed from February 29, 1996 consideration of the motion that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General in response to his Speech he addressed at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne reaffirms the government's commitment to expand trade to ensure our prosperity.

[English]

**Mr. Silye:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe you will find if you check with the table officers that when we ended debate on this subject matter, my colleague for Okanagan Centre had the floor and he was halfway through his speech. I thought that when we resumed this debate it would pick up where he left off. He still had five minutes left in his speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** With the greatest of respect to my colleague for Calgary Centre, in fact the hon. member for Okanagan Centre did have the floor. If we also recall, the vote took

place immediately following his last intervention which in fact cut off that debate and brought it to a conclusion.

We are now debating the amendment to the speech from the throne. The debate on the subamendment was what the hon. member for Okanagan Centre was participating in and that debate has now concluded. That matter is now behind us and we will resume debate on the amendment to the throne speech with the hon. Minister for International Trade.

**An hon. member:** Learn the rules.

**Mr. Silye:** Mr. Speaker, to whomever yelled that out, I am trying to apply the rules.

What I am trying to say is when the member had the floor it was also a 20-minute time period and we were splitting our time. He was only five minutes into his 20-minute period. How could the debate have ended then?

• (1020)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I think you would find that in fact what we were debating at that time was the Reform Party's subamendment to the throne speech. We voted on the subamendment which in fact closed that debate. Now we refer to the debate on the amendment to the throne speech and I would like to begin that debate with the hon. Minister for International Trade.

**Mr. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, I am indeed rising to speak on the speech from the throne specifically with regard to the area of which I have jurisdiction as minister, the area of international trade.

Expanding trade is not a matter of choice for Canadians. With a relatively small population we simply must find markets beyond our own. This is a challenge which Canadians are taking on with tenacity and success. Exports have been growing at an unprecedented rate and now represent nearly 37 per cent of our gross domestic product compared to 24 per cent in 1991. One in three jobs in Canada now depends on exports. That is one in three.

The final figures have just come in on our merchandise trade and I am delighted to announce today that it now stands at a record surplus of \$28 billion. This record surplus smashes the previous record of \$20 billion that was set back in 1984.

Significantly much of this export growth is taking place in value added sectors which means that we are no longer simply exporting raw materials for others to refine and then sell back to us at increased prices. This is good news for the long term economic prospects of Canadians.

It is also encouraging to note that while the United States remains by far our largest trading partner, there has also been a significant increase in our exports to other major markets around the world. Our trade is growing. Our exports are diversifying and our markets are expanding.

What accounts for this phenomenal success? There are three main reasons. First, of course the lower Canadian dollar has made

*The Address*

it easier for Canadians to sell their goods and services in international markets. But that is not the full story.

Second, we must also recognize the role played by our success in liberalizing trade, in opening up these markets around the world through the World Trade Organization and through the North American Free Trade Agreement. By levelling the playing field for Canadian firms our trade policy successes have allowed many seasoned exporters to take on new markets. It has also meant that many Canadian businesses have begun to export for the very first time.

Third, our exports have soared because of the initiative and the imagination of individual Canadians and individual Canadian companies which have found ways to compete and to compete profitably in the global marketplace. They are the authors of their own success and their achievements are benefiting all of us in Canada.

The successes of the past impose upon us the responsibility to maintain and exceed that performance in the future. If we are to continue to offer quality jobs to Canadians, we must continue to set our sights higher and we are doing just that.

Last October my predecessor as Minister for International Trade challenged Canadians to double the number of active exporters by the year 2000. This is indeed an ambitious goal, but consider the potential of it.

Relatively few Canadian companies are currently exporting. In fact 50 firms alone account for half of the exports of this country. There is lots of margin for improvement. To expand exports we need to dramatically increase the number of companies exporting and encourage current exporters to expand into new markets.

• (1025 )

There is also the other side of the coin. Just as Canada must increase its exports to others, so too must we attract quality, technology rich, foreign, direct investment to this country because more than one job in ten and more than half of Canada's exports are directly due to international investment in Canada. Companies which invest in this country end up carrying much of the exports into other countries.

[*Translation*]

Foreign investment brings us the latest technology and helps our subsidiaries compete in world markets.

[*English*]

All regions of Canada benefit from such investments. For example, Stora of Sweden recently announced the construction of a new \$650 million pulp and paper facility in Nova Scotia, creating 300 new jobs. The Montreal subsidiary of Ericsson Communications also of Sweden is providing 700 jobs for Canadian engineers and technicians. The recently announced expansions of Toyota and

Honda in Ontario mean 2,200 new jobs for Canadians. The recent decisions by Merck-Frosst mean 200 new jobs for research scientists in British Columbia and Quebec.

These are large numbers but behind each one is an individual Canadian who is granted the dignity of holding a job, of paying his or her own way and who can begin to dream that their tomorrows will be brighter than their yesterdays. This is what foreign investment really means.

We know that the competition for such foreign investment is keen so we must be both aggressive and strategic in our efforts to attract and retain it in Canada. We have the best country in the world in which to invest and we need to continue to get that message out.

It is absolutely essential to offer foreign investors an investment climate that is second to none. That is why the government remains committed to deficit reduction. That is why we are working to eliminate regulatory burdens, barriers to interprovincial trade and to end disputes and regulations which restrict the flow of business and business people.

If, as it has been often said, trade is the lifeblood of our economic prosperity, then access is its arteries. The free circulation of goods is essential to our economic health. Our government will continue to open new markets and create new opportunities for Canadian companies.

To ensure the continued development of our trade, this government has identified three key priorities. The first is to effectively manage our most important trading relationship, that with the United States. The second is to liberalize trade around the world based on clear rules and level playing fields. To this end we are working through the World Trade Organization and the North American Free Trade Agreement. The third is to ensure that Canadian companies realize the benefits presented by the global marketplace. This means championing Canadian companies abroad, helping companies find new markets, assisting with financing where appropriate and attracting new investment to Canada.

These priorities were not pulled out of thin air. They are the result of extensive consultations with Canadian industry and with our provincial partners. We will continue in this collaborative manner as we proceed to implement these priorities.

It should come as no surprise that our trading relationship with the United States should be our first priority. After all, 82 per cent of our exports go to that country. In fact, two-way trade between Canada and the United States is a billion dollars every single day going both ways. It is the biggest trading relationship for both of our countries. It is the biggest trading relationship that exists in the world and one on which tens of thousands of jobs depend. It is also one in which, in spite of the headlines that show the controversies and issues in a number of areas, more than 95 per cent of that trade

*The Address*

with the United States goes across the borders harassment free, without any difficulties whatsoever. The relationship is a strong one.

• (1030)

The relatively stable and predictable trade environment that has been created by NAFTA and the WTO has certainly improved conditions a lot. It has encouraged an enormous expansion of this trade and trade in other parts of the world. Our exports have risen by 90 per cent over the last nine years under NAFTA and its earlier FTA.

Over time we have been able to bring more and more of the bilateral trade relationship with the U.S. within the scope of agreed on trade rules. It is not perfect yet and we have still a way to go, but we are getting more of it based on rules.

For example, we will continue to be making the case that anti-dump and countervail laws have no place in a free trade area. While we have not yet convinced the United States of this, we will keep working toward it. We will keep working toward a bilateral trading relationship free of such trade remedy laws. This will be a key objective as we work to expand and tighten the rules in NAFTA.

These principles of rule based trade and freedom from countervail also animate our approach in other multilateral and regional fora such as the WTO and the Asia Pacific. With our partners in the WTO we aim to avoid the hub and spoke approach to trade policies, ensure the development of fair rules and obligations, and demonstrate the benefits of participating in the WTO.

We are also engaged in regional liberalization discussions where these are deemed important to Canadian interests. They include the negotiation by the year 2005 of a free trade area of the Americas. They also include participation in Asia and through APEC in efforts to pursue a Canada-European action plan and do some of the discussions jointly with the United States in a trilateral consultation.

Bilaterally we are close to concluding a free trade agreement with Israel. We are now negotiating a free trade agreement with Chile which will act as a bridge toward the eventual accession of that country into the North American free trade agreement.

With all of these efforts and initiatives we have tried to establish the access to foreign markets which Canadian companies need. Access is only half the battle. Canadian companies must be made aware of the opportunities available to them. They must be supported in their efforts to create beach heads in these new markets. The benefits of investing in Canada must be communicated to foreign investors.

In all of these areas the government is taking action. Canadians are well aware of the Prime Minister's highly successful Team Canada missions abroad. The latest mission to Southeast Asia

underlined the merits of the united approach, leading to some \$9 billion in new contracts for Canadian firms. This is on top of the \$13 billion generated by two previous Team Canada missions.

The government has no intention of stopping there and, as indicated in the speech from the throne, the Prime Minister will lead more such missions in the future. When we look at the fact that for every billion dollars in new trade and exports we create 11,000 jobs for Canadians, that \$20 billion has produced tens of thousands of jobs in our economy.

These missions show how much Canadians can achieve when we work together as a Team Canada. Now we must borrow the same approach at home in order to increase the number of companies trading abroad. To this end we have built a domestic Team Canada in partnership with relevant federal departments and agencies, the provinces and the private sector. Its mission is to help existing exporters find new markets, and to ensure that all Canadian exporters have access to the best possible market intelligence about these world markets.

• (1035)

Over the next three months all of the partners at the federal level in the provinces and the private sector will be determining what sectors and what markets we should be keying in on. Where do we focus? Where do we set our priorities?

Team Canada's task will be to identify, prepare and assist companies with export potential, develop their interest in foreign markets, help them gain access to all export assistance programs, and facilitate their export involvement. We are becoming much more proactive than ever before.

It is more important than ever that we commit our resources where they will have the greatest impact. Certainly in our economy exports have had an enormous impact in creating jobs and growth. That is why our direct funding assistance for international business development is now limited and will be focusing on small or medium size companies in which a lot of the growth and jobs can take place.

We also recognize the vital role played by our trade commissioners in all this. In 107 trade posts throughout the world these commissioners provide Canadian entrepreneurs with business leads, introductions to buyers and partners in foreign markets as well as with timely, strategic advice on markets and how best to tap into them.

We must support and strengthen our trade commissioners by enhancing their client focus and by providing means of monitoring client satisfaction.

The final ingredient of export success is access to competitive export financing. This often determines whether a firm can export or not. In times of diminishing resources, when governments can no longer afford to provide all the funding they would like to or



*The Address*

which companies may feel they need, we need to become more creative and imaginative in our approach.

The old ways of the old days when export orders were purchased with highly subsidized export financing must give way to new forms of risk sharing with the private sector.

We understand these new realities and we will work through the Export Development Corporation, the EDC, to expand the export finance system by leveraging public and private sector resources in new and innovative ways.

We will also look at ways to encourage Canadian financial institutions to become more involved in export financing. Some of the banks have already begun to develop strong relationships with EDC. We want to see these relationships grow with true risk sharing partnerships.

As we approach the 21st century our reputation as a trading power is well established and will continue to grow because Canadians have demonstrated their ability to take on the world and win. As a government our role is to solidify the gains we have made, to open new markets to Canadian enterprises, to encourage more Canadian companies to sell abroad, to be more proactive in how we help them and to continue to market Canada as a wonderful place to invest.

Our prosperity as a nation is always dependent on trade. In earlier days in other ways we met the challenges that faced us. I am confident we will again rise to the occasion. Our recent trade performance, as I have talked about it here this morning, has indicated that we can achieve when Canadians work together, when Canadian work in unison, when Canadians work as a team.

I am convinced these successes will pale with the achievements that are still to come.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on his speech. Unfortunately, I cannot completely subscribe to his claim.

Yesterday saw the minister in the United States talking about trade relations with that country, our main trading partner. The U.S. is indeed one of Canada's very important partners, but at a significant cost.

• (1040)

It is not under just any old conditions that we are friends with the United States and it is not under just any old conditions that we export to the United States. To do so, we have to snub our longstanding trading partners, Cuba, for example. Yesterday the minister was reminded fairly vigorously that courting Cuba was not in the best interest of trade relations between our two countries. I

would like him to explain to us what he intends to do about this. He has brushed it under the carpet.

Fifty companies in Canada export more than 50 per cent of all Canadian exports, and the minister is telling us we have to increase the number of exporters. Is this an example of the new Liberalism where as many friends as possible get involved at once? Would it not be a better idea to try to have more products and, by inventing new ones, open markets with our own products, produced and created right here? When I say "created right here", we should think about research and development, an area the revenue minister cut and then went back to after the fact. He clawed back the investments of Quebecers and Canadians who had put their money into research and development.

With one small example, I would just like to show the minister the importance of research and development in Canada. When the first white people, the French, arrived in Canada, an ear of corn was about the size of a cigarette. Then, with the opening of the prairies, research was done and this area was studied in depth. Now an ear of corn almost looks like a bologna sausage. The desire and the research produced success.

What have we done in forestry? We have emptied our land of its vast forests. We know that, before it can be cut down, a spruce tree must grow for 50 years in some areas and 40 years in others. We, however, have not gone any further to find a harvesting method that could meet global demand, if we are talking about new exports, new products.

We are still able to export wood because of our huge territory, but we have not made any discoveries in this area. We could engage in research and development, but the minister was not too insistent on this point.

I would like to ask the minister whether he plans to speak to his colleague, the Minister of National Revenue, to make him stop blundering as he did by acting like the highwaymen of the last century, who went after all those who had managed to save a little money and squeezed them dry by collecting their money retroactively.

As the minister would probably admit, the rooster is an early riser so whoever wakes him up must rise even earlier. That is what the minister should do. If he wants to accomplish something, if he wants to get something done, he should rise before the rooster and propose something that makes sense. I am 50 years old and the minister is not saying anything I have not heard before. I never heard an industry or international trade minister admit to us: "I have no ideas. I am no good. I do not think my proposal will work". No minister ever told me that. I am 50 years old, and I am still waiting.

They have all discovered the greatest thing since sliced bread. We, however, can see that the debt has grown to \$600 billion, that nothing is working, that the economy in Montreal and other cities is in a free fall, that poverty is rising in direct proportion, while the minister is shouting "Eureka" like the guy in his bathtub.

*The Address*

What we need is R and D, new markets, new products, nothing less. Instead of taking a piece of pie and letting as many people as possible nibble at it, we must put another pie on the table. The minister, however, shows no such political will.

I therefore ask him what he intends to do in this area.

[English]

**Mr. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague said a number of things. What struck me the most is when he said we must think Canadian. I am glad to hear that from a member of the Bloc Québécois.

• (1045)

What we need to do is think Canadian. That is what was the great success was behind Team Canada, notwithstanding that the premier of Quebec never went. Other premiers went, the private sector went. They produced some \$20 billion in contracts that produced tens of thousands of jobs throughout Canada, including Quebec.

The Quebec government needs to get on to Team Canada. I am delighted to hear the member say that we need to think Canadian. He said a number of things. I got the impression he was dismissing our relationship with the United States. This is over 80 per cent of our trade. We cannot dismiss that relationship out of hand.

I pointed out earlier that we have a \$28 billion surplus, much of that with the United States. Our trading relationship with that country is quite successful and it is bread and butter on the table for Canadians. We need to continue to nourish it.

I went to Washington yesterday to talk with the U.S. trade representative, Mr. Kantor, and the Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Brown, about the relationship. It was a meeting that had been planned some time before the Helms-Burton legislation became quite the controversy that it is today. It was designed as a get acquainted session and an opportunity to explore a number of bilateral issues.

To put this in some context, more than 95 per cent of the trade that exists between Canada and the United States is not a problem at all. These discussions are relevant to no more than 5 per cent of trade. We must continue to advance that relationship. We must make sure that we have more rules on which to base our discussions and settle our disputes.

As was quite evident in the recent settlement of the softwood lumber dispute, in NAFTA there is no subsidies code. There are no rules about subsidies so that the United States can come in and countervail.

Fortunately, with the support of the provincial governments, the Government of Quebec, the industry of Quebec, the Government of British Columbia, the industry of British Columbia being the two

biggest representing 85 per cent of the softwood lumber exports to the United States, we were able to work out an agreement with the United States that provides for five-year secure access for our lumber market, an \$8 billion export market. By doing that, it will prevent countervail from occurring in this area and save thousands of Canadian jobs.

In spite of the fact that we did not have rules on subsidies, we were able to get that agreement. We need to keep working on the rules to make sure that we are protected. We are dealing with a big country. We have to protect ourselves with a rules based system. More liberalized trade, yes; also, more rules based trade.

With respect to Cuba and the Helms-Burton bill, I made it clear to Mr. Kantor and Mr. Brown of the United States government that Canada protested the bill. We certainly join with them in deploring the shooting down of those planes by the Cubans. We want to work with them and to try to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba.

To take this kind of measure against third countries, including Canada, to say in effect that if you trade with Cuba, you cannot trade with us, as somebody in the States said, is wrong. It is a dangerous precedent. I made that quite clear.

My hon. colleague asked me this morning about what we will do. I met with ambassadors from many countries and heard many similar kinds of concerns expressed by them. I will also be consulting with Canadian businesses. We are looking at our options as we read the final text of the bill. We have not seen the final wording yet. It is going to pass the Senate and the House of Representatives. It will be signed by the President.

The President of the United States will have some discretion. It is limited, but he has some. We will be urging him to use that discretion to not take this out on their long time friend and number one trading partner, Canada, or third world countries. We have not heard the last of this issue.

The throne speech talked about the need for further investments in the area of science and technology. This certainly is where a lot of research is going to be needed. We recognize that innovation is going to help lead to more productivity. It will help lead to the kind of competitive position we have to have in world markets to be able to increase our exports. We well recognize that. We also recognize that more firms need to export. That is why we set a goal of saying we would double the number of exporters by the year 2000. That is why we are going to take a more proactive means of achieving increased export volumes and increased investment.

• (1050)

My hon. colleague knows full well from those remarks and from the statistics which have been coming out lately which clearly

*The Address*

indicate our ever increasing export opportunities that the government is giving this the kind of priority that it needs to have.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I am going to seek the co-operation of the House and in particular the minister. The member for Yorkton—Melville rose to his feet at the same time as the member for Chambly on questions or comments. While the minister took some time in his response to elaborate on an issue which is very time sensitive, and I am referring to the Canada-U.S.-Cuba situation, I wonder if he would take a question from the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will make one observation and then I will get to my question as quickly as possible.

I am really surprised at the blatant hypocrisy of the Liberals. I will ask the minister this question. Why has he suddenly changed his mind in regard to free trade, NAFTA and all of these things? During the election the Liberals clearly stated that they were going to abrogate certain parts of the NAFTA treaty. In fact, during an earlier election they vigorously opposed NAFTA.

I do not understand the hypocrisy in suddenly turning around and singing the praises of NAFTA. It is like they are telling us they are glad the Conservatives won the election on that issue.

Why is the government not working much more vigorously within Canada to reduce the trade barriers that exist within this nation? It is working in areas around the world, and we do not have a problem with that. We realize that Canada depends a lot on international trade so why is the government not using its power to break down the barriers within Canada that are costing us billions and billions of dollars?

**Mr. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, there are two parts to that question. I will take them in reverse order.

The government does give priority to the breaking down of internal trade barriers. Some people have said there are more barriers to trade within Canada than there are between Canada and other countries. That is true in many respects.

The government is cognizant of that. It wants to remove those trade barriers. That is why it entered into an accord with the provinces last year. It will continue to work to break down those barriers, to bring about the free flow of goods and people and investment within our country. That remains a very high priority of the government and my colleague, the Minister of Industry, will be able to provide more information on what specifically is being done by him and by the government to meet that priority.

With respect to the free trade agreement and the position that the government took when it came into office, we had witnessed for a

number of years the start-up of the free trade agreement prior to the NAFTA agreement. The initial impact of that agreement was quite negative in many respects for many companies, particularly branch plant companies. There were a lot of closings and a lot of people losing jobs. The previous government had indicated that it would have an adjustment program that never materialized. Many people suffered under that situation.

Having gone through that restructuring, Canadians are beginning to see the benefits of the free trade agreement, the benefits of NAFTA. More benefits can be gained if we can increase the number of rules, including dispute settlement mechanisms. That has always been the government's message and my party's message.

• (1055)

It is what we said we wanted to do with the trading remedy groups in NAFTA. We want increase the rules to decrease the times and the opportunities for a member country to take countervail or anti-dumping duty action. Those two actions have no place in the free trade agreement. We want them out. We want a rules based system and we will continue to get through NAFTA and through the World Trade Organization a priority of working toward more liberalized trade in the world, but also based on some very clear rules.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I thank the minister and the House for their indulgence.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that, starting now, Bloc members will be splitting the 20 minutes allocated. As far as I am concerned, I will have the pleasure of sharing my speaking time with my good friend, the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe.

I take this opportunity to mention two major political developments that have occurred since last session, before Christmas, and have resulted in major changes both in the Quebec National Assembly and in the House of Commons.

On the one hand, Mr. Lucien Bouchard was elected leader of the Parti Québécois, becoming the premier of Quebec, and on the other hand, the hon. member for Roberval was elected leader of the Bloc Québécois. These two events have added a new dimension to the Quebec national political scene, not as regards the ultimate goal, which is sovereignty, of course, but as regards Quebec's structures.

Mr. Bouchard's reputation is firmly established and, as far as the hon. member for Roberval is concerned, I am convinced that he will ensure that the Bloc Québécois gets the second wind it needs to carry out its mission, which is to look after Quebec's interests in Ottawa.

*The Address*

This being said, I have spent several weeks in my riding since the holidays. This was an opportunity for me to examine further a number of issues and travel throughout my riding without any electoral concerns. I spoke with people, but mostly I listened.

People are worried, not about the rise of the sovereignist movement in Quebec, contrary to what federalists contend all the time, but about the repressive attitude of this federal government.

They are also worried about the government's famous *B* plan, the plan to create fear: the fear of partitioning, to the point that there was a demonstration just across the river. There were just a few demonstrators, and the incident turned out badly for our good Prime Minister. Minutes later, the Deputy Prime Minister—this is not just any backbencher—was saying: "It is those separatists again. It is all their fault".

As for the drop in air traffic at Mirabel and Dorval airports, the Minister of Finance had this explanation: "If there are fewer planes in the sky and at Mirabel, it is because of the separatists". When a snowstorm hits Quebec or some other region in the country, it is the separatists' fault. And when spring finally arrives and the tulips start to grow, it will of course be thanks to the federalists. When things go well it is thanks to the federalists, but when they go bad the separatists are to blame.

I was really surprised to see that when Kevin Barry Snow, a Newfoundlander, climbed over the fence at our Prime Minister's residence, nobody stated: "Another separatist". That person happens to come from Newfoundland, so the issue of separatism was not raised.

• (1100)

On another note, the cuts to social programs, particularly the UI program, have major repercussions for workers. The unemployed are helpless, and feel that they are perceived as being at fault. Indeed, this government does not target unemployment but the unemployed. It punishes them by shortening the benefit period, by reducing the amount of these benefits, and by forcing people to work longer to be eligible for these benefits. This is not what Quebecers need. They need jobs.

During the last election campaign, some people all dressed up in red and carrying a red book kept saying: "Jobs, jobs, jobs. We will create jobs". The official unemployment rate may not be up, Mr. Speaker, but look at the offloading onto the provinces going on. It has led to a dramatic increase in the number of welfare recipients.

I had the opportunity to meet women and men from my riding, and it is very clear to these people that the Liberal government is overwhelmed and cannot cope with the major issues that concern all Canadians. Not only do they think that this government is out of touch with reality, they also feel that it has lost the confidence of Canadians and that all it can do is create a feeling of insecurity.

One of my constituents in the municipality of Coleraine made the following apt comment to me on the weakness of this government: "You know, Mr. Chrétien, this government does not know what tax fairness means. They did not have the nerve to tax family trusts or to abolish tax shelters for the rich, but instead they dump on ordinary folks, the elderly, the unemployed, self-employed workers, particularly in the fishing and forest industries".

During the last referendum campaign, I saw Laurent Beaudoin being interviewed on RDI. The host asked him "How much tax did you pay last year?" His answer was: "We paid no taxes last year". "How much in the way of taxes did Bombardier, the biggest company in Canada, pay two years ago?" Mr. Beaudoin replied: "None". He was then asked "What about three years ago?" The answer: "We did not pay any taxes". When asked "What was the last year for which you paid any taxes, Mr. Beaudoin?" he replied candidly "I do not remember." So much for tax fairness, Mr. Speaker.

This government has created an atmosphere of uncertainty. We hear rumours that the minimum age for old age pension eligibility will be raised to 67. You can imagine how worried the people in my riding who are 63 or 64 years old are. The government is toying with taxpayers, and this must stop, and stop immediately. The people of Frontenac are vigorously voicing their opposition to this government; there have been public demonstrations, with no holds barred in their criticism of this government.

In October 1995, the Liberals raised considerable hopes with their "jobs, jobs, jobs". Are you aware, Mr. Speaker, that in the month of November 1995 alone there were 40,000 jobs lost in Canada?

• (1105)

The Liberals will reply: "But we created 50,000 jobs." Yes, they created 50,000, but 90,000 businesses or individuals closed down or lost their jobs. What is of interest to us is how many jobs were really created. I have a document here prepared by the Liberal Party on job creation and economic renewal during their first year. "Implementation of the national infrastructure program, which will create 90,000 direct jobs in two years." Not true. These are only figures with which they want to impress their supporters, but when the calculations are made, we realize that there is nothing to them.

I have a report from *Le Soleil* here which says that the Prime Minister will need to work twice as hard, keep major promises at the mid-point of his mandate. Among the promises that have not been kept—one to which the minister has just referred—there is the replacement of the goods and services tax, the GST. The Deputy Prime Minister and member for Hamilton East said: "Give us a year in power and the GST will be scrapped". Now two years and four months have passed and all that we have managed to get from the Minister of Finance is that the GST will undergo a name change and that they will hide it away, like hypocrites. People will keep on

*The Address*

paying taxes like before, but without noticing them. That is what the Liberal Government is in the process of imposing upon us.

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as the member for Richmond—Wolfe, I am pleased to rise today in the context of the reply to the speech from the throne, and, more specifically, in the context of my new responsibilities as heritage and cultural industries critic.

The speech from the throne stated that, with culture at the heart of Canada's identity, the government wants to promote a vibrant cultural industry. It therefore reiterates its desire to ensure the viability of the CBC, the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada.

However, I must remind it that its red book states in black and white, and I quote: "Funding cuts to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, and other institutions illustrate the Tories' failure to appreciate the importance of cultural and industrial development". The Liberals, who are now in power, were criticizing the Conservatives for their lack of understanding of cultural vitality and development in Canada. What a farce. This government is a big fat joke.

It is an eye opener to look at the facts and realize that this Liberal government is not meeting even one of its commitments and that the speech from the throne is nothing more than window dressing in the area of cultural policy. We should take note that, in the area of cultural and heritage development, funding for programs supporting publishing, museums, sound recording, video production, TV5 and broadcasting in the North has shrunk by \$36 million in the past fiscal year.

The French network of the CBC is underfunded compared with the English network. It gets \$280 million less, for the same sized audience. In his letter of September 20, 1995 entitled: "Structural Review: the next steps", the President of the CBC, Perrin Beatty, announced that the corporation had to expect significant cuts in government funding, and I quote: "We are working toward the likelihood that, by March 31, 1997, we may have to reduce our budget by some \$350 million from the 1994-95 levels". He also indicated that cuts totalling \$227 million over an 18-month period starting in September of 1995 were contemplated, which means that nearly \$127 million in cuts should be announced in the budget tomorrow.

• (1110)

After the Juneau report was tabled, it was suggested that a new CBC tax be levied through a 7.5 per cent increase in cable fees to support cultural undertakings. Note that a recent survey shows that more than 43 per cent of Canadians oppose the proposed new tax.

Tell me, Mr. Speaker, is this the way to go about supporting our cultural industries? I would like this House to tell me what is prompting the Liberal government of Canada to put its leading cultural industries on the line, thereby jeopardizing the vitality of our cultures in Canada and Quebec?

That is why the Bloc Québécois is objecting to this Liberal government changing the mandates of major cultural institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada and the CRTC, as recently announced by the Deputy Prime Minister. All this to use these institutions as propaganda tools to promote Canadian unity.

We will recall that already in the early 1960s, culture and communications became key issues, both for Quebec's cultural sovereignty and for Canadian unity. As mentioned on page 5 of the white paper on culture tabled in July 1966, the commitment to developing and maintaining a radio and television broadcasting system in Canada essentially came within the scope of the pursuit of a Canadian identity and of Canadian unity. The kind of Canadian nationalism practised by Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Liberals was intended as a counterbalancing force, a weapon against Quebec's nationalism and against the recognition of the Quebec people.

Through its statements and challenges, this government continues to deny there is such a thing as a Quebec culture. The term "ethnicism"—a term to remember—used by the members of the heritage committee, a committee with a very large Liberal majority, in reference to Quebec's culture, is a case in point. As evidenced by history, taking such a view to Canada causes a major clash between Ottawa and Quebec.

With respect to culture, the 17 years of the Trudeau era were characterized by an emphasis on culture as a Canadian identity and unity tool and by the development of a national policy in Canada. This denial of Quebec's cultural identity goes to show how much federal Liberals use double talk.

In these times of communication, new technologies and information, Quebec's culture is claiming its rightful place. At no time will the Bloc Québécois ever tolerate that Quebec be dealt with by this government like in the days of the British colonial empire. We will keep forcing the federal government to recognize the existence of the people of Quebec. We intend to pester the government until such time as budgets are allocated fairly and equitably amongst cultural institutions.

At present, the average budget for one hour of broadcast production at the CBC is twice what at Radio-Canada. Such unfairness is unacceptable and all the more unjustified that, in 1976 and 1977, the average cost of one hour of broadcasting was shared equally between the French and English networks. But the present

*The Address*

situation is the result of 20 years of the Liberal federal cultural development policy.

• (1115)

In the whole issue of the relationship between Canada and Quebec, the Bloc Québécois believes that the only way to deal with this colonial attitude is to become sovereign. We will continue to strive to ensure that the federal government will never again trivialize Quebec culture by reducing it to a mere Canadian sub-culture. Quebec culture is the culture of a people.

In closing, in my capacity as the official opposition's critic for heritage and cultural industries, I would like to state in this House that Quebec culture is the culture of a people, one of the founding peoples of this country, which was excluded by the unilateral patriation of the Constitution in 1982. Sovereignty is absolutely essential to the cultural future of Quebec.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's comments. The closing urges me to come forward and ask the member for a response to a hypothesis.

The member says that Canada rejected the Quebec culture in 1982. In my view, Canadians, regardless of the province they live in, have a vested interest and own a piece of every part of Canada: Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia; Goose Bay in Labrador; Quebec City in Quebec; Toronto and Muskoka in Ontario; the wonderful prairies; the magnificent Rockies; and Victoria. Each and every one of us owns a piece, no matter how small, of all of that, including the culture and physical characteristics.

Would the member not agree that he also owns a part of all of Canada?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. As it clearly shows, the hon. member recognizes not only that Quebec is a founding nation but also—although he did not dare say so—that it has played a very active role in and made a major contribution to this country's development.

History demonstrates this strong reluctance to recognize Quebec—and its francophone community—essentially as a people. This was confirmed by recent federal-provincial negotiations that led to the rejection of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords. When the Constitution was patriated in 1982 and the issue came to the forefront, where were the groups travelling to Quebec by bus and by plane to tell us that they loved us?

Do not forget that the Quebec National Assembly, composed of both nationalists and federalists, had rejected this unilateral patri-

ation of the Constitution. Where were you when Pierre Elliott Trudeau was leading this kind of action against Quebec and denying that Quebecers were a people? This is the ultimate result of the action taken by your government and your party.

Whoever their new members may be, Liberals must remember that this matter is of the utmost importance for Quebec at a time when Canada is rejecting the concept of Quebec as a people and, according to Canada's cultural policy, relegating it to the status of one of the largest cultural communities. I am sorry but the hon. member must know that we are not a large cultural community. We in Quebec are a French speaking people.

• (1120)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Dauphin—Swan River, I am pleased to respond to the speech from throne.

The throne speech outlines the broad initiatives the government will take over the next two years, initiatives that will continue the work we began two years ago. They are initiatives that we promised in the red book, initiatives that we are delivering on as a government and initiatives that promote economic growth and job creation, that promote unity and promote security for individual Canadians and their families.

Our vision is clear. We are working toward a strong and united Canada with a vibrant economy that allows us to continue to provide the social programs that are so important to Canadians. It is a vision that includes all Canadians, urban and rural.

Our Prime Minister continues to keep our greatest resource, the Canadian people, at the forefront of his agenda. That is what this country is all about. That is what the throne speech is all about. It is about delivering honesty, integrity and hope to the people of this great country Canada.

Canada is the best country in the world in which to live. This Liberal government is committed to ensuring that Canada includes all 10 provinces and two territories. The Liberal government recognizes that all Canadians have a stake in the future of our country and that all Canadians care about Canada. That is why we are committed to ensuring that all Canadians have a say in the future of Canada.

Since Confederation, Canada has successfully adapted to a rapidly changing world. The one constant in Canadian history has been our ability to adapt to new circumstances and new realities without sacrificing our principles and values.

*The Address*

Part of ensuring that Canada remains strong is ensuring that we have our fiscal house in order. As the member for Dauphin—Swan River, I was pleased with the priority given to improving the economic health of rural Canada.

One of the first areas addressed in the throne speech was rural Canada. This demonstrates the importance this Liberal government places on the future of rural Canadians. The economic challenges rural Canada faces are much different from those of urban areas.

We will ensure that all Canadians benefit from economic prosperity. That is important to the people of Dauphin—Swan River and I applaud it. We already have a proven track record in putting programs and policies in place to benefit rural communities in the long term.

The infrastructure program is an excellent example. We helped local communities complete important projects, created jobs and boosted local economies. We invested over \$2 million in the future of my riding of Dauphin—Swan River.

As a government we have also brought information technology to rural communities through the community access program and SchoolNet. These tools will help communities diversify their economies and will open up endless possibilities for businesses and employment. We are proposing new and innovative ways of job creation and rural Manitoba will benefit from our jobs and growth strategy.

In particular, I am very excited about our focus on jobs for young people. We are investing in our young people. As a mother and as a grandmother, I know how important our young people are to the future of this country. One of the challenges our young people face is that to get a job, they need experience but they cannot get that experience if they cannot get a job. They are caught in a vicious circle.

We are, as the Liberal government, taking decisive action to address this problem. We are doubling the number of summer jobs for students to give them the experience they need to get jobs once they are done school. We are investing in their future and the future of Canada.

In rural Manitoba and in Dauphin—Swan River we know that people accomplish the most when they work together. That is exactly what we are doing as a federal government. We are putting out a challenge to the provincial governments and private industry to match our commitment to young people and the future of our country. Our future is their future.

This government's commitment to sound agricultural policy will be an important component in revitalizing rural Canada and rural Manitoba. Farmers are already seeing the positive impacts of this government's agricultural policy. They are seeing it in their pocketbooks where they need it most.

• (1125)

Grain prices remain high, exports are expanding and there is a higher demand for the quality products that we produce. This is a direct result of trade missions, the Team Canada approach and our commitment to expanding markets, our commitment to ensuring that our performers can continue to do what they do best, produce the highest quality foods in the world. Agriculture is one of the three or four most significant players in the Canadian economy generating more wealth, more innovation, more trade and more jobs for Canada's future.

We are also following through on other commitments to get our fiscal House in order. We are on target with deficit reduction. We are keeping interest rates low so farmers can buy equipment and land to take advantage of the opportunities we are creating in agriculture and so families can invest in their future. We are spurring the economy. We are negotiating with the provinces to harmonize the GST and the PST. And we will make good on our red book promise to replace the GST.

While our economy is vitally important, as a government we have struck the important balance between the economy and social programs. The whole world looks to Canada as a model of co-operation. As the Prime Minister stated, we have affirmed our own special definition of greatness. We have achieved the greatest balance between economic success and social justice of any nation. Our social programs are part of what makes us Canadian. They speak of compassion, caring and selflessness. The Liberal government will continue on with its unwavering commitment to social programs.

We are committed to medicare and will continue to uphold the five principles of the Canada Health Act. Over the last two weeks I have held five health forums in communities across my riding in conjunction with the National Forum on Health. The message from the people of Dauphin—Swan River was loud and clear. They want medicare maintained and they want to ensure that health care dollars are wisely spent.

Where the previous Conservative government was phasing out its financial support of our social programs, this Liberal government is putting our money where our promises are. We are placing a floor under the Canada health and social transfer. We are ensuring that Canadians will continue to benefit over the long term from our social programs. This is our commitment to Canadians. We will preserve the social programs that protect Canadians and that have become part of our values as a country. We will ensure that Canadians can continue to count on medicare, the Canada pension plan and quality education.

I have spoken with people of all ages in my riding of Dauphin—Swan River and they know the importance of the Canada pension plan. They have told me how important it is that as a government we ensure that their children and grandchildren will benefit from a public pension system. This Liberal government is committed to a

*The Address*

public pension system that provides future generations with financial security. We will ensure that the people of Dauphin—Swan River have this security.

I am pleased that we are continuing our commitment to the First Nations people of Canada. In two short years much has been accomplished to forge a new relationship with Canada's aboriginal peoples, a relationship based on communication and mutual respect. The Liberal government is establishing new partnerships with First Nations through the dismantling process in Manitoba, the announcement of inherent right to self-government policy and our commitment efforts to work co-operatively to address the unique challenges First Nations and Metis people face.

The throne speech clearly demonstrates the leadership this Liberal government is providing. We are committed to keeping our greatest resource, the Canadian people, at the forefront of our agenda. We are committed to leading this country with honesty, integrity and hope.

**Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my hon. colleague from Manitoba for an excellent presentation. It is certainly a pleasure to hear all the excellent things that are coming forward. As you move through your presentation, I wonder if you would take a moment for those of us who come from rural areas—

• (1130)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I remind colleagues not to get into a one to one conversation and leave your Speaker aside. I ask you to direct your interventions through the Chair.

**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary would highlight for us some of the items that will affect rural Canadians. It was mentioned in the throne speech and it is something we all are looking for.

**Mrs. Cowling:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain for the question.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, I believe one of our greatest resources is our people. In the throne speech the Prime Minister outlined the importance of the people in rural Canada. The resource base of rural Canada can grow and prosper through natural resources, part of which is the production of food, agriculture.

There are many opportunities out there such as the whole component of value added and diversification. I know it because it is happening in my riding of Dauphin—Swan River. We are adding a value to a product we produce. There are great opportunities and as a government we are addressing those and will continue to

address those for the greatest resource of our country, the Canadian people.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources if she feels the government should reconfigure how to calculate the royalties on the oil and gas sector to try to extract an extra \$100 million out of the industry.

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

At this time I would like to take the question under advisement to my minister. I am sure the Minister of Natural Resources will respond very quickly, as she does.

**Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and honoured to speak on the throne speech.

I believe in my heart in these issues. I refer to our aboriginal people, our way of thinking, our philosophy in the country. I also want to talk about the national unity debate.

This is very important to aboriginal people, as we are referred to in this country and in the Canadian Constitution, those being the Metis people, the non-status people who live off-reserve and also include the Inuit who live in the high Arctic and the First Nations, the first inhabitants of this land we call Canada.

What is happening in this country causes me great concern not just with the economic situation we are facing today but the divisions happening across the land. It has always been our belief that we should live together in harmony and in peace and to have honour and respect for each other. Those certainly were incorporated in the treaties that were established when the newcomers came to this land, the Europeans who arrived here 500 years ago.

• (1135)

People in this country have to realize the history goes beyond the past 500 years or more, that there is a history to this country. That part of history has been ignored and not understood by many Canadians. The focus of the national unity debate is to bring people together. To go about that we must have open minds.

Our people certainly opened their arms to the people who came to this land to share the land and resources, inherent in the treaties established with the governments. I am particularly saddened when I hear comments by members opposite that the country will fall apart. I believe it is in the interests of everybody, all Canadians, all aboriginal people, to maintain the unity of Canada. It is our desire that the country remain united.

I have challenged our aboriginal leaders, our aboriginal people to maintain the unity of the country. In December of last year I called for a sacred assembly to bring people of this country from



*The Address*

different walks of life, with different spiritual and religious denominations together. This included the Mennonite central committee, the Catholic church, the Anglican church, the United church, the Presbyterian church, the Reform church, and so on. All churches were included plus the non-Christian people, the Hindu, the Jewish people and our traditional people.

The aim was that we begin to understand each other through that process, to develop an open mind with tolerance and an understanding of each other. Many people came to this sacred assembly. I was very disturbed by a member of the official opposition party, the member for Saint-Jean, a Bloc Québécois member, when he stated that although the themes of the sacred assembly were supposed to be reconciliation and spirituality, instead the assembly “reeked of politics”.

That statement derides and insults the people who were there, including the head of the Anglican church, the primate, the head of the United church, the moderator, and other religious leaders who were there. They cannot defend themselves in the House. It insults the people who were there who were concerned about the country.

I stated at the sacred assembly that as aboriginal people we have a greater responsibility than any other group of people in this country to maintain the unity of the land we call Canada. It is our home and we have nowhere else to go.

On December 12, 1995 in the House the Bloc member also stated he disagreed with me on that: “The notion of spirituality transcends politics and the great creator has no use for national boundaries. The next step would have been to come straight out and say that the creator is Liberal”. Those are statements made by the official opposition member.

● (1140)

It was not intended to be that way. What I wanted to tell him is God is aboriginal and that he loves him and does not want him to separate. God wants him to remain in this part of the country, in this part of the world. We have so much to share in this country. We have rich resources and this land. We have so much to share among all Canadians.

Some of these comments disturbed me. What is the purpose of this institution? Parliament is the highest institution in terms of law making decisions in the country. It is a national institution. Where else do we go to correct these things and make laws for our people? This is where decisions are made.

The throne speech identified many areas, which I would like to address for my constituents. In the red book commitments were made to deal with some of the aboriginal issues such as the inherent right to self-government and the land claims process. Those things are happening today. The government is proceeding with that.

Recently we saw a land claims settlement in British Columbia, a part in which treaties were never entered into. Finally after hundreds of years they are getting a land claim settlement. I am glad to see that.

I am disturbed, though, by the politics involved. It seems this is being used as a political football. It is not based on history. It is not based on equality. It is not based on justice. Rather, it is based on trying to retain control and power in that province. It saddens me that these things are happening in that part of the country rather than being based on equality and trying to obtain justice country for our people. We have waited for a long time to resolve these issues.

The throne speech also focused on northern Manitoba, job growth, social security and many other issues.

I am very honoured to be here, able to speak on behalf of my constituents in northern Manitoba. Their concerns are unique because we are isolated. We are in northern Manitoba and are easily affected by the economy. The cost of goods is very high. We do not have the same amenities as southern Manitoba. Travel is very difficult because of the isolated communities. We have to fly in the goods and groceries and provide the basic essential services for many of the communities I represent.

I know we are trying to address many of these things in government. As I participate in the discussions I want to bring more of these things forward to the government, to the ministers so they can provide the answers and move in the right direction for our people.

Certainly I am honoured to be here as an aboriginal person in the Chamber, able to bring forth the concerns of not only my aboriginal constituents but many other aboriginal people who have come forward to me expressing their concerns, especially about national unity.

● (1145)

We want to be involved. We want to be part of the process. We play an important role in maintaining the unity of this country. We play a key role in this whole process and we do not want to be left out because we are the original people of this land.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to commend and thank the hon. member for Churchill for his presentation.

I would like him to comment on the unfortunate statements recently made by the minister of Indian affairs, who dabbled as a futurist by speculating on the future of a sovereign Quebec and its relations with the native communities.

You may recall the inflammatory, aggressive and irresponsible comments made by this minister, which caused quite an uproar in Quebec. Fortunately, the great native leader Ovide Mercredi acted

*The Address*

more responsibly and rebuffed the minister of Indian affairs by telling him—if I remember correctly—that this was not the time, that he had no right to manipulate native communities in their relations with the government of a sovereign Quebec.

Given the role played by the hon. member for Churchill in the history of Canada and Quebec—remember Meech Lake—I would like to know what he thinks of these statements and this debate and where he stands on all this.

[English]

**Mr. Harper (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, those were the minister's statements. I am not responsible for what he says. I am sure he can defend his comments.

I will say that it requires tolerance and understanding, particularly in the province of Quebec, between the government and the aboriginal people. We have comments as reported in the *Toronto Star* on January 20 by the premier of the province of Quebec who was saying there are two peoples, two nations, two territories and this one is theirs and it will never be partitioned. Later on in another news article it is stated that sovereignty is inevitable.

It has to be taken into account that we are the First Nations people. We have always taken the position that Quebec is part of our territory. Agreements were made between the First Nations people, the federal government and the province of Quebec. I have always held that the federal government should play a key role in this process to uphold the constitutional responsibility and also the treaty responsibility it has to the aboriginal people to protect the interests of the aboriginal people in that province. Whether it be the Mohawk people, the Innu people, the Montagnais, the Cree in that province, the government has that responsibility to uphold that and to ensure that their rights are protected, including the lands of the aboriginal people in that province.

We have to keep an open mind that this will happen peacefully, that there will not be any incidents that will cause harm to this country.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member for Churchill. I would like to make some of my own comments. I do not have a specific question but perhaps he could reply as to what he feels about what I am going to say.

I have had some experience overseas with conflicts that are very similar to the difficult situation we have with the aboriginal people and the rest of Canada. I spent some time in the South Pacific and observed what was happening there. The approach used by the member with his sacred assembly was used very successfully in the

South Pacific. I took a great deal of interest in what he was doing. I compliment him on the steps he has taken. He is heading down the right path and I urge him to continue because it worked in the South Pacific.

• (1150)

Some of the problems experienced in Australia and in some of the South Pacific islands when I was there were that there was a lot of conflict between these people. The solution finally came when the grassroots told the elites in their society: "We do not appreciate what you are doing. We need to reconcile. We need to get together". I understand that is what is happening. I urge the member to continue that and I support him in that. Unfortunately because of previous commitments I was not able to attend his assembly.

I agree very much that we need an open mind and we need tolerance in dealing with some of these things. It appears there are elites in society whose approach to this problem only fosters more division. It appears to be to their benefit that these certain elements, who seem to have a vested interest, continue to foster this process of confrontation. We have to get away from that by talking to each other.

Another observation is that the view of looking back in history alone is not always sufficient in reconciling some of our differences. That view also has to be balanced by looking ahead to where we want to go as a nation. What do we want to achieve? What kind of a country do we all want to live in? In talking to many of the native people in northern Manitoba and on the reserves in my riding in Saskatchewan, this is what they are saying as well. The people around my constituency are also saying that. We have to bring this together.

In conclusion, if there is any injustice that is taking place, we have to resolve the issues so that everyone in society will perceive that justice is being served and that all concerned are being consulted in this regard.

**Mr. Harper (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I was certainly very pleased with the result of the sacred assembly. It was done in a very short period of time. They told me it takes about two to three years to organize such an event. I think we had the creator in our hands because it was such a success.

There were statements made at the sacred assembly, principles and priorities that were recommended to the participants. A proclamation of reconciliation was also put forward that the people can take forth as a role for individuals, churches and spiritual leaders and also as a role for governments on a reconciliation journey and understanding in this country. It would not be just among aboriginal people themselves but would include every other nation in this country, whether it be people from Pakistan, Asia or other parts of the world who come to this country to live. That is something we have to address.

*The Address*

We saw how fragile this country is just between two groups, east and west, the French and English. There needs to be an understanding and a healing. Reconciliation work has to be done in that area, not just among aboriginal people. We know there are a lot of problems in our communities but I keep telling our people that we have to do it ourselves, nobody else can do it for us. However, we do need some help and understanding in that area to begin to address some of those issues which have been outstanding for many years.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great sympathy for the spirit that has been engendered with the comments made by my colleague from Lloyminster and also my colleague across the way from Churchill. This kind of conciliatory attitude ought to prevail in a whole variety of areas.

In rising to address some of the aspects of the speech from the throne, I wish to refer to the particular area where the speech from the throne is particularly unspecific. It has to do with updating legislation governing financial institutions to ensure that the legislation continues to be relevant to the emerging needs of businesses and consumers.

• (1155)

It is absolutely correct that we need to do this. The difficulty with the provision in the speech from the throne is that there is no particular direction as to what should happen. Will that legislation deal with all financial institutions, that is, insurance companies, banks, trust companies, securities dealers, credit unions? Does it contemplate the establishment of a new schedule of banks so that there will indeed be some competition in this area, or at least a change in competition? Will there be changes regarding the privacy and confidentiality of personal information?

It is perfectly clear in the provisions of some of the banks at the moment that if you make application to become a client in one section, then personal information such as name, address, assets, liabilities, indebtedness to one part of the bank is automatically transferred to another. If you decide not to allow that to happen, then the financial institution, in this particular case the bank, has the right to terminate your business relationship with the bank upon 30 days notice.

Will it deal with the levels of access of capital by small business? I was rather impressed by the minister of foreign trade who suggested that perhaps we ought to have more export and that the banks should lend more money to small business. Is he suggesting that there be some kind of legislation that will force the banks into lending to a certain level to certain kinds of businesses in certain parts of the country doing certain kinds of business?

Will the legislation deal with how we shall evaluate various kinds of business, particularly the knowledge based industries where the technology and knowledge is the issue and there are no hard assets that there are in certain other sections? Is that what the legislation will address?

The speech addresses none of these kinds of things and therefore we do not know where it is going. The fundamental issue in terms of that legislative change or examination should address the question: What should be the appropriate balance of influence and power among the financial institutions in Canada? It is a relative position. Who should dominate? Which institution or group of institutions? There is no direction in the speech that indicates there ought to be that kind of balance and where the balance should lie.

That is an absolutely crucial question which needs to be addressed and it is not. That is a very serious shortcoming.

I also would like to very briefly touch on the significance of science in our economy and address the comments that were made by the auditor general in 1994 when he said: "In today's world, economic progress is measured by the ability to provide at competitive prices the variety of common and new products and services that global markets demand. This requires the ability to adapt and commercialize the results of science and technology". This is a very insightful remark and one that we ought to take very seriously.

What ought to happen here is that the government should create in whatever way it can and in every way possible a new awareness of the role of science in our educational institutions. It should not do the kinds of things that were done last year when it terminated the recognition of science teachers and the granting of scholarships for students of science.

We need competition among institutions to provide the most cost efficient and relevant programs. We need a new system of introducing a consumer model in post-secondary education so that student choice can have an economic dimension to it. There could perhaps be such things as vouchers so that the educational institution is not granted funding simply on the basis that the institution exists, but rather on the basis of competence, competition and strength of the programs it provides for students.

One part of the throne speech is very specific and it is this particular specificity I want to address. On page 12 of the speech from the throne is found the following paragraph:

Action has already been taken to recognize Quebec as a distinct society within Canada and to guarantee that no constitutional change affecting any major region of the country will take place without the consent of that region.

Now comes a humdinger of a statement:

The government supports the entrenchment of these provisions in the Constitution.

*The Address*

• (1200)

We have just heard about the need for reconciliation. It is important for us to recognize one another as citizens of one nation. We need to be tolerant with one another. We should not create exclusiveness between one group and another.

I suggest that the time has come for us to accept one another as Canadians. If distinction is to suggest that I am distinct from my colleague from northern British Columbia, from any one of my other colleagues of the Reform Party, from any one of my colleagues across the way or in the Bloc, yes, I am distinct. However, that does not create any special status for any one of those people or any special status for me as an individual.

It is very clear that the issue that needs to be addressed today is one of building a relationship, not finding ways in which we can draw distinctiveness between us, which separates one another and creates some kind of special position relative to one another based on where we live, what we speak and what we believe.

We need to build. The word that we ought to talk about is building, not separating. We need to build, to work together, not to become exclusive or distinct in some way. These things should be looked at.

I would suggest not a perfect document but a document that comes to grips with what ought to be the characteristics of a Confederation in which all Canadians are treated as equals. I suggest that the government look at the 20 proposals for Confederation that were presented by the Reform Party. Look at the implications and the consequences of the matters that need to be addressed in the event that separation ought to be contemplated in a serious way. It is not a perfect document. It was put out for discussion and examination. It should be treated very seriously.

If the Prime Minister truly wants to unite this country, then I suggest that he listen to the people. They are sending a message to us and to him. It says yes, we are distinct in the sense that each one of us is distinct from the other. But do not ever divide us into categories based on geography, on race, on language or on religion. We are Canadians, no more and no less. Dare not divide us into groups based on where we live, what we believe or what language we speak.

This speech is at the same time so unspecific as to be non-directional and dangerous in that it threatens to divide people who want to be together and be united. It is within this context that I would like to propose an amendment to the amendment we are debating at this point.

I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding after the words "Quebec society" the following:

—and in particular, recognition that it is the separatist movement in Quebec that threatens the economy of Montreal.

Much was made a moment ago about how the economy is dropping in Montreal. The reason it is dropping is because of the threat of separation of Quebec from Canada. That is the reason for this amendment. I urge the House accept the amendment to the amendment and support it.

• (1205)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, the current throne speech presented in the other House and written by the Prime Minister is a desperate statement of promises by a desperate government in a desperate situation.

To get elected the Liberal government promised to get rid of the GST but so far it has not kept its word. Here are some comments and quotes throughout the past few years.

On October 16, 1993 the Deputy Prime Minister said: "If the GST is not abolished under the Liberal government I will resign". On March 2, 1996 she changed this to: "If the GST is not replaced under a Liberal government I will resign".

On September 27, 1990 the Prime Minister said: "I want the tax dead". On May 2, 1994 he said: "We hate it. We will kill it".

The current Minister of Human Resources Development said: "The goods and services tax is a regressive tax. It has to be scrapped and we will scrap it".

The new revenue minister on March 24, 1994 said: "As Liberals we were elected to change the tax, abolish the tax, scrap it".

On April 4, 1990 the finance minister declared: "I would abolish the GST. The manufacturers' sales tax is a bad tax, but there is no excuse to repeal one bad thing by bringing in another one. Let me figure this out. Does he not think by merging the GST with the PST and bringing in a national sales tax he is doing the same thing? Is that not just replacing an old bad tax with a new bad tax?"

**Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)** They do not think so.

**Mr. Silye** On February 6, 1996 the Liberal member for Broadview—Greenwood said: "We are going to defend the status quo. You can tell by the way we are treating the GST. I am dead in the water with this government. It is one word, trust. I am doing my best to fight for tax reform, but my best is not good enough".

"Get rid of the GST" has become harmonized. "Kill the GST" has become harmonized. "Abolish the GST" has become harmonized.

As the Liberal member for York South—Weston, a former Liberal leadership candidate stated: "I hope we do not try to hoodwink people into thinking our commitment was contingent on the provinces agreeing to harmonize their taxes with the GST".

*The Address*

This potential Liberal leader further stated: "The integrity and credibility of the Prime Minister are at issue. He made promises. We all made promises. We went door to door to scrap the GST and if we do not keep that promise it will be very difficult for Liberal MPs to go into an election knocking on the same doors, asking support once again from people they lied to in the first election campaign".

In the red book the Liberals promised to replace the GST. They cannot even do that.

In a desperate act the Liberal government proposes to transfer the problem of getting rid of the GST to the provinces by promoting a national sales tax, by promoting harmonization which will be nothing more than a change in name to the son of the GST.

**An hon. member:** A tax is a tax.

**Mr. Silye:** If provinces do not co-operate, guess what? It will be the fault of the provinces, not the Liberal's fault. The Prime Minister is not going to eliminate the GST. He is just going to rename it.

To get elected the Liberal government promised to create jobs with its infamous infrastructure program of \$6 billion. Now that it has failed it challenges businesses to create the jobs that it could not and in a desperate move will try to blame the private sector for high unemployment. The problem is not government overspending, it is not high taxes, it is not oversized government, it is not duplicity in government services, it is the private sector that is at fault. The government will not accept any responsibility. Blame business, blame the provinces, blame the opposition, blame the backbenchers, blame the markets, but for heaven's sake do not ever blame the federal government.

• (1210)

The government promised to preserve and protect social programs. What does it do? In a desperate move it lumps all funding into one Canada health and social transfer, reducing the funding for education, health and welfare by \$6.6 billion. Talk about slash and burn. It is another desperate but clever move to shift responsibility to provincial governments. Let them take the flak for the cuts on programs that they have to administer after the federal government reduces the amount of money they receive.

By the way, the Reform Party cuts to education, health care and welfare would have only been \$3.3 billion, not the \$6.6 billion that the Liberals propose. That is one-half of the Liberal cuts. We recognize that education is the key to future jobs.

The government promised no return to constitutional wrangling. In the new throne speech, in a desperate move because it almost blew it during the referendum with poor advice to Canadians it

wants to quickly entrench distinct society and a new amending formula in the Constitution.

I get a laugh when the Liberal members always harass Reformers and say: "Where were you during the unity debate? What did you do during the unity debate?" We listened to the Prime Minister. He told us to stay away and keep our mouths shut for fear we make the separatists in Quebec angry enough to vote for separation. That is what he told us to do. That was the Prime Minister. That was the leader of this country telling us: "Don't worry, be happy, it is all looked after".

Can you picture a replay of the Meech Lake, Charlottetown type of shenanigans across the country again? In desperation because the Liberals have no plan, have no people, they want to go behind closed doors with a first premiers conference to discuss jobs, devolution and the Constitution, hoping the premiers have solutions.

When the Prime Minister campaigned he said he had a plan, as he waved his red book. Now after two years he has revised many of his plans, replaced 70 per cent of his people and brought two outsiders into his cabinet. This is a desperate move to strengthen the cabinet, which just shows his lack of confidence in his own people.

Abraham Lincoln said: "You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong". This desperate government is now attacking profits of banks and businesses, trying to shift the burden of responsibility. Are profits a sin? Do not profitable companies retain employees and do not bankrupt companies lose employees? Why not attack the government overhead instead?

For instance there are 5,000 people in the Department of Health working in Ottawa. They are not doctors, they are not nurses, they are not receptionists, they do not have anything to do with the internal functioning of the hospitals and delivering health services. Ottawa just transfers the money. Why do they need 5,000 people to write 10 cheques to 10 provinces?

Lincoln said: "You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer". This desperate government plans to increase payroll taxes despite the fact that the wage payer pays 1.4 times the wage earner for the benefits of the wage earner.

Lincoln also said: "You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn". This desperate government clings to the belief, in fact brags about deficit spending. The deficit last year was only \$39 billion, it will only be \$30 billion this year, next year it will be \$25 billion and it is going to get to \$17 billion. Wow, aren't we doing great? The Liberals see nothing wrong with deficit spending.

Lower the deficit, the economy will grow. We cannot continue to add to the deficit. That is the problem. We are adding to the problem. We must have a surplus budget creating hope, growth and

*The Address*

opportunities. A simplified tax system would complement the spending cuts of the government and would provide the vehicle we could all ride to greater prosperity.

My last Lincolnism: "You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence". I have a suggestion for this desperate government. The way to create initiative and independence is to reward it with lower taxes, not higher taxes. The way to expand the economy is to lower government spending so that we can have lower taxes, so individuals and businesses have more disposable income, which in turn would expand the economy.

The way to create jobs is through a simplified tax system, a form of a flat tax which is pro-growth, pro-family and represents progress toward solving economic problems besides just spending cuts.

The government is so desperate it is even firing its own people from jobs well done. What a shame. What a desperate display to cover up the lack of leadership.

I submit the best solution, notwithstanding the many good ones already made, is that the government plan a fall election this year and allow the people of Canada to vote for the party that has plans to solve our debt crisis, our debt problem before it is all too late.

• (1215)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is appropriate to congratulate you on your new appointment. I know you will do a very good job on behalf of the House.

In the few moments I have I could not possibly respond to all the points the member has raised. This is the member who proposed to the House that MPs' salaries be increased from \$64,400 a year to \$125,000 a year to make it fair. That says a lot about the quality of the contribution the member has made to the House.

The member referred to the Canada health and social transfer. I will deal with that since he was quite critical of the concept. As the member knows, the federal government transfers on behalf of post-secondary education, health and under the Canada assistance plan for health and welfare. That consists of tax points and cash.

There were circumstances under which the cash component was being reduced to the point it would shortly be eliminated in a couple of provinces. In response the government combined the transfers into block funding so there would be a cash component available for some time until other arrangements and permanent cash positions could be established.

As a very simple example, here is an instance in which the member has been critical of the government for making a move which allows the federal government to have an opportunity to enforce national standards, particularly on important issues such as the health care of all Canadians.

Here is a member who has been a proponent of a flat tax. He has no specific proposals but knows very well that according to his proposals a flat tax may be more simple but the only aspect of simplicity is that it simply transfers the tax burden from high income earners like him to low income Canadians. That is what the member is after. He is after a shift of the burden to low and middle income Canadians. I believe the member has shown very well to the House exactly what he stands for.

**Mr. Silye:** Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the member opposite questions the quality of the contribution I have made to the House. I will talk about the quality of the contribution I have made.

I have talked about integrity and I have talked about honesty while that member has sat opposite and laughed. I did not say \$125,000, I said \$150,000. I said it because I believe the government was paying itself those gold plated, fat cat, huge pensions with millions and millions of dollars to be paid to its members when they are finished serving in the House. Is that what we are here for? That is not what we are here for.

We are not here for the \$64,000, but to serve the country. However, the way we compensate members of Parliament is something that has to be addressed. That is what I said. I received a lot of compliments from members of his own party about my having the courage to talk about the compensation issue. I should have stuck to the pension. I now have a conflict of interest by saying how much because I am an MP.

I should not have stated an amount, but the member well knows that when it came to the pension debate, the quality of that debate was deteriorating because from the Prime Minister on down everybody in the House who opted in wanted to take care of their future pensions on the cry that we do not make enough money in salary. All members agree we do not have a high enough salary but they do not talk about the high pensions.

I walked from the pension. I am such a smart businessman that I walked from this pension. If I get re-elected I will not qualify for a pension and neither will any of the Reformers in the House because we have integrity. We attacked it and criticized it with the exception of one Reform member. Fifty-one out of fifty-two walked from this and that is the quality we have provided. That is the quality of debate I am providing to the House.

If the member wants to talk about an issue, let us talk about the entire issue. Where is this member on the pension? Did this member walk from the pension? Does this member believe that after he leaves he deserves millions and millions of dollars for the work he did during years he was here?

I get upset when somebody questions the quality of what I contribute to the House. I am in the House and I am supposed to debate issues, putting forth my ideas and suggestions. Nobody has to agree with them, but who in the House has the God given right to

check and verify quality? I think the member should take a look at his own quality in terms of his criticisms.

I also want to talk about the simplified tax system. A simple tax is a very complicated tax. It is a complicated tax that takes a lot of discussion and a lot of debate. The advantage of simplifying the tax system is to restore the purpose of the income tax back to its original purpose, which is to generate revenue.

• (1220)

If we do that, all of the programs we want to give Canadians we can deliver through grants and subsidies and not by the complicated income tax system in which bureaucrats and politicians can distort and play games in society both economically and socially. We should make it more visible, transparent and taxable. These are the issues I stand for. I want to have things fair and above board, not in back rooms behind closed doors.

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, welcome to your post. We look forward to a very pleasant and interesting House with your guidance and leadership.

I am very proud to rise in the House today to speak behalf of my constituents, the people of Mount Royal riding.

In the past weeks I have received remarkable outpourings of support from Côte-St-Luc, Hampsstead, Snowdon, Côte-des-Neiges and the town of Mount Royal. My constituents have really renewed and re-energized my commitment to them. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

What is a throne speech? It is words. What are words? Words are the key to communication. They can comfort and confront. Words can build harmony and social cohesion or they can lead to violence and death.

The Heinous and vile acts which took place through the Hamas terrorists and which destroyed the peace and lives of men, women and children are unacceptable, beyond belief and beyond description. My sympathy and the sympathies of the House expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and particularly by the Prime Minister go out to all those families where words led to sharp differences and where there has not been a way to lead to peace, social cohesion and to the ability to live together in a way reflective of respect for differences.

That is what our throne speech is all about. It expresses our shared values as Canadians and the values of the Liberal government. It is about our aboriginal people and the two broad national groups and their communities, the broad language groups, central to our national vision.

By reinforcing our economic and social union we are building solid foundations for a strong and united home, a home for all

### *The Address*

Canadians from all parts of Canada regardless of gender, origin, race, language or creed. We are determined to renovate our home as we have done over the last 125 years, to make room in it for all of us with respect and dignity.

These are not words. These are found within the Constitution of our country, within the laws of this land and within the concepts behind this throne speech. It is a blueprint to a remodelled Canada, a prosperous Canada, a united Canada.

It speaks to my constituents in Mount Royal in a very special and direct way. My riding is a microcosm of the macrocosm that is Canada. It is as diverse as our country. It is the mosaic of many ethnic minorities where French and English are heard, mixed with many other languages, where young and old, men and women, rich and poor, of all hues, races, languages and religions live together in harmony.

However, it is a riding that is deeply nervous, very concerned and very upset about the future, living daily on the fault line of the national unity issue.

My constituents should take heart. I believe firmly that stability with economic growth and social cohesions will prevail. That is the message of this throne speech. It reaffirms our commitment to the people of Mount Royal and to all Canadians to build a strong social and economic union that will keep the country together.

• (1225)

We all know the United Nations has called Canada the best country in the world. We know that in our gut. We never get around to expressing it. We get around to expressing it only if we are taking our luggage and going out of the country. We put a Canadian flag on, a Canadian button on, and all of a sudden we are very proud to be distinct with our wonderful maple leaf.

We get around to saying it only when we are in trouble, which we were on October 27. That was the discussion around the referendum. That is why Canadians came together, to express the desire as a country to live together and to stay together. I suggest we start saying that more often, thinking that out loud and being proud of all the things we do.

[*Translation*]

Moreover, the referendum results clearly showed that Quebecers want some changes to the federation. Their wish is no different than that of people in the other provinces of the country. People everywhere in Canada want change. As I already said, we have to reorganize our house. Indeed, what is the House of Commons? What is the National Assembly and what are all the other bodies of elected representatives? This is a big house and we have to run it and be aware of what goes on inside. We have to take care of our elderly and of our children; we have to ensure that people have a

*The Address*

decent life with their spouse and that they have a job. This is, in essence, what the speech from the throne is all about.

[*English*]

We have a federation that has been in evolution for the last 25 years. There are many more things that unite us than divide us. It is about time we started to look at all those things for which we can count our blessings, particularly as we look around the world.

We are working with the provinces and individual Canadians to ensure the federation is modernized to act and operate effectively and efficiently within clearly defined jurisdictions.

[*Translation*]

For example, the federal government pledged not to use its spending power to create new programs in areas that come exclusively under provincial jurisdiction, except with the consent of a majority of provinces.

There are also other areas in which the federal government does not have to get involved. More specifically, we are prepared to withdraw from the manpower training, forest, mines and recreation sectors.

[*English*]

We will work to continue the process of reducing barriers to internal trade and labour mobility. We will end costly duplication because we propose to work with the provinces toward the development of the Canadian securities commission, a single food inspection service and a national revenue collection agency.

The Prime Minister will meet with the first ministers. I am pleased to note that Quebec will focus on the economy, the people and their needs. I think if we get together to look at what we are responsible for and remove that duplication we will be a much more efficient and effective country. The problem is most people do not know what is federal jurisdiction versus provincial jurisdiction versus municipal jurisdiction. We need clarification.

This speech today on the throne speech is a generic speech. It addresses what I consider to be the global words that affect the atmosphere in which we live. We all live in a major envelope. We live where the environment has to be in balance with work, the economy, security, children, addressing questions of poverty, the social and economic problems that beset us.

I hope that with more time and the ability to examine and put into focus the economic forward movement we find in this speech as it addressed the particular issues I have just alluded to, so the scales of justice will be in balance, older people will not have to worry that they will not benefit from their pensions because their pensions will not be touched. My goodness, if we do not touch the Canada pension plan our children and grandchildren will not be

protected because they will have to pay too much and they will not be able to support it. That is just one example for the elderly. There are other examples for child support and for children.

• (1230)

It is time for my colleague to add to what I have said and to give his own perspective from his part of the world. In the meantime, I hope the constituents of Mount Royal will appreciate the beauty of the words encapsulated in the throne speech and the forward look with care and devotion which is behind the thoughts and the values of the government.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first I want to congratulate you on your election as the House's acting Speaker. I am sure that your constituents from Madawaska—Victoria are proud to be represented by you in this assembly.

[*English*]

My congratulations on your election. We are very proud of you.

I have spent time both in the provincial house in Newfoundland and in here and I have had occasion to participate in other throne speech debates along the way. This one gives me particular pleasure because it does strike three things I can wholeheartedly support: job creation; preserving the social security net; and addressing the national unity issue. These are issues all members of the House can identify with. I understand the Bloc has a particular perspective on the third issue of national unity, but with that qualification, I am sure members of the House generally can concur with the need to promote those three objectives.

Let me address something my friend from Calgary Centre was on to a few minutes ago. By way of illustration, let me tell him and others in the House that the former Premier of Newfoundland, Joey Smallwood, was known and berated by the Tory opposition in Newfoundland for 40 years. He was berated for having said to Newfoundlanders: "Burn your boats".

The context was that we had come into a new industrial age and we would not have to fish any more because there would be lots of jobs on the land. According to the critics of the day, Mr. Smallwood had said: "Burn your boats. We won't need to go fishing any more. There are going to be thousands of jobs on the land". The phrase, burn your boats and the attribution of it to Smallwood went on for 30 or 40 years.

Most Newfoundlanders today are absolutely sure that Smallwood made that admonition, gave that advice to Newfoundlanders, particularly the fishermen. The fact is that he never uttered the



*The Address*

words but that did not matter. It was said often enough by the Tory opposition that it became the accepted truth in Newfoundland that he had said it. If you are from Newfoundland it is a classic example of how something that never was gets into the record.

I come to what the gentleman for Calgary Centre and members of his party are doing today. They set up the old strawman and then knock him down. "You guys said you were going to do away with the GST". No, we did not. They are waving the red book here every day. Well, let them read the red book on this one because the red book is very clear. On page 22 of the red book it says very clearly that the Liberal government would replace the GST with a system that "generates equivalent revenues, is fairer to consumers and to small business, minimizes disruption to small business and promotes federal-provincial fiscal co-operation and harmonization".

• (1235)

The member for Calgary Centre says that we suddenly slipped in the word harmonization. We did not just slip it in. It was on page 22 of the book they have been quoting from for the last two and a half years. It has been there all the time but they did not read it. It is the old strawman approach: Quote them as having said something and then show how they did not come true to their quote, even though the quote was false in the first place.

I never stood on any platform during the 1993 election saying that we would do away with the GST as such. What we said was that there had to be a fairer tax, that it had to bring in the same amount of revenue and that we would undertake to replace the GST with something fairer. Let there be no mistake about it. We need the kind of revenue that is generated by the GST. Nobody in his right mind suggested that the revenue which was generated from the GST would be done away with. That was never ever said.

Let us go back to the themes in the throne speech. The one I am particularly pleased about has to do with job creation, the whole issue of jobs and growth. So far the government's record is not that bad.

In the first couple of years since November 1993 more than half a million jobs have been created. The unemployment rate has come down two full percentage points. It is now under 10 per cent for the first time in five years. Canada enjoys the highest growth rate of the G-7 countries, the big industrial countries, the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and so on. The government under the leadership of the Prime Minister must be doing something right to have these results to show after only 28 months in office.

I want to focus for a moment on youth unemployment, particularly as it relates to Newfoundland. Going back to 1990, the youth unemployment rate in Newfoundland was 25 per cent. That is the 15 to 24 age bracket. In 1990, 25 per cent of them were unem-

ployed. By 1991 it was 28.1 per cent unemployed in Newfoundland. By 1992 it was 30.2 per cent. In 1993, the last year of the Tory administration, it went over 31 per cent. It went from 25 to 31.1 per cent in the last three years under the Mulroney and Campbell administrations.

Beginning in 1994 we began to see a turnaround. It was still terribly high but it came down. It began to drop from 31 to 30 per cent, then to 28 per cent. It has come down in the couple of years this government has been in power but 28 per cent of one's young people in Newfoundland, ages 15 to 24, without work is still nothing to be proud of. It is lower than it was but it is nothing to be gleefully shouting about.

More needs to be done and the government has recognized that. It said so in the throne speech last week. It is going to take steps to double the number of summer student jobs. Summer student jobs are very important for young people. For most of them it is their first crack at a job. It is their first opportunity to prove themselves in the workplace. It comes as very welcome news that the government is going to do that.

I was also pleased with the emphasis in the throne speech on the knowledge based industries. There again, that is the wave of the future. That is the way to go. In Newfoundland we are getting in on that action too. A number of communities in my own riding are benefiting from the government's initiative in this area.

• (1240)

It is trade of course that is at the heart of the reason the government has been doing so well in fostering economic growth and creating jobs in the last couple of years. In that context I want to salute the Prime Minister's trade missions. They have been marvellous successes.

Unfortunately my time is up. Otherwise I would talk about some of the success stories that have flown from the Prime Minister's trade missions right into Burin—St. George's, right into the province and riding I represent, creating and stabilizing jobs there.

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague for Burin—St. George's with a great deal of interest as he addressed the questions of youth, youth training and the amount of attention we are paying to youth unemployment.

It is a very serious question in my riding as well. We do not want youth taking to the 401 because of the referendum that is hanging over our heads in Quebec. I bring to the attention of my constituents that as long as that referendum question hangs in the air, we have an obligation in this government. We have a responsibility to ensure that the debate is conducted with all the facts on the table, that there are clear rules of procedure, that the process is fair, that the consequences are clear and that all Canadians have a say in that.

*The Address*

I am very pleased that my colleague clarified the question on the goods and services tax. We never said we would get rid of the goods and services tax. We said we would harmonize it and we would raise equivalent revenues in the process of trying to deal with a new method to ensure that it is fair, understood by all and that small business will not be crushed by the mechanisms that have been put into place.

Does my colleague not get a sense of comfort because Newfoundland has developed such outstanding and creative artists in the field of song and dance? For example the CBC program "This Hour Has 22 Minutes" is so uniquely from Newfoundland. Was he not encouraged to see that we are focusing on cultural industries recognizing their worth and are supportive of the CBC?

We look forward to the budget speech tomorrow and seeing how well we are going to do with respect to our interests in cultural industries.

**Mr. Simmons:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague for Mount Royal has given me the opportunity to say something on the cultural issue.

I am proud of the leadership the government is giving to this particular initiative. Yes it is tough times but the government has avoided the temptation to treat cultural industries as something that are dispensable. It has paid more than lip service to them and that is to its credit.

The hon. member has also given me an opportunity to beat my chest as a proud Newfoundlander. I never miss the show "This Hour Has 22 Minutes" and I hope she does not either. It is a marvellous show and I know all four of the characters. In the good Newfoundland sense of the term they are characters, all of them. It is a great tribute to Mary Walsh for having dreamed up the idea and having provided the leadership, following it through and now being part of the cast.

The danger of course for all you up along Canadians in fostering the cultural enterprise of this country is that you are going to allow very many talented Newfoundlanders to rise to the surface. I could mention Rex Murphy and his Sunday call-in show. We are going to take over this country altogether.

As you know from John Crosbie, Brian Tobin and Don Jamieson and others who have come here, acting is what we do well in Newfoundland. If you encourage us at all, you could be in a lot of trouble up here.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened to the answer given by the member for Burin—St. George's to his colleague concerning a cultural affairs program. This is all very nice, but the issue here is youth unemployment. The member is pleased that the unemployment rate is a mere 25 per cent, that it has

gone down somewhat. I find that rate to be very high. It is at least 8 per cent higher than in the rest of the country.

• (1245)

I have a question for the member, since he provided some figures. Last year, when I sat on the human resources committee, we went to Newfoundland. People told us, of course, that the number of UI claimants had gone down, that the number of welfare recipients had gone up, and that young Newfoundlanders were leaving the province in droves because they could not find work there.

Since the hon. member surely knows by heart the exact figures for Newfoundland, I would appreciate it if he would provide them.

[*English*]

**Mr. Simmons:** Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Lévis for his question and comment.

Without blaming the translators, something obviously got lost in the translation. I said in essence what he implied at the end, that while the youth unemployment figure is down to 28 per cent I immediately followed up by saying that is nothing to be particularly proud of. That is what he is saying. It is still very high. I said in my speech, in fairness, that it has dropped down a little and we can take some encouragement from that. However, I believe my next sentence was that it was nothing to be particularly proud of. That is not good enough. I agree with him that it is a little better, but just a little.

That is why I took comfort from the fact that we have a federal summer student job creation program which will double the number of jobs this year.

I agree with my friend from Lévis that we need to do more, particularly in the area of youth unemployment. So much needs to be done and he and I are on the same wave length.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I do not wish to ruin the day for those who are watching us on television, but I have bad news for this House, as well as for the people of Quebec and of Canada.

I would like to divide my reply to the throne speech into three phases.

The first thing that struck me was how the Prime Minister seems to be haunted by the last referendum. I think that he has not yet grasped that federalism won, that the message being sent was that real changes were needed, but that, for now, people expected that we would deal with the economy while trying to let old wounds heal, wounds that were still raw when we came back here in November. The expectation was that the House would renew its efforts on the economy.

*The Address*

But no, the Prime Minister seems to have made Canadian unity his priority, while it was not one, not a problem, at the beginning of the government's mandate. I wonder. How could public confidence be gained? I do not think the throne speech has succeeded in making people feel more secure, even if there are references at various places to safety and security, whether environmental, individual, or international. I do not think the government is managing to make people feel any more secure, because it is not saying what the people want to hear.

But since it seems intent on talking about it, I am not in the least ashamed to show my colours in the matter. What about those three little points they passed before the holidays: the distinct society, a form of decentralization—for when, I do not know—and veto rights? We know where all that got them. No one wants to hear any more about it. Reference is made to a distinct society, but the attitude we had adopted, and which we maintain, is that this was not enough and, even, that the proposal made to us was hollow.

• (1250)

I tell myself that I am perhaps still naive, that I perhaps do not understand everything, that there is perhaps something hidden there I will have to understand at some point. But reading the papers yesterday, we could see that the new Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Stéphane Dion, is thinking exactly the same thing we are: the distinct society is meaningless.

He said as much in black and white using the new terminology borrowed now by the government—security—with the aim of reassuring people from Vancouver attending the conference. I cannot wait to see Mr. Dion come and repeat that to the people of Quebec, who were expecting real change. He is saying in black and white that this is not important, that it means nothing and that we should not be concerned with it.

He was talking to a strongly federalist audience—they are allowed—but he was telling them what they wanted to hear, and it is not what Quebec wants. It provides no security for the people of Quebec to hear a discordant speech like that, something that is supposed to bring back unification, but that is meaningless.

The other minor point I would like to make in the debate on the throne speech, still on the subject of the referendum and the fear of the sovereignty movement, is the possibility of the federal government holding a referendum. I would like to advise my colleagues in the House right off and advise the government that never will Quebecers, at least the people in my riding, allow the Government of Canada to tell them what to do or to impose its will.

What they expected after losing the referendum was real change. We have accepted defeat. People have come to me and said: “Yvan, we were not with you, but we hope there will be change. If there is no real change, however, have no fear, we will be behind you”.

So, this is a signal and I hope the government will understand. It could be said they are working to help us, when we are really trying at the moment to find a period of calm. We are really trying to build what could be a partnership between two peoples living together in this huge space. I have no problem with the name Canada. What I want is for us to be able to do what we want in our own territory, to be sovereign in our territory.

I am going to speed up, because I would like to talk a bit about the economy. What do we find in this speech regarding the economy? Try as I may, I cannot find much to reassure us. On the contrary, I see disturbing things. With regard to an effective social safety net, the people in my riding were wondering about the status of UI reform since Parliament had been prorogued. I told them that they could continue to demonstrate in an organized manner, without disrupting their neighbours' lives while still showing their dissatisfaction.

I told them the government would set out its agenda in the throne speech and that the Minister of Finance would put figures on the government proposals a week later—as we will hear in tomorrow's budget speech. It is clearly written here that the government will ensure the UI bill will reflect conditions in the labour market while respecting the fiscal parameters of proposed reforms.

In other words, the status quo. We expect the new Minister of Human Resources Development to fully review this bill, as the Minister of Finance has indicated that fiscal parameters would represent cuts of at least 10 per cent. The die has been cast. All that can happen this winter are cosmetic changes. Is this what I am to understand?

In this case, the people in my riding have a right to be concerned and to continue to demonstrate. We had already suggested that the government should go after family trusts and urge all Canadians to pay their fair share of taxes.

• (1255)

Allow me to quote a few lines from the speech made by our leader, the hon. member for Roberval: “Total profits for the five major banks reached \$4.9 billion, but 2,800 jobs were cut”. This is shocking. If the government is looking for a new source of tax revenue, it should start there.

“GM Canada reported record profits of \$1.4 billion, while at the same time laying off 2,500 employees—Bell Canada recorded profits of \$502 million, but also eliminated 3,200 jobs”. There is nothing reassuring about this if large corporations like these are really interested in short term profits.

Madam Speaker, you are indicating to me that my time is almost up, but I am sure some members will want to ask me questions so that I can elaborate.

*The Address*

It is not by threatening to retaliate against companies that do not comply—I think that, in the budget speech, the government should show its true colours right away and raise new taxes to ensure that the burden is distributed equally.

In conclusion, there is nothing new in the throne speech, except that the government has made Canadian unity a priority, when everyone is asking it to tackle our economic problems. What I find most outrageous is that they prorogued Parliament, but for what? They are already talking about reinstating the old bills. The government should really do its homework, listen to the people and work on the economy.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member discussed several issues, but what really caught my attention is the fact that the government wants to reinstate, without amendments, the Unemployment Insurance Act. I sense that the hon. member did not have enough time to say everything he wanted to, regarding this issue. He told me about it on other occasions. I want to ask him what has been going on in eastern Quebec over the last few months, since Bill C-111 was first introduced, and to tell us about how satisfied people are regarding this measure.

I am sure his answer will be of interest to you, Madam Speaker, since, as we all know, you come from Edmundston, in New Brunswick, where the issues are the same. So, I ask the hon. member to tell us more about the unemployment situation in his area.

**Mr. Bernier (Gaspé):** Madam Speaker, this is an excellent question and also an excellent opportunity provided to me by the hon. member for Lévis.

I jotted down some notes. In the Gaspé Peninsula, the working population currently stands at about 43 per cent. This means that only four persons in ten are working or actively looking for work. This is a very serious situation. It means that out of 10 people who are of labour force age only 4.3 actually work.

This gives you an idea of why there is so much discontent right now. What can these people turn to? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Moreover, let me repeat that, given the financial implications of the speech from the throne, we can anticipate a 10 per cent cut.

Since the Gaspé area, including the Magdalen Islands, gets something like \$170 million under the unemployment insurance program, a 10 per cent cut means \$17 million less in the region's economy. This is in addition to the reform made to the costs of fishing permits, which was implemented by the former minister and which the new minister intends to maintain. The minister hopes to get some \$50 million from the fishermen's pockets with that.

The Gaspé Peninsula accounts for about 10 per cent of Canada's fish harvesting. Ten per cent of \$50 million is another five million. In other words, we are in deep s—, up to our necks, and this is the

moment the government chooses to take \$22 million out of our region.

You can see why people in the Gaspé Peninsula and on the Magdalen Islands are upset. Seals are not the only ones looking for food; people are hungry too. They want to work, but they get no offers.

• (1300)

So, what do they do? They show their discontent. Wherever we meet them, they tell us: "We want to work". But what is there for them? Nothing. It must be understood that these people have been told to wait and wait, that they are alone to face the big federal machine. At present, they have forum to get their message across to the government.

It is easy to say that the minister will organize public hearings, but the closest one that was proposed, and that was a video conference, was in Rimouski. It takes half a day to drive from the Gaspé Peninsula to Rimouski. This is a lack of respect toward people who are supposed to live off UI benefits, who are being bled dry, and who will lose another 10 per cent which, as I said earlier, amounts to \$22 million.

Time is running out and so are people's hopes. Those who live in the Gaspé Peninsula are proud people, like those who live in your region, but the government must understand that the fate of these regions is in its hands. If the minister really wants to go forward with that reform, he should at least be man enough to say: "I am putting a stop to that. I am imposing a moratorium". Until the unemployment rate goes down, the minister should shelve his reform. This is the message that people from the Gaspé region asked me to convey to the minister.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** First a word, Madam Speaker, to congratulate you on your appointment as Acting Speaker. I would like to wish you the best of luck and, for our part, we can assure you that you can count on our full co-operation.

My speech will have two parts. I will start off speaking as the official opposition's critic on training and youth and then simply as the member for Lévis, to share with you what my constituents think of the speech from the throne.

First, with respect to youth, let me just say that, in a nutshell, last Tuesday's speech from the throne is a tacit admission of the fact that the Liberal government's youth strategy is a failure. Much pomp was displayed in introducing this strategy on April 15, 1994, and the then Minister of Human Resources Development promised it would resolve the unemployment problem, especially for young people. What is the youth unemployment picture today?

I heard my hon. colleague from Newfoundland mention earlier that, in his province, the rate of unemployment among young people under the age of 24 was 28 per cent, as compared to a

*The Address*

national rate of 17.2 per cent, as of January 1996, or about two tenths of one per cent less than when the Liberals came to power. We might as well say there was no change. At first glance, statistics do not appear to be any worse, but that is only at first glance because, when you take a closer look, you realize that, in many provinces, in almost all—three out of four—maritime provinces and especially in Quebec, the number of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are on welfare has increased.

Statistics vary from province to province, but according to Statistics Canada, there are currently 143,000 young Quebecers under 30 on UI rolls, that is to say, who are receiving UI benefits. But what Statistics Canada data do not say is that, in the same age group, there are 52,000 Quebecers on welfare. And these figures do not include young people who are still living with their parents, perhaps because their parents' level of income is moderately high. But they are nonetheless jobless, out of school and living in their parents' basement—this is more and more common—while looking for work. Yet, because of their parents' income or their own previous income, they do not qualify for UI benefits or welfare. They are not included in the statistics because they are not on the labour market. Statistics are very dangerous things.

• (1305)

What did the government say in its throne speech to remedy this situation? It too saw that its Youth Strategy had failed, so it told us "Now, we will ask business, big business in particular, to do its part and to try to do something especially for youth in future." As we know, big businesses are more likely to be unionized. The hiring standards in those big businesses would have to be changed if young people were to have any chance of being hired without seniority.

And what is the situation in our big businesses? On March 4 Michel Vastel reported that the five biggest banks in the country managed to make record profits of \$4.9 billion in 1995 with 2,800 layoffs. GM Canada recorded a \$1.4 billion profit while terminating 2,500 employees. Bell Canada made \$502 million while doing away with 3,200 positions. Is this making employment opportunities available for young people? Even if all of these are unionized employers and if jobs were created up to the previous level, not one more young person would be hired. Far from it, the ones hired would be the people on the union call-back lists, so this does nothing to solve the problem of our young people.

Small businesses do what they can, but they too cannot create jobs when times are very hard for them as well.

Following along somewhat with what the hon. member for Gaspé has said, I say that the government will not help our youth by reducing access to unemployment insurance. They will not be

helped by what is proposed in bill C-111, which triples the minimum number of hours worked, from 300 to 900, for new unemployment insurance recipients. That is not how our young people will be helped. Nor by deducting from them as soon as they start working, whereas in the past they had to work 15 hours before deductions were taken. Of course, they can get the overpayment back when they file their income tax, but they will in a way be lending money to the government for a year.

Neither will they be helped by cutting back on transfer payments to the provinces for post secondary education.

In this second portion of my speech, I will restrict myself to discussing a situation more specific to my riding. Even if the federal riding of Lévis is below provincial unemployment levels, less than 10 per cent last year, the two manpower offices in my area paid out \$122,138,000 to UI claimants. With the planned cuts, which will be on the order of 12 per cent, as we all know, \$14,656,000 will be lost to the economy. As regards the former workers at MIL Davie alone, it has been estimated that for the 435 UI claimants who return periodically, after the reform takes effect, the cut would be \$1,400,000. Is this how we help the economy? I do not think so.

Some might think there were no federal officials in the Quebec City region. In my riding of Lévis alone, 600 people work for the federal public service. What did we do last year in the Quebec City region? The federal government cut 950 jobs. Did it help the economy in the Quebec City region or in the riding of Lévis? No.

Worse than that, to add insult to injury, they announced recently the closure of the Department of Human Resources' information centre, which served people receiving old age pensions and unemployment insurance in Quebec City. Where was it transferred? Not where it could be amalgamated with another, but, rather, to the riding of the Prime Minister, in the city of Shawinigan. This, on top of the closing of the regional manpower centre in Trois-Rivières last year. Where was it transferred with its 108 employees or maybe slightly fewer, because some positions were cut along the way? To the Prime Minister's riding.

• (1310)

People always say it pays to have a Prime Minister in your riding, but when they take things that belong to a riding and move them to the Prime Minister's riding, this is not creating jobs for some, it is deleting jobs for others. This is not normal.

The famous speech from the throne and the red book talked of funds for defence industry conversion, but none of it went to MIL Davie. There was talk of a ferry, but we still have no ferry. The member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, who had promised one to his constituents, does not dare return to the Magdalen

*The Address*

Islands, because his constituents wrote in the papers: "Do not come back until the ferry has been replaced".

The situation is worse for the marine industry around Quebec City. There was talk of cuts, but people objected so much they decided to wait. They talked of increasing coast guard fees and reducing services: four icebreakers instead of five. That would have cut another 50 jobs. But they also wanted to increase fees. It would have had an impact if implemented, and yet, they are still threatening to implement it, 80 cents a tonne more, which would mean that the ship owners will change routes. They will use the port of Halifax and especially American ports.

Is this sea traffic policy? Is this merchant marine policy? No it is quite the opposite. The aim is to get ships out of the St. Lawrence and send them to the United States. This is a long way from what the Liberals promised in their red book.

They talked about the CN. They privatized it, but did nothing to help the SLRs. The bill is still on the table and there is nothing in it for the SLRs. The former Minister of Canadian Heritage announced two days before his demotion—I will close on this because it is very symbolic—finally acknowledged that the old Quebec City bridge was a national heritage construction. It has to be more than a symbol; there has to be money involved, because the Quebec City bridge is coming to symbolize the decrepitude of Canadian federalism.

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I must commend my hon. colleague for the profile he has presented of his region and his riding.

I must say that the picture he has painted is exactly the same wherever you go in Quebec. Our regions are emptying, our ridings are plagued by unemployment. In Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, we have remained unbeaten for years in terms of unemployment in Canada. Our people do not deserve this. Absolutely not. This government—and my hon. colleague alluded to this—is kissing an entire generation of young people goodbye. It is sacrificing that whole generation. They are without jobs.

However much the government boasts about its infrastructure program—government programs are useless anyway—the fact remains that no real job creation has taken place, only very temporary work was created. No progress has been made in bringing the unemployment rate down in even one region of Quebec. One thing is clear to us in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean: we may not get support from the federal government—and we are not talking about billions of dollars here—but we know how to innovate.

Consider the following example. The local ALCAN employees union brought the plants in Jonquière, Laterrière and Alma together through a work sharing arrangement. With no big grants or major outlay of money on the part of our governments, it succeeded in

creating 120 direct jobs—you can imagine what this will mean in terms of indirect benefits down the road. It merely cost \$10,000 per job created. That is what I call a job well done. That is what innovating is all about.

Compared to the millions of dollars sunk here and there sometimes just to maintain a few jobs, not even creating any—millions, if not billions, are spent here without much success—these workers who assumed responsibility for themselves managed to create jobs for just \$10,000 per job. Why could the government not be as innovative as them?

• (1315)

I think that innovation involves job training, and that is what my question to my hon. colleague is about. He did not get a chance to elaborate on the subject of job training, and I am convinced that he was all set to do so, but ran out of time.

I would like him to share his thoughts about job training in Quebec.

**Mr. Dubé:** Madam Speaker, our traditional position, Quebec's traditional position on job training, the one that was taken by all parties and all members in the Quebec National Assembly, is that the funds now allocated to job training by the federal government should be transferred to Quebec so that it can take on full responsibility.

Among the topics I have not covered, there is one area I would like to address in the minute I have left. Some people may feel it is only in the Gaspé region and the maritimes that the UI bill will have a noticeable impact. I would like to point out that, according to the figures of the Department of Human Resources Development, agriculture will be cut by 12 per cent as a result of the reform. Forestry will be cut by 14 per cent, manufacturing and construction by 9 per cent, transport by 8 per cent, the hospitality industry by 8 per cent, government and other services by 7 per cent, trade and real estate by 6 per cent, education by 4 per cent, and health care by 3 per cent.

This is in addition to the cutbacks that the provincial governments will have to impose, again as a result of the even deeper cuts that the Minister of Finance will probably announce tomorrow.

Everybody loses in this reform. What is the government waiting for to set this bill aside and start over with a new, real one?

[English]

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would first like to say that I am sharing my time with the member for Durham. I also would like to congratulate you on attaining your new position in the chair. I look forward to working with you over the next couple of years. Congratulations.

*The Address*

The throne speech to open the second session of the 35th Parliament is a basic statement of Canadian values, along with a blueprint that recognizes how we must form partnerships and organize for the future.

We know that government cannot isolate itself from the people it serves. We cannot as a government work in a vacuum. However, what we can and must do is establish a framework from which partnerships can develop and prosper. Partnerships with Canadians and the numerous groups and organizations representative of all walks of life are very important to recognize those divergent values and ideals.

In part, the throne speech indicated the government's commitment to the economic renewal of rural Canada in a way that is tailored to the needs of rural Canada. In particular, my area of Essex—Kent is very happy about that.

For those who reside in my constituency and for all Canadians living in small urban and rural communities that dot our map the government is continuing its efforts in recognizing the needs of rural Canada. This type of commitment will help ensure that rural Canadians are able to participate fully in the Canadian economy.

This statement for the future builds on initiatives commenced over the last two years, initiatives such as the rural secretariat within the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. This secretariat, first established in 1994, is developing partnerships within government agencies such as Industry Canada and the Farm Credit Corporation to help access government services and programs.

The Canadian rural information service, a secretariat and Agriculture Canada partnership, has become a clearing house for rural information and responds to rural Canadians' requests for services they need. The initiatives reach out to all of us.

The throne speech spoke of expanding access to the School Net and community access programs to increase technology use in rural Canada. It provides opportunities for our most valuable resource, our country's youth, for youth development, youth opportunities, youth jobs, regardless of where young people live. There are some examples of the partnerships in which we will engage to ensure future prosperity of all regions. In rural Canada we have already seen the benefits of the partnerships between the government and its citizens. We look forward to increasing such initiatives.

● (1320)

The last federal budget announced an adaptation and rural development fund, called ARDF. The estimated \$60 million annual budget in ARDF will assist farmers in their desire to diversify their operations, become more profitable and develop new markets.

In Ontario, ARDF is being viewed as an opportunity to help the agriculture sector adapt itself to a rapidly changing environment.

The commitment of the government as outlined in the throne speech to rural Canadians is not merely lip service but a very reasonable approach to building our nation. Building on current initiatives, it is anticipated that the rural secretariat will play a lead role in developing partnerships with federal agencies, with provinces and with rural stakeholders.

This commitment is also a recognition that rural development is not limited to the agriculture and the agri-food sector. Today's technology applications, and its unknown limits of tomorrow, require us to ensure access to new information infrastructures so that rural Canadians have the tools to create jobs and generate growth opportunities.

The government also remains committed to rationalizing federal services. The throne speech referenced our interest in developing a national food inspection service that would combine various food inspection branches both as a cost savings and a service improvement. Federally, food inspection is undertaken by the ministries of agriculture, health and fisheries and oceans.

Food inspection is a shared responsibility. Therefore we are anxious to explore ways in which partnerships can be arranged with the provinces so that we can move forward and create a truly national food inspection service. Inspection at the primary and processed food protection levels will serve two purposes. It ensures Canadian consumers purchase quality products that are without doubt among the best products in the world. It will also provide uniform standards for all of us.

Recently the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food met with his provincial counterparts where all expressed a keen interest to move forward in these initiatives. Last year the minister consulted with Canadians, producers and the industry on these initiatives. It is in partnership with all stakeholders that we will be able to redesign our system, streamline the inspection process, improve efficiencies and become cost efficient. Our real competitive edge for the future will result in these types of partnerships.

The government, from the beginning of its mandate, has recognized that governments do not create jobs, rather employers create private sector jobs with the vast majority of new jobs being created by small and medium size business. For our part the government must create an economic climate necessary for businesses to flourish.

A cornerstone of our economic program is the reduction of the deficit. It is not the slash and burn deficit reduction technique that many people have witnessed in this country. It is a process that makes the transition safe and reasonable for all Canadians.

*The Address*

Our approach, and the Minister of Finance has stood fast in his commitment to this, has been to set reasonable short term targets, establish goals that while they challenge our initiative, do not break the economic backs of public and private sector partners, and deliver a balanced and reasonable approach to the divergent needs of economic development and fiscal restraint.

We remain committed to reducing the deficit to 2 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product by 1997-98. When we achieve this goal we will have reduced the deficit as a portion of our economy by two-thirds, the most successful deficit reduction in the history of Canada. This achievement will be good for all Canadians. It will mean we have brought our spending out of that spiral of continual upward movement into a reasonable form that Canadians can handle.

• (1325)

In terms of business investment, the private sector will respond positively to the deficit reduction program. By continuing to bring our country's financial house in order, we will create the economic stability that will encourage consumer and investor confidence to increase.

At the same time, it is necessary for the government to foster a relationship both with the private sector and our provincial counterparts so we can collectively invest in economic growth and job creation. The throne speech reflects that partnership, giving young people an opportunity to put education and enthusiasm to work and gain valuable job experience. Co-sponsoring with business and labour, new initiatives put young people to work.

Every effort has been made for the government to reach out to every sector of the community and identify partnerships that will be positive for our nation. As I indicated in my opening comments and reiterate now with my last few words, the throne speech has set the stage for Canadian governance in co-operation with all of us.

We can see, as certain initiatives have developed, how it is possible for partnerships to be successful. From history we have learned that governments cannot and must not proceed on their own without the co-operation of all Canadians.

In the coming months and years, as more partnership initiatives are introduced and implemented, I am sure we will as a nation reap the benefits of the positive course of action set by the throne speech.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague across the way did not interpret the throne speech the way I did.

I see this as a repetition of promises that have not been kept. There is nothing in his speech on how to make taxes more equitable, help the defence industry convert to civilian applica-

tions, for example, and especially there is nothing on how to reduce overlap.

What I remember most clearly from his speech is his statement that the federal government should develop partnerships with the provinces in order to create jobs. Yet, in the throne speech, his government continues to interfere in areas of provincial jurisdiction by recycling large portions of a watered down Charlottetown accord.

The throne speech shows the government's tendency to bypass the provinces and yet the hon. member is asking us to develop partnerships with the provinces. How can the provinces do so when the federal government has demonstrated its intention to go over their heads in developing partnerships with municipalities and with various organizations either in mining or in forestry? I do not understand that kind of language.

Sometimes they want to establish a relationship with the provinces but not at other times. What is my colleague's reaction in this matter? Does he think that the federal government should first develop partnerships with the provinces?

[*English*]

**Mr. Pickard:** Madam Speaker, I would suggest that all initiatives of the government have been to create positive co-operation between the provinces and the federal government.

I do not question the initiatives that have been taken to create a positive relationship not just with the provinces but with all the stakeholders in the country. To illustrate this I might use this point. In the last two weeks the minister of agriculture has gone across the country to bring national leaders together in a forum. He had the national leaders put forward their concerns with agriculture. He had them look at the opportunities that could come from those difficulties and develop a creative plan under which we could put forward recommendations to overcome them.

• (1330)

As he did this exercise two weeks ago, he did a similar exercise in six regions across the country, bringing in all the provincial leaders at the same time in the agriculture, agri-food and finance industries. He has gone out of his way in order to bring in all of those concerns and put them together so he can set federal direction in order to answer the problems we have in the agriculture and agri-food sector today; develop new markets, develop new opportunities and a business plan for the future. That business plan, everyone moving in a direction on-side and supportive of each other.

This type of action certainly is not mentioned by the opposition. It does not recognize the value of bringing all of these groups together, having one strong voice to make certain the agriculture and agri-food industries speak as a group in order to develop opportunities and a business plan for the future. That business plan, which the minister is working on right now, shall be prepared



*The Address*

and ready hopefully by June but through the summer at the latest. We will then see how we can move together.

The incorporation of industry, provincial governments and the federal government's viewpoint is critical. Again, it is not easy to have 13 areas of government all agree. It is a process that must be done very carefully and reasonably in time to make certain that all voices are heard and considered on a fair basis.

My response is yes, there is a tremendous amount going on. We all should be very excited about those opportunities of bringing everyone together, getting rid of the overlap and trying to iron out the system. It cannot be done in one year. It has to be done carefully over a longer period of time, and that is the direction the government is taking.

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member from Essex—Kent very aptly leads into my dissertation about the speech from the throne. Basically my speech also deals with the prospect of the evolution of our federation.

We talk a lot in the Chamber about devolution. I think that is an inaccurate word. Basically what we want to do with our federation is evolve it. We have been around for 127 years and it seems reasonable that we should enter into some changes within the federation to make it more economically viable.

Canadians have historically refused to invest in themselves for a variety of reasons. The Canadian economy has been typified by foreign investment. Canadians have been reticent to invest in their own enterprises. As a consequence we have suffered as a country.

Why have we been shy about this investment procedure? I do not really know. The bottom line is the speech from the throne did attempt to address that in some very real and meaningful ways. I refer to a specific aspect which talks about the formation of a national securities exchange. Securities legislation is basically the jurisdiction and purview of the provinces.

Canada is the only industrialized country in the world that does not have a national securities exchange. What has this done? It has fractionalized our capital markets. It has prevented people from properly visualizing and assuming masses of capital for the investment of our own enterprises.

The concept of a national securities commission would not override the jurisdictions of the provinces but would envelope them. Basically the concept is to provide a basic national securities exchange commission which would have a national regulatory environment. Basically what it talks about is harmonizing all the provincial regulatory procedures so that it is one. What is the problem today?

• (1335)

A mutual fund registered in Canada has to register with each individual securities commission throughout the country. It is a very expensive process and basically many people do not do that. A lot of these offerings are not available throughout the country. They are available only in certain jurisdictions.

Another aspect occurring in Toronto, what is called the dealer's network, which is an over the counters market, is the strange evolution that we are having listings on that market which are basically extraterritorial. In other words, they are British Columbia listings, possibly Quebec listings, registering with the Toronto over the counters market.

We have the strange situation in which Ontario's securities legislation is basically being applied to British Columbian companies. One can see this is creating a great deal of confusion and overlap.

We often compare ourselves with the United States. I would like to make a quick comparison with Japan. In 1951 Canada and Japan had the same gross domestic product. That is a very interesting statement, especially because the Japanese economy by the year 2000 will surpass the gross domestic product of the United States.

That country has half the population of the United States and almost none of the natural resources. We must ask ourselves in Canada what we are doing and why we are falling behind the world. It is because of interprovincial bickering that prevents us from properly pooling some of our capital resources.

If Bill Gates were a Canadian he would never get his company started here. Why? We do not have a pooling system and a risk taking orientation within our financial institutions. Because many of our start-up companies are looking for equity capital they are forced to go to the United States.

They end up being taken over by Americans and we are back to where we started. We are on a treadmill of not being able to properly invest in our own companies mainly because of our own institutions.

Because of the great fractionalization of our equity markets, many of our companies go wanting even where they get a listing on the over the counters exchange markets. There is a whole area there that causes a great amount of fees being charged. The legal bureaucracy and regulatory environment almost prevents small and medium size companies from accessing this.

The history of many of these companies is they lost control when they tried to go through this process. The whole idea of a capital based system is to make it easy for small and medium size companies to access these markets.

I was pleased to serve on the industry committee when we talked with some of our biggest banking institutions about access to capital for small and medium size business. Again and again these

*The Address*

bankers told us the problem with small business was not its access to debt capital but its access to equity capital. This was rather strange for a bunch of institutions that only recently took over most of those brokerage firms themselves.

It is an interesting observation that the only bank which now loans to junior securities investment firms is the Toronto-Dominion Bank. Remarkably the Toronto-Dominion Bank is the only bank that does not have a securities arm. We can see there has been consolidation and economic concentration in the whole area of securities.

What I am saying is those banks are also federally regulated. It seems a logical conclusion that our securities industry should also have a federal focus, a national focus. I doubt that many of our provinces are on side on this. The maritimes basically are very interested in pursuing this. Ontario is also very supportive of moving forward with the dealer's network.

To give an idea of the over the counters market, which is part of that market in Toronto, it has zeroed in on small and medium size business. In 1993 it had tradings of over \$10 billion. By 1994 it was up to \$15 billion. By 1995 it was \$17.5 billion worth of trading in small and medium size company stocks. This represents a 70 per cent increase in only three years. We can see there is a tremendous demand for this vehicle.

• (1340)

The over the counters market is still somewhat unsophisticated because of the capital markets we have. We are fractionalized. We are a very small market in the first place in Canada. We made it even smaller by dividing it many times over.

We need a three tier system of access to these over the counters markets, a junior market in which everybody will know the risk involved and then basically tiered into the larger markets like the TSE. It will provide a cheap access to allow start-up companies to find capital in Canada rather than forcing them to go south of the border.

I look forward to the initiatives of the government in this area and look forward to working once again with the provinces in creating a national securities commission in Canada.

**Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Durham for his very excellent address.

I would like the hon. member to elaborate further on the three tier system. The access to capital for the nurturing and development of small business in Canada is extremely important. We need

to know how to get those patents into technology, technology into commercial development and production and into the marketplace.

It is a complex process, a costly process. How can we accelerate the access to our financial institutions which are reluctant to participate in this process of development and get the encouragement from day one when research at our universities becomes part of a patented process and development progress into a product that is viable and marketable in society?

**Mr. Shepherd:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

Basically one of the issues for small and medium size business is pooling. As we expand in the area of over the counters and junior markets in Canada it allows pension funds, banks and other financial institutions to pool relative securities. The whole object of the exercise is risk aversion.

Many of our institutions do not want to see a high concentration possibly in a few companies but they are willing to look at a wider base of possible technology stocks that transcends a global environment in Canada and therefore would inject funds for that purpose.

Once again, the object of the exercise of a more sophisticated securities market in Canada is to provide that area where businesses could pool similar stocks and then sell them to these financial institutions which could then more effectively participate in growing the Canadian economy and creating those new technologies.

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member.

In talking about small and medium size business, it seems the whole focus from the government's eyes, the banks' eyes and from those who provide capital is very narrow to the extent that they seem to be most concerned with small and medium size business in technology, research and the development of new the technology sector of business.

However, one of the big problems is what we would call the bread and butter basic business, retail business, wholesale business, people buying things and reselling them. There are hundreds of thousands of these businesses across Canada.

• (1345)

It is truly that sector, those types of business that have the most problems securing capital to either start up, expand or improve their businesses. They are generally looked at by the banks as second and third class citizens when they come to the banks for a loan. They generally need to have \$3 in their pocket for every \$1 they want to borrow.

What does the government have in mind to tell the banking institutions that would encourage them to start paying attention to these more basic types of business of which there are hundreds of thousands in this country?

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the member for Regina—Lumsden.

It has been just over a week since we all trooped off to the other place to be subjected to 20 minutes of vacuity, the exercise so aptly described by Ottawa *Sun* columnist Joe O'Donnell as the drone from the throne.

I envied the handful of napping Liberal senators who took the opportunity to catch up on a little sleep. On my feet and pressed against that brass rail I did not have that option.

The government came out swinging in this throne speech with a promise to double the number of federal summer jobs for students. There will not be a dandelion left standing on a single federal lawn from sea to sea to sea. If only this government would cease to suck the life out of our national economy, young people would be able to find real jobs instead of relying on this son of the Company of Young Canadians or whatever it is the government has in mind.

The government then proposed to introduce another business subsidy boondoggle, this time for environmental technologies, biotechnology and the aerospace industry. Will this be a continuation of the de Havilland-Boeing-Bombardier saga? The word on the street is that there is \$300 million in pork which will be available to those with the appropriate Liberal and Quebec connections.

Within the throne speech there is one little paragraph on criminal justice. There is a reference to "innovative alternatives to incarceration of low risk offenders". I wonder if this means more experimental facilities like the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge in my riding.

The women currently living there have all committed very serious crimes. The most common sentence among them is life-10. The concept of gentle handling as a means of rehabilitating them may have some merit. I do not question that. However, do they have to be accommodated in facilities that are much finer than anything available to many of the law-abiding, hard working, tax paying farmers and ranchers in the surrounding area? Social injustice cuts both ways. In case anyone has forgotten, this country is broke.

The capital cost of this penal Taj Mahal was \$9 million, \$300,000 per inmate at full capacity. The annual operating cost will be \$86,000 per inmate if the place operates within its budget, which my sources tell me is highly unlikely. This year the cost per inmate will be astronomical because to date Correctional Services Canada

### *The Address*

has been able to find only 14 serious offenders whom it believes can safely be kept in this open facility with 26 staff members on duty.

Few people will mourn the closure of the old women's prison in Kingston, but surely there has to be a common sense middle ground where people can be treated humanely without ripping off the long suffering taxpayer.

● (1350)

On the day following the throne speech we heard the expanded version. We were treated to an hour by the Prime Minister who delivered the same message with a few rhetorical embellishments. He said that the government had broken the back of the deficit, which brings to mind a certain Mr. Trudeau's famous remark: "We have wrestled inflation to the ground". Remember that one?

If cutting the deficit by a third is breaking its back, I am in desperate need of language lessons. If the Prime Minister had said the country is going down the drain more slowly than when the Tories were in power, that would have been an honest statement and I would have applauded wildly.

The Prime Minister made one sensible comment in his speech when he said: "Government does not create jobs. It creates the climate for the private sector to create jobs". It is the epiphany, the Prime Minister's conversion on the road to the next election. Does this really mean that we can all look forward to an end to pork barrel politics, bloated regional development agencies and \$6 billion infrastructure programs that provide neither useful infrastructure nor long term jobs? If I could use another biblical reference, that would be equivalent to the second coming or perhaps the congelation of the inferno.

The Prime Minister then went on to state that his government is prepared to withdraw from certain areas of provincial jurisdiction. He has obviously been doing some serious reading of the Reform policies. Out with the red book, in with the 20/20 program. My cup runneth over.

If the Prime Minister would like a Reform Party membership, I would be more than happy to forward his \$10 to our Calgary office. However, I am afraid his application would be refused since he still does not believe in nor even understands the concept of fiscal responsibility. He is apparently unconcerned that our national debt of \$578,288,000,000 is growing by \$1,036.26 each second of this day and that our per capita national debt at 7.46 a.m. was \$19,439.56. That is unconscionable.

**Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, to the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, that was quite a speech.

*S. O. 31*

I would like to know what he thinks about entrepreneurship and if he has ever in his life looked at the history of the Bombardier company. Perhaps 40 years ago a French Canadian family from rural Quebec started a company in its garage from nothing. It repaired snowmobiles. It was building and looking to the future, employing young Quebecers, young Canadians.

Does the hon. member not see Bombardier today as an international company which sells high speed rapid transit vehicles throughout the world? It is a success story not only for Quebec but for Canada. Does the hon. member not appreciate that?

**Mr. Morrison:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's intervention. Yes, Bombardier in its infancy as a company was an icon of Quebec and the rest of Canada and I was a great admirer of it. I will go along with her on that.

However, it has since become a bottomless sinkhole, taking in hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants. There is no company on the face of the earth that could not survive, be profitable and prosper under circumstances like that. It is a national and international scandal.

• (1355)

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia for allowing me to share his time and the House leader of the Reform Party who helped to make that arrangement.

We have seen the speech from the throne. Most people in the House have indicated that the speech from the throne from this government is not worth the paper it has been written on. It talks about promises the Liberals have made in the past. It talks about the promises very clearly and about the Liberals breaking those very same promises. The promises from their 1993 red book were so good that they have offered them up one more time in the speech from the throne. They did not carry out the promises in the first place.

The Liberals promised jobs, jobs, jobs and they delivered talk, talk, talk. There was no action with respect to the jobs they said they would create. They promised to build up Canada. They promised to strengthen our country. Instead, they have ripped apart this country from sea to sea with respect to the national unity issue.

We have also seen a total abandonment of the government's responsibility to clearly hold as a priority the rights and interests of the citizens of this country in terms of their right to employment and other matters.

**Mr. Duhamel:** You will be judged according to your friend.

**Mr. Solomon:** We hear the member for St. Boniface chirping from his seat. He is anxious to get into the debate. He wants to get in here and talk about this issue, and I hope he will.

The Liberals promised they would create jobs. They promised they would reform social programs and unite Canada. Of course they have failed. There is talk about job creation and social reform in the speech but that is not what Canadians are getting.

The federal government is actually doing less about jobs now than it was a year ago. Instead of a hand up for Canadians there is a handout which is shrinking on a daily basis. There is deficit reduction but it is neither balanced nor fair. National programs and national standards, which have been the glue that has held Canada together, are being wiped out rather than being improved.

The Liberal members sit in their seats and say that what I have just said is nonsense. Let us talk about some of the things they have encouraged in terms of a situation—

**The Speaker:** This would seem a good time to interrupt. I do not want to stop you in full flight later on. You will have the floor when debate resumes.

[*Translation*]

It being 2 p.m., we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### MIDDLE EAST

**Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask this House to remember the victims of the terrorist attacks this week in Israel.

Once again enemies of peace in the Middle East have surfaced and the innocent have been made victims. We urge the Israeli government and the Palestinian authorities to continue their work together for peace and to resist violent attempts by marginal groups to derail the peace process.

[*Translation*]

The Israeli government and Palestinian authorities have shown the world that former combatants can sit down together and reach a peace agreement. The terrorists who are trying to derail the process are being condemned by Canada and the international community as a whole.

[*English*]

The people of Canada have always strongly supported peace in the Middle East. We reject violence as a means of resolving the complex divisions between peoples there. A motion passed by the House yesterday was a demonstration of our solidarity with the

champions of peaceful political solutions to this too longstanding conflict and a condemnation of those who would see it destroyed.

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[Translation]

#### FAMILY FAIR

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the Montérégie region, a fair will focus exclusively on families living with older relatives. This free activity, which has been organized by the Association des familles soutien des aînés de Saint-Hubert, will take place on March 9.

A number of stakeholders will be present and several mini-conferences will be held on physical and mental health, as well as the rights and safety of the elderly. Legal advice will also be provided.

This family fair is an ideal opportunity for elderly people, and those responsible for them, to get useful information.

I want to congratulate the Association des familles soutien des aînés de Saint-Hubert for its praiseworthy initiative.

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[English]

#### FISHERIES

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last year on August 26 I went fishing in a native only commercial fishery. My vessel was immediately boarded by DFO officers and I was charged. Now six months later I have been quietly informed by the government that it will not be proceeding with the charges against me. They cannot make them stick. In allowing for a racially exclusive fishery, the minister has exceeded his authority and defied the B.C. Court of Appeal.

However, the government will still have to defend its actions in court. Last fall I filed a statement of claim in the Supreme Court of British Columbia asking the court to declare that the minister acted improperly in excluding commercial fishermen from the native only fisheries. The government will not be able to avoid the issue; it will have to answer to the judge.

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#### THE LATE SIR ROBERT WILLIAMS

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past Tuesday, February 27, Brampton lost one of its outstanding citizens and a pioneer in the field of prisoner rehabilitation. Sir Robert Williams passed away following a brief illness at the age of 84.

*S. O. 31*

Sir Robert Williams compiled an impressive list of community achievements over the past three decades. In addition to spearheading the Foundation of St. Leonard's House, which was the first home in North America devoted to prisoner rehabilitation, he was a founding member and later the chair of the Peel District Health Council. He was an active member of the Brampton Rotary Club, a director of Peel Community Services and chair of the United Way. In recognition of his outstanding achievements he was named Brampton's Citizen of the Year in 1981 and was the recipient of the Order of Canada.

Sir Robert Williams is survived by his wife Mary and his son Robert Jr. He will be missed by many. His contributions to his community and country will always be valued.

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#### HON. LUCIEN BOUCHARD

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on August 29, 1988 a member of Parliament stood in this very House to give his maiden speech. Speaking on free trade he said: "This will have an impact on the very future of this country and it will help Canada achieve the place it deserves among nations". The hon. member continued by saying that free trade "is the affirmation of our country's global role". He said: "Nothing which makes this country—different from the United States is affected" by the agreement.

Who was the member? He was the newly elected member for Saint Jean, Quebec, the Hon. Lucien Bouchard. Canada was a country in 1988 by admission of the now premier of Quebec and it continues to be the best country in the world according to the United Nations. Vive le Canada.

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[Translation]

#### THE LATE MARGUERITE DURAS

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the passing of Marguerite Duras, a great French writer of international stature. Through her talent, Marguerite Duras helped French literature and culture remain one of the main foundations of contemporary humanism.

She spent her life writing; she lived through and for writing. As the author of many books, she made a name for herself in several literary genres, such as stories, novels, plays and screen plays, including the one for the famous movie "Hiroshima mon amour". Her novel *L'Amant*, a book that was stopped at the border by Canada Customs, won the Prix Goncourt in 1984.

The Bloc Québécois salutes this great woman who was called by *Le Devoir* a "luminary of 20th century literature".

*S. O. 31*

[English]

### CHILD SUPPORT

**Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the issue of child support. Any reform to the child support or taxation system must be more than a half measure by ministers to placate special interests or to fudge broken government promises.

The child support issue is not simply a woman's issue; it is a family issue. Child support must be family support. It must address the interests and concerns of children and both parents.

How the tax is calculated or how child support payments are enforced will only make sense with a fair and just support settlement.

Change is needed to remove the necessity of adversarial lawyers in a family court. Change is needed to bring federal and provincial jurisdictions together and change is needed to create fair guidelines and formulas.

The policies of governments have contributed in a very real way to the breakdown of family units in Canada. In child support as in all government decisions, Reform believes that the well-being of families should be the priority.

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• (1405)

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a general agreement that Canada needs a public broadcasting system so that Canadians are able to see and hear each other. Twenty-five million Canadians tune into the CBC at least once a week.

I also believe Canadians support the CBC's need for stable, multiyear funding. However the special tax proposed by the Juneau report is not the answer. Canadians are in no mood for any tax increases. A new tax for the CBC would unleash a storm of anger directed at the public broadcaster which is the last thing the CBC needs.

Providing stable long term funding for the CBC should not be achieved by new taxes or manipulating the tax system. The solution is quite simple. The government should guarantee funding for five-year periods.

This government promised in its red book: "A Liberal government will be committed to stable multiyear financing for national cultural institutions such as the Canada Council and the CBC". All it has to do is to live up to the political commitment it made to the Canadian people.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this International Women's Week we celebrate the contributions of women and renew our commitment to their equality.

Today women make up 45 per cent of all workers but they also continue to do two-thirds of the unpaid work in Canada. In 1992 Statistics Canada estimated the total value of all unpaid work at between \$210 billion and \$318 billion. In order to make sound public policy, we need to take this productive activity into account and we will begin to do this in May.

For the first time ever, the national census will ask questions on unpaid work related to housework, child care and care of the elderly. In doing so, we are recognizing the tremendous contribution of women's unpaid work to Canadian society and the Canadian economy.

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[Translation]

### ECONOMIC RECOVERY

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, although all the figures on deficit reduction are not yet available, I will venture to say that the performance of our government in this connection deserves praise.

Our Bloc colleagues, however, have devoted all their energy since their election to criticizing our strategy, without proposing any serious alternative. Now he is the premier of Quebec, the former leader of our official opposition surely has a better understanding of the dilemma of preserving social programs while putting one's financial house in order.

To foster economic recovery and and create jobs, our colleagues will have to take off their sovereigntist blinkers and help us attain these objectives for the good of all Canadians.

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[English]

### HAMILTON

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 1996 is the 150th anniversary of the founding of the city of Hamilton. All the community groups involved and the organizing committee are to be congratulated on the several hundred events that have been planned for this year to celebrate Hamilton's sesquicentennial.

Hamilton's economy is relatively stable these days with an unemployment rate of 6 per cent. Co-operation between the unions, businesses, schools and government has created Hamilton's current success: a 5 per cent reduction in unemployment in two years.

Since Hamilton was incorporated in June 1846, the city has developed into one of Canada's major industrial centres. Although most famous as a steel town, Hamilton has numerous national attractions such as the Royal Botanical Gardens, Dundurn Castle, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton. This year's Grey Cup will be held in Hamilton, home of the Tiger Cats.

I would like to invite all my colleagues and all other Canadians to visit Hamilton this year to take part in the sesquicentennial celebrations.

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#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

**Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House during International Women's Week to salute the women of the world, particularly the women of my riding of Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

In my riding women run businesses and are artists, farmers, politicians, service providers, homemakers and caregivers. They are also volunteers and members of service clubs, legions and women's institutes. Like women internationally, the women of my riding contribute wholly to the social, political and spiritual life of their communities. And they are heroes. I proudly recall witnessing Sheila Maracle and Terry Ann Richardson receive the Star of Courage and the Medal of Bravery for saving a drowning child in a spontaneous act of courage.

• (1410)

Generous actions occur daily in homes and communities and across international boundaries. Mary Lou Carroll of Adolphustown is currently arranging a third shipment of supplies to the Sisters of St. Joseph's orphanage in Haiti.

Our lives are made richer by the women we know. Please join me in saluting the women of the world and of our constituencies across this great country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### MONTREAL NEUROLOGICAL INSTITUTE

**Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Montreal Neurological Institute has developed a new and unique working tool for detecting brain tumours: magnetic resonance spectroscopy. This is a diagnostic procedure that is both safe and painless.

With traditional methods, the rate of success for preoperative diagnosis is 78 per cent. This new method of detection raises the success rate to 99 per cent. The accuracy of these new tests will

*S. O. 31*

help relieve patient uncertainty, as well as reducing costs and length of care.

The Bloc Quebecois offers its congratulations to Drs. Arnold, Preul and Carmanos and their colleagues in neurosurgery for their discovery, which again offers proof of the innovative genius of Quebecers in the health field.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I was delighted to see the Minister of the Environment who is from Toronto join the gaggle of Ontario Liberals squirming under their broken promise to eliminate the GST. "To deny that it is an issue would be incorrect", said the hon. minister. "People remember us taking a firm position".

Canadians know that the Prime Minister promised to eliminate the GST. He did not promise to fudge the GST, to hide it or to sugarcoat it; he promised to eliminate it. What part of the word eliminate do the Liberals not understand?

Canadians and especially the voters of Etobicoke North will not be tricked by the same old Mulroney tax under a new name and a new cover. This issue may make the hon. minister and his Grit gang afraid of the voters, but we are not. Etobicoke North, say no to the supertax: vote Reform.

\* \* \*

#### GEMINI AWARDS

**Mr. John English (Kitchener, Lib.):** The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television recently celebrated its finest achievements in creating programs in the English language for broadcast during the past year. For the past 10 years the Gemini awards have honoured all aspects of television production in Canada recognizing over 55 categories of achievement annually. The Geminis offer a fitting tribute to the vitality, energy and creativity of Canada's cultural community.

I would like to offer congratulations to the nominees and winners of this year's Geminis. Compelling, humorous, or informative programs, such as "Due South", "Million Dollar Babies", "The Fifth Estate" and "This Hour Has 22 Minutes" captured our imaginations and well deserved the recognition they received. The standards they set are an example of the exceptional work Canadians produce.

Canadian programming is now seen in every part of the world, a result of the hard work and talent of our own creators and craftspeople. It is also due in part to support from the people of Canada through the various programs and policies which exist to keep our cultural life vibrant and meaningful to all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE**

**Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Huntington's disease invades the body of one in every 1,000 Canadians in the prime of their life. Over its 10 to 25-year course, Huntington's leads to incapacitation and eventual death. There is no known cure and no effective treatment to date.

In 1993 scientists found the gene that causes Huntington's disease. Every child who has a parent with Huntington's has a 50 per cent chance of developing the disease.

Many know that May is Huntington's awareness month. In order to help local chapters in my riding spread their message, I am declaring May 19 to 26 Huntington's Awareness Week in Cumberland—Colchester. It is my hope that this initiative will help to heighten the local awareness and generate greater local support for research programs and education. With increased support for this dreadful disease, we can find a cure.

That would leave eight. In my arithmetic, eight is less than ten. I do not know whether the hon. member is using some form of octal calculating but eight is less than ten, six is less than ten and anything is less than ten if the federal government gets involved.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, arrogance never got anyone very far.

The throne speech indicated that the federal government would not intervene in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the consent of the majority of the provinces. Is there anyone in the government who can tell me whether it might finally admit that its proposed approach, particularly in the area of financial institutions and in other areas, as indicated in the throne speech, will inevitably lead to Quebec's isolation?

[*English*]

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. The only question that comes up is that the proposal was there to improve the efficiency of Canadian capital markets to make it easier for business to issue securities and to make it easier for Canadian companies to be competitive.

If the hon. member is not interested in those matters, fine, but maybe the rest of the Canadian provinces are interested. We are putting the proposal up. If they want to opt out, they can opt out. There is no compulsory matter here whatsoever.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, will the government admit that the establishment of a federal securities commission will amount to putting the Quebec securities sector in a sort of trusteeship, despite the opposition of all interested parties in Quebec, including federalist Quebecers?

[*English*]

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this particular instance the Canadian business community and the commission chair in Ontario for example have said that this is a positive proposal. This is a proposal that would create jobs in Canada, that would help Canadian business become competitive, that would help Canadian business raise capital.

It seems that the opposition party is not interested in creating jobs in Quebec. It is not interested in making Quebec's businesses more competitive. If that is the case, fine, but we are interested. This government is interested in allowing the provinces to come together with us to make a Canadian securities commission.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

**SECURITIES**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in response to questioning yesterday on the government's intentions in the area of securities, the secretary of state for international financial institutions said that, in his opinion, the federal government would look after securities more effectively than the provinces.

In his letter to the President of the Privy Council of February 16, 1994, the former premier of Quebec, Daniel Johnson, said that federal regulation would be inappropriate and would lead to duplication of monitoring rules and inevitably to heavier administrative loads for issuers, investors and intermediaries.

My question is for the Minister of Finance or the secretary of state. On what basis can the government seriously state that it would be more effective in the area of securities than the provinces have been up to now, when this area of jurisdiction is solely theirs?

[*English*]

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should realize that there are a large number of securities regulators in this country. Let us say there are 10 and let us say that two of them got together and asked the federal government to handle the securities.



*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in his February 16, 1994 letter to the then President of the Privy Council, former Quebec premier Daniel Johnson wrote, and I quote: "The Government of Quebec has never been in favour of a greater federal role in the securities industry, which is an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. On the contrary, it has regularly expressed its opposition to federal initiatives in this area".

• (1420)

My question is for the Minister of Finance, since the secretary of state is not taking this seriously. Can the minister, who knows Quebec well, deny that the establishment of a federal securities commission would go against Quebec's position and marginalize the Quebec institutions working in this area, while reducing their ability to intervene?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that, on the one hand, the federal government is in the process of responding to the requests made by several provinces and, on the other hand, to the business community across Canada, including Quebec, which is calling for rationalization.

Why should a Quebec company have to send prospectuses to 10 provinces, when it could limit its mailings to two entities if there were a federal agency and its Quebec counterpart?

We want to put Quebec companies in a position to seek capital as efficiently as possible. A federal commission would help, as the Quebec business community knows full well.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I see that even the Minister of Finance does not know what he is talking about. He should ask the current Minister of Immigration who, when the letter was sent to the President of the Privy Council, was in Mr. Johnson's cabinet. She shared Mr. Johnson's opinion that the federal government should not interfere in the securities industry, an area that comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Quebec government.

Again, I ask the Minister of Finance, who normally gives me serious answers, a question that is as serious as the first one, in the hope that he will give me a straight answer this time around.

Will the minister admit that this new intervention in an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction could have a negative impact on securities operations in Quebec by fostering a gradual transfer of these operations, including those of the Montreal Stock Exchange, from Montreal to Toronto?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Québécois has been overtaken by events. They should know, as the Montreal Stock Exchange members and

the business community in Montreal and throughout Quebec know full well, that competition now comes not only from Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver but also from Chicago, London, New York and Philadelphia.

If we want the Canadian business community, in Quebec and the other provinces, to be able to compete with the Americans, the British, the Europeans and the Japanese, we must strengthen our position. This is what we are doing. Creating a federal securities commission in co-operation with the Montreal Stock Exchange and the Quebec people will make us stronger.

*[English]*

There has never been a better example of the extent to which the Bloc Québécois exists in the 1950s, perhaps the 1960s if it is lucky. The world has changed. Quebecers are no longer in competition with Ontarians. They are in competition with the Americans, the Brits and the Japanese.

What we want to do is give this country the best foundation possible, and that is what is happening here.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as the House prepares to receive the federal budget, I want to examine the Prime Minister's assertion that the federal government has broken the back of the deficit.

If such a statement came from a government that had balanced its budget it might be credible. However, when it comes from the head of an enterprise that has run 25 consecutive deficits, has not had a budget surplus in a quarter of a century and is currently spending \$30 billion more per year than it takes in, such a statement is unbelievable and exposes the government and the House to ridicule.

• (1425)

The only back the government has broken is the back of the Canadian taxpayer.

To the finance minister, if the government has broken the back of the deficit, how soon we can expect a reward for that accomplishment, namely tax relief for overtaxed Canadians?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we took office the deficit as a percentage of GDP was 6 per cent. Last year we brought it down to 5 per cent. This year we will be announcing 4 per cent or better. Next year we will hit our target of 3 per cent, and we have already set a target of 2 per cent. Six, five, four, three, two—

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

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** Mr. Speaker, we would very much on this side of the House like to reduce taxes but we have to deal with the hand we were dealt.

We will eliminate the deficit. At the same time, we will protect the basic social programs of the country. We would like to reduce taxes but we will preserve the social programs because that is the higher priority.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, if the treasury could have a dollar for every excuse like the one given for not balancing the budget, the deficit could be eliminated.

Eight out of eleven senior governments in the country are committed to eliminating their deficits, not just reducing them, and are much further down that road than the federal government. As the provinces get closer to balancing their budgets, they fear that a fiscally irresponsible federal government will move into the tax room they have vacated.

Will the Prime Minister today assure the provinces the federal government will not undermine the positive effects of provincial tax decreases by federal tax increases?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, time after time the leader of the Reform Party sets up straw people he likes to knock down.

We met with the finance ministers of the provinces. At that meeting we agreed we had a common objective. We agreed as well that as we work to that common objective it made no sense for any government to fill in room left by any other government.

Around the table of the federal government and the provincial finance ministers there is an extraordinary amount of co-operation toward that ultimate goal. It does not make any sense for the leader of the Reform Party to try to get in the way, stir up the waters and cause problems where none exist. Why does he not try to help the country work together? That is what we are doing with the provinces.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this month in the province of Alberta the government and the public are beginning a very positive and constructive budget debate.

It is a debate that cuts across party lines. It offers something to consumers, to business people, to the users of social services, to taxpayers. It is a debate on whether to apply a government surplus, something this House has not heard much about, to debt reduction, to social service investment or to tax relief.

When can Canadians expect the House of Commons to debate a budget surplus? Does the government foresee such a debate being possible in this millennium, the next millennium or the one after that?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it takes two to debate. The government has nailed its colours to the mast.

Before Christmas there was a debate in the House on what the members of the opposition and the rest of the members felt should be in the forthcoming budget.

The Reform Party was notable for its absence, its lack of thought, its lack of ideas and for its lack of understanding the problem.

• (1430)

We are prepared to debate the issue. The question is where was the Reform Party when we had the debate before Christmas? Where is the budget the Reform Party promised it would bring down before our budget?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, whom I congratulate on her appointment.

According to former deputy minister Roger Tassé, who was in charge of investigating the deportation services at Citizenship and Immigration, certain Canadian officials were reported as having offered bribes to foreign authorities for letting their own nationals back in.

In light of the fact that former deputy minister Tassé was clearly referring to accommodation fees, commonly called bribes, and that these fees were even reimbursed by her department, how can the minister seriously say that she does not have sufficient cause to open an inquiry? What more does she need?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure: every Citizenship and Immigration employee is expected to abide by existing legislation, including our own Immigration Act, and to follow a code of conduct.

When irregularities occurred in the past, the deputy minister asked Mr. Tassé to determine whether any illicit act had been committed by department employees and report back; hence the Tassé report.

Mr. Tassé himself concluded that there was no evidence of illegality. And I should point out that nowhere in his report does Mr. Tassé talk about immigration staff giving bribes. This minister would not stand for that.

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the president of the Canada Employment and Immigration Union himself confirmed that bribes were offered.

*Oral Questions*

Could the minister tell us if she intends to call an inquiry into this and could she give us the assurance that, henceforth, her department will not spend another penny on bribes offered by government officials?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the hon. member for Bourassa read the Tassé report before reading certain press reports.

I did so myself; I read the report. And this report clearly states that participants were informed that they were welcome to come forward with any evidence of illicit acts contravening our legislation and that it would be brought to the attention of the authorities concerned. Not one came forward with any such evidence.

Before making accusations against Citizenship and Immigration officials, the hon. member for Bourassa should check the facts.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADIAN WATERWAYS**

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Americans are flexing their muscles not only with respect to Cuba but also on Canada's west coast. As a consequence of Brian Tobin's ill advised and unsuccessful 1994 fish war with the U.S., the American Congress has found B.C.'s inside passage to be an international waterway.

Why has the government failed to protect Canada's sovereignty on this internal Canadian waterway?

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is not new. This has happened before. To bring the House up to speed, the U.S. has complained that we have applied the transit fees of two years ago inappropriately and not in accordance with international law.

In January we sent a note to the United States indicating that it is reasonable to use these terms and options in inland waters. The waters under question include the inland waters of British Columbia.

The fees are quite appropriately charged in inland waters. The right of innocent passage, which really is at issue here, applies only to the territorial sea.

• (1435)

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the issue warrants more than a diplomatic note. In its fisheries act of 1995 the U.S. Congress mandated that "the president should ensure that the U.S. coast guard has available adequate resources to provide for the enforcement of United States law and to keep peace among vessels operating in disputed waters".

These disputed waters are Canadian waters. Are we to expect to see battle ready U.S. coast guard vessels operating in Canada's inside passage off Campbell River?

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had a long answer ready but the answer is no.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CITADEL OF QUEBEC**

**Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Answering a question about the events in the Citadel of Quebec, the Minister said in this House yesterday, and I quote:

[English]

"We particularly wanted to assure that the mother of the deceased was comfortable in knowing that the armed forces had dealt with the matter in the most appropriate of ways".

[Translation]

But, far from being convinced that it was a suicide, the mother said to the media yesterday: "With all those things going on in the Armed Forces, my son knew too much and they prevented him from talking".

Since the mother of Jonathan Brunet has bluntly refuted what the Minister said in this House yesterday, does the Minister intend to clarify the matter once and for all. Yes or No?

[English]

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should realize that the armed forces came to the conclusion that the unfortunate death of this soldier was suicide, as did the coroner's office in the province of Quebec.

He may not accept what goes on in the armed forces but he is actually criticizing not only the armed forces but the coroner's office in Quebec which has come to the same conclusion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister told us yesterday that the mother was satisfied. Today she is not and there is another reason for this. This case is not unique. May I remind the House of Petawawa, Somalia, the videos, the terrorist attack against the Citadel of Quebec, and so on.

Given his attitude, does the Minister not realize that there is only one thing left to do and that is to launch a complete and independent inquiry in this matter in order to restore the credibility of the Armed Forces and his own?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a real tragedy that a politician comes into the House and uses the misfortune of someone who died to score political points. I will not get into this debate any further.

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**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign the Liberals went door to door promising to abolish the GST.

Let me quote the fisheries minister in the House of Commons on February 11, 1993: "Our alternative to the GST is that we are not going to have one. We are not going to have a tax that burns the individuals and the small businesses which then go broke because they cannot afford the people and computers to do it".

My question to the finance minister is when will he uphold the promise of his fisheries minister, his caucus and his own promise when he said he would abolish the GST?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party is running out of questions; this is about the third time in the last four days.

In case the hon. member has difficulty finding it on page 22: "A Liberal government will replace the GST with a system that generates equivalent revenues, is fairer to consumers and to small business, minimizes disruption to small business and promotes federal-provincial fiscal co-operation and harmonization". That is what we will do.

**The Speaker:** I am not sure when a book becomes a prop. You are getting awfully close to it.

● (1440)

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, before the election the Liberals seduced Canadians with the promise of getting rid of the GST. Two years later, Canadians are left holding the GST love child and those sweet talking Liberals are nowhere to be found. They walked out.

The Minister of Finance said: "I would abolish the GST". Those are his words. Does the minister deny that he said those words? If not, why is he not meeting his promise?

**Mr. Abbott:** Deny it, Paul.

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** Your nose is growing.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if there is a paternity suit the government is not the father of the love child.

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

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** I am not getting much support here, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I know the hon. minister is going to get to his answer.

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** The word in the red book is "replaced". That is what we said during the election campaign and that is what we are going to do.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***CUBA**

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade met yesterday in Washington with his American counterpart to discuss the measures the United States intend to take against countries trading with Cuba. There is every indication that Washington wants to maintain a hard line policy.

The Prime Minister said yesterday in Grenada that, in all probability, the United States are preparing to pass such measures because this is a presidential election year. Does the minister not think that such defeatist remarks by the Prime Minister, far from helping Canada's case, are hurting it?

*[English]*

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said, quite eloquently, how the government feels, which is that the Helms-Burton bill in the United States should not affect this country or any other country.

We should not be told that if we trade or have business with Cuba, which is perfectly lawful, that we are going to be punished. That is the message I took quite clearly to Washington yesterday. That is the message of the Prime Minister in the Caribbean supported by the leaders in the Caribbean community.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister not think that such comments by the Prime Minister remove all credibility from Canada's efforts at negotiation?

*[English]*

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** I think not, Mr. Speaker. The American senate, the American house are determined to pass this bill. The president has decided he is going to sign it. It is largely out of the unfortunate incident that occurred of the planes being shot down by the Cuban authorities. We condemned this incident and were one of the first countries to do so.

However, some discretion is being left with the president. This morning I consulted with ambassadors from a number of countries. Further I will be consulting with the business community. We

intend to follow this through. The president has some discretion with respect to this matter.

We think this bill is a dangerous precedent. We hope he will use that discretion to make sure that Canada and other third parties in this dispute are not affected by the United States' desire to get at Cuba.

\* \* \*

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are very concerned about the deficit.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he will meet his deficit target for this year and how far into his contingency fund will he have to go to do so?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will hit our target. There is no doubt about that.

• (1445)

We may do better than our targets. However it is the government's policy that if there is bad news to say it right away, if there is good news to wait until it is in the bank.

Therefore we will not be releasing a projection apart from the fact that we will probably do better than the \$32.7 billion. We will not be releasing a projection or going any further in the budget tomorrow.

As far as the contingency reserve is concerned I think we should be very clear on this. It is exactly what is said. It is a contingency reserve for the unexpected. If it is not required it will not be spent. It will go directly to the bottom line and reduce the deficit.

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### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Cliff Bretkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the agriculture minister say they favour allowing farmers their freedom to market their wheat and barley outside the Canadian Wheat Board.

Recently a wheat board commissioned study was released claiming it cost less than five cents per bushel to run the board. Today in Edmonton the Carter study was released showing board operation costs are much higher, up to 10 times higher.

A plebiscite in Alberta and a survey in Saskatchewan show that a majority of farmers favour freedom to sell their wheat and barley abroad. With this new evidence, will the minister stay true to his promise and allow western grain farmers a direct voice through a plebiscite?

### Oral Questions

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have noted that the Alberta government set up a committee to examine the marketing structure in the west. They produced the report today at noon. It was not a written report. It was a news conference where the committee did not give the federal government any information about what it had looked at and what it had studied.

We presently do not have written information. We only have a news conference. It is very difficult to respond at this time when we do not have the information that has been put forward.

**Mr. Cliff Bretkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, certainly the parliamentary secretary should place as much credence in the Alberta study as in the wheat board study.

Farmers know their business, making decisions involving thousands, indeed millions of dollars, projecting years into the future. Will the minister call the promised plebiscite and allow farmers to make their own grain marketing decisions?

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

The minister has looked at this very carefully. At this time he is having round table discussions with people right across the country. He is trying to look at that problem with industry, government and all people in the area combined to come up with a reasonable suggestion. The minister is looking at this and will report back to the House when he has plans in place.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### TAXATION

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the finance minister.

In the finance committee report on pre-budget consultations, published in January, the liberal majority recommends that the tax on gasoline be raised. For weeks now, millions of taxpayers have been writing to let us know that they are opposed to any increase in that tax.

Since 23 cents out of every dollar paid for gasoline go to the federal government, can the minister tell us if it is true he is about to pull \$5.2 billion out of the pockets of road users?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member will not be surprised if I do not answer that question. He will have to wait until tomorrow.

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am in fact quite surprised that the minister will not reassure taxpayers who are very concerned about this.

*Oral Questions*

Since the federal government reinvests only 4 per cent of all taxes on gasoline in the construction and maintenance of roads, will the Minister of Finance promise not to increase those taxes?

• (1450)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am greatly tempted to reply, but unfortunately, we will have to wait until tomorrow.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

In the 1960s the province of Newfoundland was refused the right to build power lines through Quebec to transfer power to New England. Newfoundland is now forced to sell its power to Quebec at 1969 prices, costing Newfoundland \$800 million a year. This amounts to an interprovincial trade barrier, something the Liberal red book claims the government will eliminate.

Does the Minister of Industry believe that the people of Labrador should be able to enjoy the benefits of the free flow of trade?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Perhaps the hon. member is not aware that chapter 9 is being worked on dealing with energy in relation to the internal trade issue. Discussions are continuing relating to electrical power between the provinces of Newfoundland and Quebec.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the mess at Churchill Falls was created in part by the federal government. It could be fixed by the federal government because it has the constitutional authority to challenge interprovincial trade barriers.

The Reform Party is willing to support the federal government in a court challenge to ensure free trade. Will the minister tell the House and the people of Labrador whether or not she is willing to stand up for their rights and move now to fix the mess that is happening at Churchill Falls?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his support and the support of his party.

Let me reassure the hon. member. As I said before we are working in partnership with the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland. We will continue to do so.

I am not going to usurp the role which is rightly that of the provinces. I have no doubt that discussions will continue and they will reach a suitable conclusion some time in the near future.

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that progress is being made with regard to the concerns of fishermen in the Scotia Fundy region. I want to thank the minister for moving to end the impasse.

Could the hon. minister update the House on the progress being made at the meetings which began yesterday in Nova Scotia between fishermen and DFO officials.

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the hon. member and this House that a good meeting took place yesterday. Five items were discussed: the Fisheries Act, the Oceans Act, licence fees, allocations of quotas and the criteria to get to a core fishery.

I am pleased to report to the House that common ground was found on many items among the over 100 people who attended the meeting. The discussions are continuing today. I think it is safe to report that this common ground will help us move forward with a fishery of the future with optimism and positiveness.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage. Over 94,000 Quebecers signed a petition asking the federal government to grant a broadcasting licence to Quebec Telephone, which would enable the company to remain competitive in the communications field. Although foreign-owned, Quebec Telephone, the corporate culture of which is francophone, is crucial to Quebec's economic development.

Does the heritage minister intend to take the necessary steps to make sure that Quebec Telephone is granted a broadcasting licence?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for taking the initiative of calling a meeting. Obviously, Quebec Telephone's wishes are similar to BC Tel's; these two companies have been competing in Canada for a long time; in 1987, they were recognized as having a certain Canadian content when they were "grandfathered" under the new telephone regulations.

We have offered the company to negotiate the acceptance of a strong presence in Canada, in Quebec, and among others, in Rimouski.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

In British Columbia, B.C. Tel is a very important Canadian player. We would like to work with both parties to make sure that they are permitted to continue to work effectively in the Canadian market and at the same time we do not set the stage for the American takeover of Canadian radio diffusion.

• (1455)

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that under this grandfather clause Quebec Telephone is already involved in Internet broadcasting, could the government recognize that granting a broadcasting licence to this company would only be updating its vested right, due to recent technological developments?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I told Gilles Laroche—Bloc members already discussed the issue and might be in agreement—that what is at issue is not just the expansion of two companies. Both Quebec Telephone and BC Tel are working to find a solution.

This being said, when it was decided to grant Quebec Telephone a licence, in 1987, it was to provide telephone services. Of course, when it comes to Canadian culture, television is not the same thing as telephone. The telephone is a communication tool which has no Canadian content.

As far as broadcasting is concerned, we have to make sure, not only that the Canadian content rule is respected, but also that the requirements for managing broadcasting companies are met. Last week, I met with the Union des artistes du Québec which is demanding that our broadcasting policy promote Canadian culture. I am trying to find a way to respect both Quebec Telephone presence and the Canadian content rule.

\* \* \*

*[English]***INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the department of Indian affairs has been repeatedly criticized for its lack of accountability. To this department and the minister, the Canadian taxpayer is nothing more than an afterthought.

The Nisga'a deal is another example of the taxpayer being left out of the equation. The primary accountability for spending in this deal is only to the Nisga'a people.

Why is the minister failing to be accountable to the people he is supposed to be accountable to, the Canadian taxpayer?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, considering how many natives there are in ridings held by the Reform Party I would have thought the member would stand up and celebrate the Nisga'a deal.

The reflection of accountability comes from the discussion, the political spin and the editorial comment coming out of an area. This deal has been hailed by most of the B.C. media, by most of the Alberta media and most of the Ontario media.

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** What about the B.C. Liberals?

**Mr. Irwin:** They find it fiscally responsible and publicly acceptable. Why will the Reform not admit that they were wrong when they attacked a group which has been negotiating with the white people for 30 years without success, through 12 ministers. After 30 years they finally have what they have been sitting at the table for. It is just and fair and we are proud of it.

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is not a balanced deal. There is much controversy among the media. We are not attacking any group. We are trying to place responsibility where it belongs.

The minister can dance around the issue all he wants but his primary function is to spend taxpayers' money wisely and be accountable to the taxpayers when doing so. He has failed in the past. He has failed with this deal. The auditor general has confirmed this fact over time. We deserve better.

Will the minister commit today to giving the auditor general the mandate to exercise full oversight of the spending of federal dollars in the Nisga'a deal?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, balance is in the eye of the beholder. Not long ago the Reform Party said the Criminal Code had to apply to the Nisga'a. They agreed.

The Reform Party said that the charter of rights has to apply to the Nisga'a. They agreed.

The Reform Party said that you cannot constitutionalize the commercial aspect of the fishery. They agreed.

The Reform Party said they must pay taxes. They agreed.

Why will the Reform Party not stand up today and say that these people are reasonable? They dealt with us and did many of the things we wanted. They get no credit for their goodwill and I condemn the Reform Party for that attitude.

*The Address*

• (1500)

**CORPORATE DOWNSIZING**

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

On Thursday the Prime Minister challenged business to create jobs. On Friday Conrad Black's Hollinger Inc. took ownership of the Regina *Leader-Post*, the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and the Yorkton *Enterprise*. The next day 25 per cent of the employees of these newspapers, 182 jobs in all, were terminated because Conrad Black said: "These newspapers made profits but not enough profits".

In view of this latest corporate job massacre which is clearly a slap in the face to the Prime Minister's challenge, how long will the government tolerate this lack of corporate responsibility before taking any action?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister laid out a challenge to all Canadians, to the business community, to labour unions, to educators and to governments that we must all come together to deal with what is a very deep problem, the changing nature of work.

There is nobody on this side or that side of the House who approves of the kind of corporate downsizing that is going on without regard to the long term effects on communities in terms of the people. This is not behaviour that is supported by the business community itself. Loyalty from employees is very important if a company is going to do well. One person's employees are another person's customers.

This is a problem on which all Canadians have to come together to solve. It is a problem that we will all solve together and this government is going to lead it.

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen in Saskatchewan and across the country a number of jobs that have been terminated by large corporations receiving corporate tax breaks from the national government.

Will the government give its assurance today that these corporate tax breaks are not provided to corporations that lay off employees, even though they are profitable? Will the government launch an investigation into the question of concentration of ownership and the lack of competition in the media?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of years we have eliminated the great majority of what the member would call corporate tax breaks.

The major incentives in place now are one that will encourage research and development which is very important and the lower tax rate for small and medium size business. As the member

knows, small and medium size business creates over 95 per cent of the jobs in this country. That is one break that is worth keeping in place.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne indicates the Liberals have not delivered on one promise they made in the last election campaign so they are making these promises one more time.

The Liberals have talked about creating jobs. Let us go over the list of jobs they have created. Bell Canada made profits of \$502 million last year and laid off 3,100 employees. Petro-Canada made a profit of \$196 million and laid off 564 employees. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce made over \$1 billion in net profits and laid off 1,289 employees. General Motors made a profit of \$1.39 billion yet laid off 2,500 employees.

Shell Oil made profits of \$523 million, an increase of 63 per cent over last year, and laid off 471 employees. Imperial Oil made \$514 million, which was an increase of 43 per cent over the previous year, and laid off 452 employees. The Bank of Montreal made a \$986 million profit, an increase of 20 per cent over 1994, yet laid off 1,428 employees. This is the job creation program of the federal government.

We have seen the government in every field give contributions in terms of tax breaks to these corporations which have a corporate responsibility, a community responsibility to use the profits they make to reinvest in Canada either through capital, through job sustenance or through job creation. This has not been done by the corporations because the Liberal government has allowed it to go unattended. As a matter of fact, the government is encouraging it.

How is the government encouraging it? The corporations I have mentioned have made substantial financial contributions to the Liberal Party. They are large political contributors and what do we get in return? We get the Liberal government turning a blind eye to these very policies which are not job creation policies but job elimination policies.

The speech from the throne, which somebody has more appropriately referred to as the speech from the toilet, is exactly that. It does not seem to address the real problems of Canadians.

On Saturday we saw another disaster with respect to this government policy. On Thursday the Prime Minister in the speech from the throne challenged business to create jobs in Canada. He



*The Address*

pleaded by saying to the business community: "I challenge you to create jobs".

On Friday Conrad Black, a multibillionaire in Canada whose company Hollinger Inc. took possession of the Regina *Leader-Post*, the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and the Yorkton *Enterprise* in Saskatchewan. The next day 25 per cent of the employees of all three newspapers were laid off. According to Mr. Black as quoted from the newspaper, the reason was: "These newspapers made a profit but they didn't make enough profit".

I am challenging the government, I am challenging the Prime Minister today to define for Canadians how much profit is enough before corporations have to stop laying people off when they are making profits.

**Mr. Harvard:** What is enough?

**Mr. Solomon:** My colleague from Manitoba across the floor asks how much is enough.

There is an attitude in the corporate world and it is supported and nurtured by the Liberal government which says: "You can have as much profit as you want. We do not care as long as you keep giving us money and political contributions".

I want to mention a couple of things about Mr. Conrad Black. Toronto's establishment Upper Canada College expelled him for stealing and selling examination papers. This comes from a 1992 *Macleans*' article. I quote from the article: "Black has frequently expressed a distaste for reporters, calling them a very degenerative group with a terrible incidence of alcoholism and drug abuse, who are often ignorant, lazy, opinionated, intellectually dishonest and inadequately supervised".

• (1510)

This is Conrad Black who is now given tax breaks by the Liberal government to take over all of the daily newspapers in Saskatchewan and then lay off 25 per cent of their employees. We are going to give him a tax break because his company is going to buy a printing press in Saskatoon and who is going to subsidize this? The Liberal government policies. This is absolutely outrageous. I think Canadians are sick and tired of this, particularly those in Saskatchewan.

I also quote Thomas d'Aquino of the Business Council on National Issues: "The Prime Minister left the impression that we were not creating jobs but frankly we are a bit disturbed by that because over the last three years the private sector has created about 600,000 new jobs". The private sector may have done that but while the small and medium size businesses in the private sector have done that, the large corporations are taking all of the tax subsidies allowed by this government. They are laying off people

and the smaller businesses are starting up and creating their own jobs, many of them very low paying.

Mr. d'Aquino said as well: "We have not been asleep at the switch. We have not been creating as many new jobs as we would like, but to suggest or leave the impression with Canadians that chief executives are out there just downsizing and throwing people out on the streets without any sense that you know in fact it is going the other way, it was a mistake".

The evidence we have seen in this country in the last six months is exactly contrary to what Thomas D'Aquino of the Business Council on National Issues is saying. It is entirely the opposite to what the speech from the throne is saying in terms of creating jobs. I believe many of the Liberal backbenchers are ashamed of the throne speech because of the things that are happening with respect to the lack of commitment to the Liberal Party's jobs strategy.

New Democrats are calling for the government to implement a Canadian code of corporate citizenship. This is a very important code. It would say to the business community and to Canadian citizens that if they are making a profit that they are operating in this country, that they are committed to building their communities, to maintaining jobs in various occupations and as well, they are making a profit and will share the money through a fair taxation system and also will give their employees a decent increase from time to time.

I am absolutely opposed to the speech from the throne and I will be voting against it when it comes before this House.

**Mr. Morris Bodnar (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard in the speech by the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden about the cuts that have been made in Saskatchewan. No one is happy at all with the cuts that have been made by Hollinger.

The hon. member has not mentioned the cuts that have been made by his former colleagues, the NDP government in the province of Saskatchewan. Saskpower has cut literally hundreds and hundreds of jobs in the workforce and the government in Saskatchewan has devastated rural health care. Nothing is being mentioned of these matters.

When the federal government is creating work in Saskatchewan the NDP in Saskatchewan appears to be destroying the jobs as quickly as we can make them. Has the hon. member overlooked this particular matter of the job devastation which has occurred in Saskatchewan with the provincial government or is it simply something that has slipped his mind?

**Mr. Solomon:** As usual, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Saskatoon does not have his facts right. Saskatchewan has seen an offloading by this federal government of \$600 million over three

*The Address*

years. Six hundred million dollars amounts to \$600 for every man, woman and child in Saskatchewan. On top of that we have seen the elimination of the Crow benefit by the government opposite which amounts to another \$350 per man, woman and child per year. Almost \$1,000 per person per year is now lost out of the economy in terms of revenue sharing and equalization with respect to social programs.

The government has not done what Alberta has done or what the Liberal government opposite has done, simply hacking and slashing. What we have done is we have taken a balanced approach to the problem. The balanced approach is that they are making up some revenues in terms of trying to minimize the impact of that cut. As well, they are going through a process of attrition, early retirement and other procedures where people have some dignity in terms of what they are doing after they leave certain positions.

• (1515)

The member talks about devastating health care. This government promises in its red book and in the speech from the throne to improve health care and make it better. How can the government make it better when it is cutting \$7 billion from the health care plan without looking first at efficiencies?

For example, if the Liberal government repealed Bill C-91, the drug patent legislation, we would save the governments, the drug plans and the health care plans in this country over \$2 billion a year right off the top. That is the increased cost this bill has allowed prescription drugs to increase by as a result of the government's supporting the large pharmaceutical companies that give substantial contributions to the Liberal Party to get re-elected, which is no surprise to the member from Saskatoon.

The government allows little things like this to proceed while it costs our health care system and devastates it from another perspective. I think it should be looking at that issue very closely and addressing it.

I thank the member for his question. Now that he has the facts he will be able to go back to his riding and share them with his constituents.

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this historic throne speech debate.

This is my first foray in the House of Commons debate as minister of Canada's environment. I am proud to bear this responsibility. I am equally proud to stand before the House and reinforce this government's direction. A government stands or falls on its record. In this regard, the Liberal government stands and stands tall.

I have listened to opposition members with some degree of interest, and some of their criticism may be valid. However, taking it in total, they act a bit like grasshoppers on a Sunday morning. They fill the air with a lot of noise but all they are looking at is the one single blade of grass in front of them. If they could just get a little higher and have a wider perspective they might see the whole meadow because it is a big meadow.

The priorities before us in the throne speech are straightforward. We intend to build on our accomplishments of creating jobs and growth over the last two and a half years, provide additional security for Canadians and continue to modernize this federation to ensure national unity and national prosperity.

As the speech from the throne confirmed, the environment has a big role to play in all three of these priorities. Sometimes the Canadian environment's profile slips, hidden for a while behind media generated fog on other issues. However, I can assure hon. members that it is constantly in the public's mind and it is consistently at the very front of the public's mind.

Not many months ago a major research study indicated that the so-called elites of our country, senior mandarins, senior politicians, senior media and senior captains of industry, the opinion shapers, ranked the environment 10th on the list of 22 issues. Yet in that same study the general public, people we are accountable to, placed the environment as the second most important issue in their minds. One good reason Canadians feel so strongly and passionately about their environment is it is at the very core of Canadian identity.

Our environment is linked to national unity with bonds of Canadian granite. Our environment is part of our national imagination in the same way that black spruce is part of the forest. After all, does it not pervade our literature like a prairie wind and a call of the wild? Do we not have a maple leaf on our flag that we salute and defend? Do we not have birds and animals on our coinage? Do we not sing songs about four strong winds, about the Canadian Rockies and our Atlantic and Pacific heritage? You bet we do, and so we should.

Our natural heritage, whether it is in the Nahanni River of the Northwest Territories, the wild shores of the Labrador coast or the glaciers of our rugged Rocky Mountains, is not only part of our very being and shapes who we are, but it is also a major draw for international tourists and a major reason why immigrants come to Canada to invest, work and live.

• (1520)

Let us also not forget that our Canadian natural heritage is also important to the world. For example, 20 per cent of the world's fresh water supply is located in Canada. I might add that 18 per cent is in the Canadian Great Lakes alone.

*The Address**[Translation]*

I want to contribute to the preservation and improvement of this heritage. I am committed to it and I am proud of this commitment. We will cultivate security and fairness in our environment, thereby reinforcing our national pride.

*[English]*

As the throne speech stressed, we will speak in the national interest with a strong voice at home and abroad to protect both our environment and the health of Canadians. Because environmental security is a goal of Canadians, the House will soon debate a revitalized Canadian Environmental Protection Act, CEPA. It will change the emphasis of government from reacting to the toxins and pollution at the outflow of the pipe to preventing the pollution at the front end.

We also know this can succeed only if there is a partnership between governments and their citizens. That is why the legislation will allow citizens, not just their governments, to start action in our courts in order to clean up their environment. This legislation will not only help defend our environment and the health of our fellow citizens, but it will be an example of how this government keeps its word.

In the red book we promised to focus on preventing pollution at its source. CEPA will do this. We said that the winning industries of tomorrow will integrate environmental and economic efficiencies and CEPA will help make this a reality. We predicted that in the years ahead stricter environmental standards will be propelled by a number of international environmental, moral and market forces, and CEPA will help Canada respond to those very forces.

The House will also see an endangered species protection act. This too will be part of our environmental security thrust. This is important legislation and we need to get it right. We need to establish with the provinces a strong national framework within which endangered species may seek their legitimate protection. I have already received some important input from the committee, from environmental groups as well as industry and I anticipate hearing more before finally proceeding.

Although our watchwords are co-operation and partnership, we know that Canadians expect their national government to speak out and act on the issue of the environment which ultimately may affect their health. These are issues which do not respect political boundaries or lines drawn on a map. We intend to meet their expectations.

When we talk of partnerships we must also stress and recognize the role played by the provinces and the territories. We should never, therefore, fall into the trap of playing politics with our ecosystems.

*[Translation]*

After all, as federal and provincial ministers, we are the managers of an environmental heritage that we will pass on to future generations.

I already had discussions with my provincial counterparts and we all agree that we face an enormous task. As we know, progress has been made during the past few years, because all levels of government responded to the wishes of the people. They put the environment at the top of their priorities and they worked together as partners.

*[English]*

I am pragmatist and I will bring a pragmatic approach to working with my fellow colleagues from the provinces and territories.

• (1525 )

However, this co-operation does not mean giving away the store which is the message I get from some of my hon. friends across the aisle. It means ensuring there are no gaps in our joint pursuit of environmental protection. We intend therefore to strengthen those partnerships and those processes in order to achieve that goal.

We can point to a number of examples of how partnerships have already produced significant and successful results. Look at the work that has been done between the province of Quebec and the federal government to clean up the St. Lawrence and protect the habitat of the beluga whale.

Look at the partnership approach to the successful recovery programs for the return of the peregrine falcon to southern Canada. These magnificent birds have disappeared from southern Canada but are now raised through a federal provincial recovery project at a federal facility in Wainwright, Alberta, then released to the other provinces across the nation. Our work, together with the provinces and the territories, is really like a measured journey; we do it one step at a time.

At the same time our environmental work cannot be allowed to start and finish in our own backyard. Just as environmental security does not fit tightly and neatly into municipal and provincial boundaries, it also refuses to be defined by national borders. Consequently the environment is an integral part of our foreign policy and we will continue to show leadership abroad on such issues as climate change, biodiversity and ozone depletion. On this issue we truly are all in the same boat.

We will see unity in action when it comes to Canada's environment. There will be people working with other people. This will mean governments, communities, neighbourhoods within communities, environmental organizations and industry all working along side each other.

*The Address*

There was a classic example yesterday in my riding. The federal government through our department's action 21 program was able to support financially a group of individuals who have taken the initiative for the last number of years to restore Black Creek, a major tributary to the Humber River. The impulse, the incentive and the idea came from local residents. They were in essence ahead of their governments. That is what action 21 is about, trying to empower citizens locally in thinking locally and hopefully pushing governments to act nationally and internationally.

[*Translation*]

The throne speech also mentioned three specific areas for job creation: youth, science and technology, and trade. These three areas fit in very well with our priorities for the environment. It is reassuring to note that a growing number of industry leaders think that the fact they are being compelled to protect the environment is not a barrier to economic growth. The truth is, many of them believe that environment protection represents an opportunity for growth in the Canadian economy.

[*English*]

More work needs to be done. Every captain of industry, big, medium and small, needs to be convinced of this truism. Take a look at some of the leading industrial nations. Japan and Germany are both world leaders in energy efficiency, pollution prevention and control technologies. They have the very same environmental standards that we will be proposing in CEPA. Clearly environmental partnerships and environmental sensitivity have not held back the performance of those two countries and their respective economies.

In Canada it is true that we need jobs for Canadians and especially jobs for our youth.

• (1530)

I am a firm believer that when it comes to Canada's environment, it is not an either/or proposition. The choice is not jobs or protecting the environment. As a country we can and should have both. We can expand our economy and we can protect and promote good environmental practices at the same time.

Toward this end, the government will support the development of the Canadian environmental industry across the country. Our support is based on the recognition that this is a pivotal jobs and growth sector and provides the new technologies required to clean up the environment both at home and abroad.

Today the Canadian environmental industry sector employs more than 150,000 Canadians and generates sales of over \$11 billion. Globally the market for environmental products is exploding. It is currently estimated at \$425 billion. This market will double by the turn of the century.

One can see the niche for Canadian know-how is already in place. What we have to do is expand the niche and the playing field for Canadian firms, for Canadian technology and consequently for Canadian jobs.

That is why Environment Canada is an enthusiastic supporter of the Globe '96 conference that will be taking place later this month in Vancouver. It will truly be a showcase of our technological know-how to the world.

The greening of industry means jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow. High tech environmental industry will also provide much needed employment for Canada's youth.

The young are so often the rest of us when it comes to defending and promoting the rights of the environment. I have a 5-year old who often reminds this 40-year old about the bad practices of littering. It starts early.

Those of us who have crossed the magic line that separates our world from the energy and enthusiasm of the young should be very wary if we try to speak for the youth of Canada or that we speak on their behalf.

Quite frankly, they can and do speak for themselves powerfully. Our youth want to participate in the decisions and act on environmental issues that affect them and all of us and our country. That is one of the reasons Environment Canada will double the number of students we will hire this summer to work on environmental projects.

We have also initiated discussions with the youth corps to establish jobs with young people involved in the projects of the environment across communities. Ultimately such projects will strengthen the national fabric and prepare Canada for that exciting new century.

Canadian young people should lead, not follow. Their passion and energy can be mobilized from Canada's city scapes to our northern tundra. The government knows youth are not simply partners for tomorrow; they are tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the minister for his nice speech full of fine words which started off with great flights of poetry.

The minister used a quotation to tell us, among other things, that the Great Lakes represent 18 per cent of the world's fresh water supply. We know that there are thousands of chemicals in the Great Lakes. We know that the fish are dying, that birds that eat these fish end up with crooked beaks and crooked legs. It is polluted water, not fresh water.

• (1535)

Granted, these lakes contain 18 per cent of fresh water supplies, but it is certainly not drinking water.

*The Address*

The minister told us about the numerous bills he will table in this House. We will examine them, of course, according to their merit, as they are tabled. I would like to ask him a question, since he is making many commitments here today. I would like to ask him if he is willing to make real ones, not nice promises, but real commitments. We know about the *Irving Whale*, which has been at the bottom of the river for many years. My colleague the minister knows very well that, *qui va piano va sano e va lontano*, as the saying goes in his mother tongue.

But in that case, we are getting absolutely nowhere. Last year, \$12.5 million were spent trying to refloat it. I would like the minister to commit to pass on the \$12.5 million bill not to taxpayers, but to the Irving company. That is the issue.

[English]

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments and his question.

He is absolutely right to highlight the issue of water. I completely concur with him. It is an issue within the environmental domain that certainly goes beyond the boundaries of the environment. People feel quite strongly about the fresh water supply. Quite frankly, there may be conflicts and wars years down the road over the whole question of water supply.

In my remarks I was trying to highlight not only the Canadian issue but that when Canada contains 20 per cent of the world's fresh water supply, the lion's share in the Great Lakes, it signals a national priority we should attach to water and obviously the international repercussions as well.

He is also right that there are things in the water we wish were not there. They are causing harmful effects to fish, and increasing scientific evidence shows that obviously this has an impact on the health of Canadians and on reproduction.

That is what a reinvigorated CEPA would also do in terms of the battle against toxins. I hope we can enlist him and the support of his party on the whole question of CEPA when it comes before the House of Commons.

He also spoke about the *Irving Whale*. To be fair I think he trivialized a very complex situation. There was commitment by my predecessor a while ago to try to raise the *Irving Whale*.

There are people who will harp and ask why. It is very simple. It is well acknowledged that the problem will not go away. To think that leaving that barge at the bottom of the ocean is the solution is simply postponing the solution. It is a bit like the commercial which says: "You can either pay me now or pay me much more later". I do not want to do the latter if we care about our young and future generations.

Different people have different solutions. There are a number of individuals in the majority who suggest raising the barge. It is not an easy situation but it is the best situation. Other individuals suggest we should pump the oil from the barge to the surface, not an easy task at all.

We must recognize the complexities involved in the issue. That is why we have done a further environmental assessment, the fourth assessment in conjunction with independent counsel to galvanize the best possible solution to a problem which is obviously ticking away.

Our interests are in the best interest of the environment and the health of Canadians. The hon. member knows there has been an additional RCMP investigation into how the PCBs got into portions of the oil supply.

• (1540)

I issue a warning that we not seek to politically trivialize what is obviously a very complex situation, one in which at the end of the day the government will be seized with doing the right thing in the interests of the environment and the safety and health of Canadians.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on his new appointment and wish him well.

The minister is probably aware of an event that took place in the last two years in my riding of Wild Rose on the Stoney reserve. Several thousands of acres of forest were virtually devastated. As a result the government is being sued by the Indian reserve to the tune of \$50 million for the damages that occurred through the loss of trees, et cetera.

That whole episode is just beginning. We will reap some very sad rewards from that event. The sad part of it is the government was warned by me and other members on this side of the House that this was happening. We urged and encouraged it to get involved and do something about it before it was too late. Now it will be at least 40 years before another tree will be removed from that entire reserve.

There are literally hundreds of residents on the reserve who are wondering where all the money went for all of this. That is one problem. The other problem is the destruction of the ecosystem. There is unbelievable damage there.

If the minister has not seen it I encourage him to fly over it, like I have, and take a look. Is the minister prepared to do something about that situation? What steps will he take in the future to make certain we never face that kind of thing again?

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member from Wild Rose for his congratulatory remarks.

*The Address*

Given there is an impending lawsuit on this file it may be inappropriate to specifically talk about this one dossier. In the generic sense the hon. member is reminding us all that there needs to be a balance, that there needs to be both development and respect for one's environment. That is what the term sustainable development captures.

There are other instances now in which provincial governments are doing assessments on how we plan to manage the growth of our forests in the future. It is an issue the federal government takes seriously. It is an issue I have spoken to a number of ministers about. The hon. member stresses a point that should not be lost on any one of us.

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on his speech. I certainly appreciate tying the economy in as we recognize economic growth is dependent on acceptable environmental practices.

I wonder if the minister would enlighten the House and expand on his department plans as they relate to the Arctic.

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Waterloo for his comments. He is right about the integration of the economy and the environment. Clearly that has to be the future practice. Therein lies the challenge not only for our government but for provincial governments across the land and governments across the world.

When I was at the OECD meetings a few weeks ago one of the things we stressed is that we should share the Es in the OECD; that is to say the environment and the economy. One of the suggestions Canada put forward in a very practical way when we discussed how often ministers should meet was that perhaps we should have more infrequent meetings but have the meetings with the OECD ministers of finance and economy together with the ministers of the environment. If we did that we would move the files much more rapidly than sometimes happens with the frustrations by all governments in balancing and costing the environment into the economic equation.

The member also asks about our plan for the Arctic. As he probably knows, there are two very important conferences coming up. I believe my new parliamentary secretary will be playing an active role in both.

• (1545)

One conference will be of parliamentarians from around the world. I will be attending, as well as the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the second conference dealing with the setting up of an Arctic council. The environment is in the forefront of those concerns because development elsewhere is having a detrimental effect on the environment of the Arctic which should be kept as a polished jewel.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** I will now recognize the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm. My colleague, am I to understand that you will be sharing your time with the hon. member for Drummond?

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Drummond.

Ever since my constituents from Berthier—Montcalm have asked me to represent and speak for them in the House, I have witnessed all kinds of manoeuvring on the part of the government.

Each time I have spoken in the House, it was solely to defend the real interests of Quebecers in my riding.

The throne speech, and all that goes with it, is an illustration of the government's political manoeuvring that I have witnessed and about which I cannot keep silent.

It is always important for a government to take a clear position on political issues, and to state its agenda as honestly as possible, so that taxpayers have a good understanding of their government's vision. As far as the recent throne speech is concerned, taxpayers will have to wait to get a clear understanding of the government's vision, because it does not seem to have any.

Indeed, the throne speech not only leaves us in the dark, but it is nothing more than a bunch of empty promises; it is confusing and clearly lacking in substance.

One wonders why a throne speech was delivered. Those familiar with the parliamentary system will say that a throne speech was delivered because the session had been prorogued. Still, it is not clear.

Granted, the session has been prorogued, but the government, making the word prorogation meaningless, presented a motion to reinstate the bills just as they were before prorogation.

So, there was a prorogation, minus the legal implications of such a decision. Now, we have a speech from the throne that looks a lot more like an excerpt from the *Petit catéchisme* than a true speech from the throne, in which a government clearly states where it is headed. This throne speech lacks imagination to say the least.

Its vagueness is disconcerting. Yet, this government has been in office for over 28 months. Consequently, people had every right to expect more than wishful thinking. They wanted concrete commitments.

People wanted to know how the government was going to make our taxation system more fair. They wanted to hear about effective assistance programs for our defence industry conversion. They wanted to hear about eliminating overlap and waste. Above all,

*The Address*

they wanted to hear the government talk about a realistic and detailed plan to revitalize the economy and promote job creation.

Upon reading the speech from the throne, we can only conclude that the Liberal government did not understand what people wanted to hear. According to the very words used in the speech from the throne, the government will work, challenge, support, ensure. But, after two years in office, it is no longer time to ensure, work, challenge or support: it is time to act.

In the first two thirds of its speech from the throne, the government tells us a lot more about its mood than about anything else. Even staunch federalists, such as the Conseil du patronat, had no choice but to criticize the government for, among other things, its tendency to keep throwing the ball back in the court of the private sector when it comes to job creation.

However, as a Quebec member of Parliament, I was particularly surprised at the federal government's intention to remain involved in all major activity sectors, including those that come under provincial jurisdiction.

Upon reading the speech from the throne, it is obvious that Ottawa crowns itself as the great guardian of Canadian values and the protector of citizens against their own turpitude and that of their provincial government.

• (1550)

It has appropriated for itself the mandate of being the protector of the social union. Whatever our political opinion about the future of Quebec, it seems to me that in the last referendum, hundreds of thousands of Quebecers, including people who voted against sovereignty, were of a different opinion. By acting in this manner, the government has shown clearly that it did not understand a thing about the claims of Quebecers.

I will give you a few examples. In the speech from the throne, it is said that the government will not use its spending power to create new shared cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the consent of a majority of the provinces. Any new program will be designed so that non-participating provinces will be compensated, provided they establish equivalent or comparable initiatives.

This approach is totally unacceptable for Quebec, for several reasons. First, the government has not indicated that it intends to withdraw entirely from areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, as has been requested for many years by the Quebec government. On the contrary, the federal government is confirming its right to interfere, albeit within a certain limit, which is that a majority of the provinces will have to agree to the establishment of new programs under certain conditions.

The provinces that do not agree to take part in the federal program will be entitled to financial compensation only if they establish an equivalent or comparable program. This is clearly a backhanded way for the federal government to keep control of programs and have its views and national standards prevail. Moreover, we simply do not know whether or not provinces that opt out will be fully compensated. The only purpose of this tactic is to isolate Quebec once more.

Further down in the throne speech, we read that the government will transfer to community based groups, municipal authorities and the private sector the management of the transportation infrastructure. Where do the provinces fit in that scheme? It is obvious the federal government is bypassing provincial legislatures in order to keep its control over community based groups, municipal authorities or private companies to whom it will transfer powers that were never its own in the first place.

The throne speech also says that the government is willing to withdraw from such areas as manpower training, forestry, mining, and recreation. The federal government says provincial governments, local authorities or the private sector will take on these responsibilities. It takes some gall to mention in the throne speech that the federal government is willing and ready to withdraw from areas under exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

The government had already announced its intention of withdrawing from manpower training. This devolution was supposed to come quickly. But the new minister in charge has qualified that promise by suggesting it might take up to three years. It is still the old song and dance routine of the federal government.

But that was still not enough. The federal government had to be more arrogant towards Quebec. So, it will propose to the provinces a partnership in areas under provincial jurisdiction. It does not have to propose any partnership. It only has to withdraw from and stop interfering in areas where it does not belong. It is clear. It is easy. That is the message sent by the referendum held in Quebec last October. Also, a partnership means that the parties involved pool powers they actually have, and not that areas of jurisdiction are taken over and managed by the party with the greater spending power. That is surely not the changes the 50.4 per cent of Quebecers who voted No last October 30 were expecting from the federal government.

If the government had gotten the message, it would have stated in the throne speech that it was immediately withdrawing from every area of provincial jurisdiction.

Lastly, I have one more example of how the government has learned nothing from the latest referendum in Quebec. When the hon. Pettigrew and Dion and the Minister of Indian Affairs threaten Quebecers with a plan B, where the government would play hard

*The Address*

ball with Quebecers, they are really on the wrong track because Quebecers, who are on their way to sovereignty, will never bow to the threats made by these ministers.

• (1555)

What we want right now is for the federal government to at least abide by the Constitution it claims to protect and to withdraw from all areas where the provinces, including Quebec, have exclusive jurisdiction.

**Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will add a few words to the remarks made by the member for Berthier—Montcalm about exclusive jurisdiction. When I read the speech from the throne, it made me laugh.

The federal government says that it: “—will not use its spending power to create new shared-cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction—” that is what my colleague mentioned a few moments ago. “—without the consent of a majority of the provinces.”

There is something wrong here. The people who wrote that did not know what they were talking about. It also says:

Any new program will be designed so that non-participating provinces will be compensated, provided they establish equivalent or comparable initiatives.

I looked it up in the Petit Robert and Petit Larousse dictionaries, and I found that “exclusive jurisdiction” excludes any sharing or participation, that it refers to a single person or group of persons or of things.

That means that if the Canadian government recognizes that a province has exclusive jurisdiction over an area, it is supposed to have complete control over it. It is just as if somebody told me: “I recognize this is your backyard. I know it is in your backyard. It is exclusively yours, you paid for it, it is yours. However, if the neighbours so wish, we will dig a pool in your backyard, and you will not have any choice. We will install a pool in it. Also, if you wish to do it on your own, you may not do so; we will help you dig your pool. But if you decide to share your pool with your neighbours, it will have to have a certain depth and a certain size”.

It is very contradictory. I do not understand the speech from the throne when it speaks of exclusivity, and I appreciate what my colleague is trying to say when he speaks of exclusivity. It is incomprehensible. There is something wrong in the speech. The person who wrote it did not know what was meant by exclusivity.

In any case, there is a lot of hypocrisy in the government’s approach towards the provinces. We must reread that. I wish my colleague could explain further what he really understands in this paragraph which I have just read. I find it incomprehensible.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Longueuil, for allowing me to clarify my

thought. I will use an example I saw in the newspapers the morning after the speech from the throne. Here is how a paper that will remain nameless, *Le Devoir*, interpreted that paragraph. The author used education as an example of exclusive jurisdiction.

The situation can lead to misunderstandings. If a majority of provinces, six provinces for example, decided that the federal government could administer a national program in education, Quebec could protest all it wants, it would have to establish an equivalent program meeting the national standards imposed by Ottawa to get part of the funds under that program, to get back part of the taxes that Quebecers pay to the federal government. For us, Quebecers, that would be unacceptable. If there is one area that is vital for Quebec, it is education.

According to what the speech from the throne says about exclusive jurisdictions, the federal government could interfere in an area like education and that is truly unacceptable for Quebec.

• (1600)

The federal government has no right putting its nose in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. It should stay clear of such exclusive jurisdictions. That is totally unacceptable for us, in Quebec.

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to make a few comments following the speech by my colleague from the Bloc Québécois, having heard and read carefully the speech from the throne presented by the Governor General in the Senate and having heard what various ministers have said over the last few days. A while ago, we heard the Minister of the Environment talk about job creation and reaffirm red book promises. I do not know whether the minister has looked at his government’s performance over the last two years, but it is imperative that the government, which was elected to create jobs, start doing so without further delay.

The current government has done exactly the opposite after taking office by laying off 35,000 employees, in the public service alone. Believe it or not, these 35,000 jobs that were cut were in the area of services to the public. Let me just mention, among other things, that a number of employment centres were closed and that a number of air traffic controllers were laid off.

You can be sure that, by cutting jobs, especially in the public service, not only does the government not save any money for the Canadian taxpayer, but it increases its deficit. Contracting out to the private sector by the federal government amounted to \$11 billion in 1995, compared to \$1.4 billion in 1984.

By closing the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean, the government has caused the number of unemployed workers to increase. As for the closure and the privatization of federal infrastructures, we see more and more of that in the House.



*The Address*

I also heard the Minister of the Environment talk about duplication, an issue that we also talk about regularly. My colleague just said that the government should get out of areas under provincial jurisdiction.

I am concerned about duplication in environmental matters. Will we have a situation where the federal government manages water quality while the provincial government manages fish stocks? I am afraid that, if it comes to that, the fish in Quebec will be swimming on their backs in a few years.

Will the federal government manage air quality while we manage the birds? I am afraid our birds will start flying backwards because of the pollution.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he sees in the speech from the throne, between the wishes of the government and reality, some hope of a promising future for workers and for the unemployed, for our youth and our seniors.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He mentioned some very fundamental truths in the whole issue at stake in light of the speech from the throne.

To answer only the member's last question, there is absolutely nothing in the speech from the throne which would give us a bit of hope as to job creation. It is extremely disappointing because, only a few days before the speech from the throne, the Minister of Human Resources Development had said that the federal government had failed regarding job creation and that something had to be done.

A minister from his riding, in the maritimes, said: "Look, the federal government failed in matters of job creation, and something has to be done". I was expecting specific measures in the speech from the throne to boost economy and employment. All the government has to say is that there will be job cuts in the public service. It has obviously failed in this regard.

• (1605)

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in this House to comment on this government's second speech from the throne that was delivered in the House last week.

In having this speech delivered, the Prime Minister's did something rather unusual that clearly reflects the disarray of the Liberal government. This speech comes at a very particular time, that is, a few months after the victory of the no side, which will be short-lived. After the October 30th referendum, English Canada suddenly realized the scope of the changes demanded by Quebecers. That realization has given rise to two completely opposite trends among Canadians from the rest of the country and their leaders.

On one side, there are those who favoured reflection and careful analysis, which is normal after such an event. These people have already begun to consider what will happen after Quebec achieves sovereignty and are now trying to define a new Canada with a new partner: Quebec.

On the other side, there is the federal government, which is gripped by panic. It is sad to see that the members of cabinet, who claim to be able to lead the country, are the ones most reluctant to act responsibly. Instead of taking note of the referendum results and drawing the necessary conclusions rather than the ones they would like to impose, they reacted in an immature and inconsistent fashion.

The speech that was delivered last Tuesday has three themes: the economy, social security for Canadians and national unity.

First, let us deal with what the speech has to say about the economy. The speech announces with fanfare that the government will do everything possible in order to help young people find jobs. It contains a proposal to double the number of summer jobs for students in the federal public service. The irony is that at the very same moment the government is laying off 45,000 public servants.

And yet, this government has committed already to help young people. That was supposed to be done through better support for research and education. The fact is, however, that the Canada social transfer will be cut by seven billion dollars over two years. Universities are being forced to cut research, tuition fees will increase, which will have an adverse effect on access to university for young people. On the one hand, they are singing the virtues of a strong economy for the future, and on the other they are jeopardizing that future by loading university graduates down with debt. What a difference between words and actions.

To boost the economy, the government committed to eliminating the GST and replacing it with another tax that dovetailed more smoothly with the provincial tax. The Bloc Quebecois had suggested that it be scrapped entirely and this area of taxation be transferred to the provinces. We are still awaiting action from the government, and we hear not a word about the GST.

The same applies to sound public finances. The government made a commitment to make better use of the taxpayers' money in order to control its deficit. In reality, far from tightening up its administration, the federal government is laying its hands on the workers' money by appropriating the unemployment fund surplus, although it has not contributed to that fund for some years now. Once again they will dump on someone else, praising themselves to the Canadian public by saying: "See what a good government we are. We have cut the deficit by five billion dollars". What they have done is dip into the unemployment insurance fund, to which they no longer contribute. It is the taxpayers, both workers and employers, who are helping reduce the deficit from their own

*The Address*

pockets, whereas those funds ought to have been used to really provide us with job creation measures as promised in the last red book.

• (1610)

The Liberal government got itself elected with its slogan of “jobs, jobs, jobs”. So where are those jobs? Now, instead of giving us jobs, they are taking away money, five billion dollars from the most needy in our society. Instead of using it to help them find jobs and create measures for that purpose, they are putting it toward the deficit. They are dumping the problem onto the provinces and the poor. That is what is so offensive. Unfortunately, once again, there is a wide gap between words and action.

Now, to address the notion of social security contained in the throne speech. The government has tried in vain to disguise the fact that it has been engaged in dismantling the social security safety net for the past two years, particularly in the areas of health and unemployment insurance. I can tell you something about health, because it is part of my responsibility.

A few months ago, the Minister of Human Resources Development tabled a reform proposal entitled employment insurance. It seems to me that we take out insurance to help us, in the event a disaster or a mishap, to rebuild or start afresh. Here we are talking about employment insurance. What is employment insurance. It amounts to taking \$5 billion from taxpayers and putting it towards the \$600 billion deficit.

Taxpayers are not being provided with jobs, they are having their money taken away from them. No one is creating jobs for them, they are being driven to welfare. When they are no longer getting social assistance or anything at all, where can they go knocking? They will go and get welfare. They have to eat. They get no help finding jobs. You know, it costs money to look for a job too. How are we going to help them find a job when we take their last nickel?

This proposal has elicited a lot of criticism and led to many demonstrations. I do not understand. We in the Bloc see people every week, who come to tell us that the reform makes no sense. I imagine the Liberal members must have the same sort of reaction in their ridings.

We should join together and tell the new Minister of Human Resources Development that it makes no sense, that we have to go back to the drawing board. Nobody wants anything to do with this reform; it penalizes everyone. It even puts women back 40 years. Something must be done. The people are protesting against this regressive anti-job reform that will create poverty.

Allow me to quote a short excerpt from page 80 of the red book, which deals with health care reform: “A comprehensive re-examination of Canada’s health care spending is required. Without doubt, part of the immediate pressure on the program has arisen

from the decision of the Conservative government to steadily withdraw from health care funding, thus passing costs onto the provinces. Economic conditions may change, but the health care requirements of Canadians will continue. It is essential to provide financial certainty and predictability for our health care planning”.

What nice promises. Those who claimed they wanted to revamp medicare are now launching a full-scale attack against the health care system as a whole. The Canada social transfer will lead to additional cuts in the order of \$4.5 billion over two years in the health care sector alone. In Quebec, the shortfall will amount to more than \$650 million this year and almost \$2 billion in 1997-98.

Is this what this government calls providing financial certainty and predictability for our health care planning? In the recent throne speech, the government claims to be open to new methods and directions in order to preserve national values. In this case, it is high time the federal government considered transferring total health care funding to Quebec and the provinces. This would eliminate duplication and considerably reduce the size of the bureaucracy.

• (1615)

The health department employs 8,000 people and spends more than \$1 billion every year on bureaucratic organization and administration of all sorts.

If the entire health budget were transferred to Quebec and the provinces, decisions could be made closer to the people and implemented so as to meet their needs. In the end, the health of Canadians and Quebecers would benefit.

Concerning national unity and what was said on the subject in the speech from the throne, you must admit that it is not normal for a country 130 years old, a country that boasts about being the best in the world, to have to put the national unity issue on its priority list, along with the economy and social security. Yet, this is what this country has been doing for many years.

To conclude, I would like to say that we in the Bloc Québécois have this to say to the Liberal Party: The right of Quebecers to decide on their future is not debatable, period.

**Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Drummond for her excellent speech. She discussed, of course, the speech from the throne, and she showed very clearly how we, Quebecers, and particularly Bloc Québécois members, perceive this speech.

First, this speech from the throne is strictly for show. The government wants to give the impression that it seeks to make changes. It wants to impress Quebecers in particular by telling them that it will make great changes and share the management and the responsibility for certain areas.

*The Address*

Usually, a speech from the throne includes a new direction. In fact, that is the reason for such a speech. It is to set everything aside and get a fresh start. It is a new impetus, a new vision, a new way of doing things proposed by the government to revitalize the economy, stimulate employment and implement major initiatives. However, that is not the case here.

The day after the governor general delivered this nice speech from the throne in the Senate, the government tabled the same old obsolete bills that did not work in the first place.

This is pure hypocrisy, as we say in Quebec. When someone does not tell the truth, we say that person is a hypocrite. The speech from the throne misleads people because the government is bringing back the same old legislation.

My colleague also talked about unemployment insurance. We are told that, this year, the UI fund will get \$5 billion more from workers and employers. Once again, the Canadian government finds a way to tax people even more, that is the workers and the employers.

In Quebec, for years now, both the Conseil du patronat and labour have been saying: "If we are the only ones to pay into the unemployment insurance system, why can we not manage it?" Why could employers and employees not manage the unemployment insurance fund? Why not, indeed? Why has the government not withdrawn from this area instead of cheating the people once again, using unemployment insurance as an excuse to put its hand on more money, as a new way of collecting taxes? This is outrageous.

It is the same thing with health care. My colleague mentioned health care. Of course, when the health care system was put in place, in the 1970s, the federal government had to interfere, saying: "I want to get involved". The provinces refused. The government persisted, in spite of the provinces' reluctance. Finally, the provinces told the government: "If you want to get involved, you will have to pay your share". The federal government decided to pay 50 per cent of the bill. Today, it only pays 28 per cent, and Quebec pays over 70 per cent.

The federal government keeps on telling us that it will decide how health care will be managed. Once again, this is unfair, this is unjust.

• (1620)

If the federal government had respected the Constitution, we would not be faced with the problems we have today. But the federal government keeps on encroaching; it does not respect the Canadian Constitution. This is why the Bloc Québécois is here. This is why Quebecers elected over 50 sovereignist members to this House, because the federal government has never respected the Constitution.

It is always the same hypocrisy, as can be found in the throne speech, especially with regard to exclusive jurisdiction, which my colleague mentioned earlier. It is bad to speak about exclusivity but, at the same time, nobody really has any exclusivity because the federal government says it will deal with it, it will decide, it will set standards and if we do not respect those standards, it will not give us money. The great master, the boss of this country is the federal government.

This is not what we created. Two equal states, two equal peoples created a country at a point in time. Now we have to obey this great master who takes the liberty of writing in a throne speech a paragraph like this one:

The Government will not use its spending power to create new shared-cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the consent of a majority of the provinces.

What a contradiction! Who do they think they are anyway? Furthermore, the government adds:

Any new program will be designed so that non-participating provinces will be compensated, provided they establish equivalent or comparable initiatives.

My colleague, the member for Drummond, talked at length about that in her speech and since she is the health critic, I would like her to explain the meaning of that paragraph as far as health is concerned.

**Mrs. Picard:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Longueuil for his comments. I totally agree with what he just said.

First of all, I prepared a list of all the commitments from the first throne speech which have been reheated, as we say, and reintroduced in the new throne speech, to make us believe that they are new commitments. This is a replay of the first speech. These are promises which were made and not kept.

The government promised to improve integrity, appoint an ethics counsellor, introduce a bill on lobbyists and institute free votes.

The ethics counsellor is normally appointed by the Prime Minister, not the House. His or her advice is secret and nothing guarantees that the government will take it into account.

The bill on lobbyists which was passed, was a very watered down version of Liberal promises.

As to free votes, there have not been any. There have even been sanctions against those who stepped out of line, as we have seen when the firearm control bill was put to a vote.

Then we were promised support for education and research. Instead we had cuts in established programs financing and in transfers for education. As I told you a while ago, the result is that universities must cut, including in the area of research support.

*The Address*

The social security system was to be reformed in close co-operation with the provinces; this was another promise. What we had was the Canada social transfer and a \$7 billion cut over two years in the areas of health, education and social security, without any consultation with the provinces.

The replacement of the GST is something we are still waiting for.

We were promised that health would be protected. A national forum on health was put into place. We had been told: "in co-operation with the provinces". We ended up with a \$4.5 billion cut over two years under the new Canada social transfer, and the national health forum was criticized by all the provinces. It is still going around somewhere and no one knows what it is doing and what results it will produce. At the present time, all the provinces have taken steps on their own to make their own health reform, because health management is a provincial jurisdiction. So what is the federal government doing with a national health forum?

• (1625)

I have nothing against the people who sit on that forum. They are certainly qualified people, but what has it got to do with the provinces? It is our reform. Health ministers in each province are taking care of our needs. The federal government is spending billions of dollars on window dressing. It says it is taking care of the health system.

I would like to tell people who are watching us, Quebecers and Canadians alike: Please do not let yourselves be fooled by big programs, big forums like the one on health care.

[*English*]

**Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne has carefully set out a number of important themes with respect to the unity of Canada, the development of Canada's economy and the development of Canadian society. These themes respond to the hopes and aspirations of all Canadians.

One of the themes made very clear in the throne speech is the need to understand that we in rural Canada face particular challenges that our urban neighbours often do not.

As we in rural Canada, in rural Ontario and in rural Parry Sound—Muskoka work to increase and expand our economic activity, our problems include such things as geography, transportation and low population density. Our challenges include the delivery of government services and the acquisition of modern and sophisticated communications infrastructure. These can be handicaps on existing or potential business enterprises. Solutions to these problems and answers to these challenges will provide many opportunities for businesses and communities in rural Canada.

An important distinction is found in the type of economies that exist in the rural parts of our country. Our rural economies are largely based on primary industries and depend on natural resources. Pursuing activities in agriculture, fisheries, mining, trapping or forestry can generate very different problems from those faced in an auto plant, a high tech manufacturing facility or the financial offices of Bay Street.

Fluctuating commodity prices, stifling regulatory regimes and the seasonality of employment are all economic realities faced by the men and women working in rural Canada.

There are important and often overlooked differences in rural Canada. We have defining cultural traits. We honour tradition at the same time as we look forward to and embrace the future. We turn toward our families and extended families for the type of support that today others expect and indeed require from the state. We understand the land and the sea and the importance of its riches. We have a long tradition of harvesting its abundance.

For recreation we also turn to those same places where many rural Canadians find their employment. Together with visitors from urban Canada and from abroad, we enjoy the natural amenities of rural and wilderness Canada in cottage country where hunting, fishing and a wide variety of other recreational activities can be pursued.

Work, family and the enjoyment of our natural world are basic to rural life and perpetuate very important values. These values in pursuits unite us a nation. Our unique lifestyle in rural Canada is as relevant to the farmer in Quebec as it is to the farmer on the prairie. It is relevant to the miner of Nova Scotia who understands the miner of northern Ontario. The fishermen of Newfoundland are closely akin to the fishermen of British Columbia.

In the throne speech the government made it very clear that it understands and recognizes both the importance of rural Canada and the unique nature of its challenges. I applaud the statement in the throne speech committing the government to the economic renewal of rural Canada. I am particularly pleased that this will be done in a way tailored to our specific needs and our specific challenges.

The task ahead is to provide the framework within which this commitment can unfold and to provide the specific measures that will lead to economic renewal in all parts of Canada.

• (1630)

It is important that rural Canada have a strong voice in government which I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, it does on this side of the House. It is important that voices resonate with our rural perspective and that these voices find expression at the cabinet table. I am confident that there are many capable men and women in the current ministry who can articulate the issues of rural Canada as we

work to implement our renewed interest in the well-being of rural Canadians.

As the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka I look forward to working with my colleagues in cabinet to help implement the government's renewed commitment to bettering the lives of rural Canadians.

We in rural Canada know we need to diversify our economies and to increase our education levels and skills. We know we must do this through community based actions in concert with the private sector and government.

While natural resources will always be an important sector we must value add to them to increase the returns to us in the marketplace. We must embrace the positive changes that are taking place in the world. We in rural Canada will be innovative but we will look to the government to develop a process that will encourage our potential.

The government has begun this process. Since 1993 federal departments have worked more co-operatively to improve the delivery of programs in rural Canada. Last year we established the adaptation and rural development fund which will provide \$60 million per year to help rural Canada adjust to new economic realities.

Beyond this it is appropriate that the various regional development agencies which operate across Canada mandate a specific portion of their financial resources to rural Canada. I also urge that the \$300 million fund that is being proposed under changes to employment insurance be used in rural Canada to provide the services and infrastructure necessary for long term economic development.

As I mentioned earlier in my speech, rural Canada suffers from a relative lack of technological communications infrastructure, considering the distances and lower population densities that exist. This deficiency sometimes puts our educational institutions and business people at a competitive disadvantage. Parents in rural and remote Canada also want access to good communication services for the safety, education and entertainment of their children.

I compliment the Minister of Industry on the school net program which is connecting many of the schools in my riding and across rural Canada with the Internet. I am also pleased to see the implementation of the community access program which will provide links to the community access network for up to 1,000 rural and remote communities, allowing them to market themselves and their products.

The government at the end of the first session of this Parliament announced the reform of the unemployment insurance system. This is an important and positive initiative. It must however recognize the economic realities of a rural economy dependent on natural

### *The Address*

resources to generate employment. Many of our jobs are seasonal because of climate and natural cycles. People work part time not because they want to but because they have to.

Reforms are necessary and reduction of costs are necessary, but reforms and reductions cannot be achieved solely on the backs of rural Canadians who work or invest in seasonal industries. I am pleased to see that we are addressing that question in our approach to the needs of rural Canada.

Another important component of revitalizing the economy is access to capital. The government has moved diligently in this area. The Federal Business Development Bank, now the Business Development Bank of Canada, has a new mandate as a complementary lender and has had its debt ceiling raised to \$12 billion.

The community futures program is being revitalized and has new funds attributed to it so it also can help rural Canadians.

Today I call on Canadian financial institutions, which oftentimes tell us that it is too risky to lend in rural Canada, to use a portion of their \$5 billion profit to find innovative ways to lend in rural Canada.

Canada began as a rural country and we have grown to become a world leader, a cosmopolitan people, an industrialized state, a highly urbanized nation. I am proud of all this. However we must remember our roots. We must remember the millions of Canadians who live and work in rural and small town Canada. We must remember the basic wealth generated by natural resources. We must remember the unique potential that is our rural Canada.

• (1635)

The government will not forget the contribution of rural Canadians. Rather, we are working to help rural Canadians make their contributions to strengthening the economic and social structure of Canada which will be the foundation of the national unity we are all working to achieve.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was afraid you might have forgotten me, but I can see you had not.

I would like you to know that it is nice to have you back. I wish to thank my hon. colleague for his speech, in which I could feel how truly committed he is to his riding. It was clear to me that the hon. member had very deep roots in the community that he represents here, in the House of Commons.

However, I would like to share my thoughts with him concerning two or three statements he made. The hon. member referred to the lack of advanced technology in his community, and I can easily imagine that high technology industries could be rather scarce in a rural area. This is an issue of great interest to me, and I would like

*The Address*

to ask the hon. member what concrete steps were taken by the government, in his opinion, in support of science and technology?

I am putting the question to him while bearing in mind that consultations were held at both the regional and the national level, and that the government had promised to table a white paper on science and technology. We are in the somewhat paradoxical situation where ministers keep telling us: "Canada is a developed country. Canada is a country of plentiful resources. Canada is rich with brainpower". But when you take a look at government reports—and I will close on this, because I can detect a trace of impatience in you, which is not in your true nature—and consult the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology, you learn that Canada ranks second to last in terms of public and private support for research and development.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I regret having to interrupt, but other members also want to ask questions. The hon. member will now answer your question.

[English]

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. The point I was making about rural Canada is that the technological infrastructure, the ability to access the information highway, which is taken for granted in urban Canada as just being there, is often not available to rural Canada. When trying to attract business people and businesses to our area, one of the handicaps and competitive disadvantages often faced is lack of access to the Internet and high technology types of facilities.

I am pleased that the Minister of Industry has recognized this need. We are starting to see some very concrete programs such as the community access program and the school net program. These are important initiatives being undertaken by the Minister of Industry. They are making an impact in my riding and in other rural areas of the country. Obviously the minister intends to do more and I support this. I look forward to his initiatives in the weeks and months to come.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I regret, but members will each have their turn. The hon. member for Okanagan Center, briefly please.

[English]

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment the hon. member on his remarks. He did a good job as he usually does on the industry committee. I was very interested to hear him.

I would like to address a question concerning three programs through which government moneys are distributed: the Business Development Bank of Canada, the community futures program and the regional development programs.

Would the hon. member please comment on the following. Is it not somewhat confusing to rural people to have so many different ways of looking at these things? Could these things be co-ordinated? What is his opinion about doing some of this in a more co-ordinated fashion instead of having one bureaucracy that deals with community futures, another that deals with the Business Development Bank of Canada and a third one that deals with regional development corporations which often become very little more than a political patronage type of agency?

• (1640)

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, the member has made a very good point. It is absolutely essential that there be a one stop delivery component or window for small business, not only in rural Canada but in urban Canada.

That is why the Minister of Industry has begun a pilot project called the Canada-Ontario Business Centre which will do just that. It will allow business people to go to one location to see all the various products the government and the private sector offers to assist them with their businesses. It is essential that there be one place to go rather than spending time shopping around. The minister recognized that need and he is working toward it.

To my colleague in the Bloc, I look forward to working with him in the coming weeks and months to see that the program is rolled out across Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to give our colleague one minute?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time allotted has expired. Is there unanimous consent to give one minute to the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask the hon. member to be very brief.

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am anxious to put a question to the hon. member because I very seldom hear anything about rural communities in this House, particularly from that side.

The Eastern Quebec Development Bureau, as well as the operations Dignity, got started in our region 25 years ago. At the time, we worked very hard with people from various organizations. These were real people in that they took charge of their destiny. Twenty-five years later, I can see that the rural community is still in serious trouble.

*The Address*

Governments do not really seek to help us. I could talk about that for a long time. For example, we want to build a small slaughterhouse because we have to travel 100 kilometres to have our cattle slaughtered; we cannot do it locally, because federal standards force us to go elsewhere.

The Eastern Quebec Development Plan was abolished last year. That plan provided direct support to silviculture workers and helped land owners to get into forest management.

We also had, as everyone else in Canada, infrastructures. I want to put a question to the hon. member. In rural communities, what purpose did the infrastructure program serve, other than building sewers, sidewalks and roads? Such activities provide temporary employment, but they never create permanent jobs.

[English]

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, that reminds me of a question that was asked in the first debate on the throne speech about the infrastructure program.

It is not simply about the short term jobs that may be created by building a new sewer or road. What we need and what we lack in some places in rural Canada is infrastructure. When this program builds a new road or sewer system and unserviced lots are now serviced, the ability to attract business and economic activity and to create jobs is enhanced for the long term.

I think the program worked well in rural Canada. It delivered what it was supposed to deliver and it will lead to long term jobs. It is doing that right now.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to permit another question?

**An hon. member:** No.

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to support the speech from the throne which is the government's formal statement with respect to its plans for the new session of Parliament which started on February 27.

In this speech from the throne the government is setting out its directions, its policies, its skeleton legislation for the second session of the 35th Parliament.

While the speech from the throne is set out in general terms, as is the case with most speeches from the throne, in my view the general directions are good. There seems to be a return to what I would describe as traditional Liberal positions.

• (1645)

There are three main themes in the speech from the throne. The first is economic growth and jobs. The expressions of intent by the

government are first class and praiseworthy especially with respect to young Canadians.

The second theme is security, security for those who will retire through their pensions, security for those who are sick through our national health care system, and security for the unemployed through an unemployment insurance system. There are also proposals with respect to security for our environment, security against crime and security in the international arena where we have had so much conflict in recent years.

The third theme in the speech from the throne is with respect to national unity. I will say more about this in a few minutes.

The details from the speech from the throne are fleshed out in due course following the speech. They are fleshed out in the government's actual legislation and in statements by ministers of the government. We will all be looking very closely at the government's legislative bills to ensure these bills remain true to the statements in the speech from the throne and also remain true to our election promises in the Liberal red book.

I still remain concerned with the high level of unemployment in the country. I remain concerned with the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. I remain concerned with the development of the Canada health and social transfer and with respect to the proposals for pension reform which we expect to receive very soon.

With respect to the unemployment insurance amendments which were tabled near the end of the last session, there were some good provisions in Bill C-111 but others in my view were unfair and draconian. It is unacceptable that we should consider cutting the benefits of those at the low end of the benefit scale.

At the low end of the scale one receives approximately \$500 a month. This is hardly enough to live on, hardly enough to pay one's rent, to buy one's food and the other basic needs of life. Consequently I cannot accept that we should lower these low end benefits. By doing so all we really do is shift those individuals on to the welfare rolls of the province and they end up being paid for by the very same taxpayers but in a more demeaning and difficult way.

I am anxiously awaiting the changes to the UI bill which will be introduced by the new minister. He said when he was sworn in that he had in mind making certain changes. We also expect that some changes will be made to the bill following the public hearings in a parliamentary committee.

I have only 10 minutes and cannot deal with all the subjects I would like to discuss in that time. As a Montrealer I want to spend some time on the national unity issue. The federalists, the no side, won the referendum in October. However, the margin was so thin that we have been left with a serious state of uncertainty which has

*The Address*

caused extreme harm to the national economy, especially in Montreal, but also to the whole province of Quebec.

I am pleased with the initiatives the government is taking to promote national unity and to deter another divisive and harmful referendum. First, I give my full support to the so-called plan A. It involves programs to inform Canadians about the benefits of Confederation, to promote Canadian achievements, to improve the operation of Confederation and to make it more effective for ordinary Canadians in all parts of the country.

• (1650)

We must demonstrate to Canadians in Quebec and elsewhere in this country that our two official languages, French and English, are a great asset and not a burden. Unlike many other countries Canada can do business in English and French: diplomacy, research, literature, theatre, films, television, music in English and French. These are outstanding assets which we should promote and use to our benefit. In no way should the asset of our bilingual policy be attacked and diminished. We have to convince Canadians of that.

I was also pleased with the statement in the speech from the throne that the government will promote exchanges in Canada so that Canadians, especially young Canadians, can get to know their country better and get to know other Canadians better. Prejudice builds and is fostered in a situation where we do not really know each other, do not talk to each other and do not really know each other's homes. I would fully support those initiatives referred to in the speech from the throne.

The government's emphasis and my emphasis is on this plan A approach. Our priority and preference is to make Confederation work better, to sell the benefits of Confederation and to see that Canadians know what is involved in the Confederation agreement.

The government has also mentioned what might be called plan B. I refer to a few lines in the speech from the throne:

But as long as the prospect of another Quebec referendum exists, the Government will exercise its responsibility to ensure that the debate is conducted with all the facts on the table, that the rules of the process are fair, that the consequences are clear.

Such an approach is necessary because until now the agenda on these matters has been principally controlled by the PQ Government of Quebec. That government decided when it would have referendums. It decided how often it would have referendums, what the question would be and what the process would be. These decisions affect not only the province of Quebec but the unity and the continued existence of one of the greatest and longest lasting democracies in the world. This is unacceptable.

It is essential that some reality be injected into this discussion. It is appropriate that this be done by the federal government, which

must ensure that whatever is done is done in accordance with well established principles of democracy and law. The rule of law must prevail. In this respect the federal government must make absolutely clear that constitutional referendums, such as we have had recently in Quebec and in Newfoundland, have no binding consequences either legally or constitutionally. At the very best such referendums are only advisory and a possible basis for negotiation.

Referendums give no right to unilateral declarations for any kind of constitutional change, let alone to a unilateral declaration of independence. Of course a strong yes vote in a referendum would have political consequences, not legal consequences. It would provide a certain impetus for negotiation, but that is all.

Furthermore, the federal government should make clear that referendum results will not even be the basis for negotiation unless certain conditions are fulfilled. I suggest the following: first, the question must be clear, direct and unambiguous; second, the referendum and voting process must be fair and equitable; third, the majority required to proceed to negotiation, the next step, must be substantial, not marginal.

• (1655)

In other words, we should have a majority that is at least equivalent to the majority required for constitutional amendment. No country in the world allows constitutional amendments by the simple legislative process.

We must affirm in our policy that Canada is a federal state which has been internationally recognized and has successfully functioned for over 129 years, and that federal jurisdiction and sovereignty exist in all provinces.

The continued existence of such a state cannot be threatened by marginal decisions on ambiguous referendum questions. Steps to divide or separate such a state can be taken only after considerable deliberation of all relevant factors, unequivocal and conclusive agreement by all parties and in accordance with the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law. I believe this is essential as we continue with this discussion in this country. It is important that the realities of the situation be made known to everyone.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the first part of his speech, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce indicated one again that he favours maintaining social programs. He said so on many occasions during his long parliamentary career; he has always been very consistent on this point, even in the last few months. We have to salute him for this.

In the second part of his speech, which dealt with the Constitution issue, he showed the same consistency. However, I do not think that we, in the Bloc Québécois, can agree with him when he says that, in the event of another referendum, a bigger majority



*The Address*

might be required. To start with, I have this question for him: In his opinion, what percentage would be acceptable?

On the other hand, he said that extensive consultations would have to take place. I do not have the same parliamentary experience as the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, but I have been in politics long enough to know, as many Quebecers do, that constitutional negotiations have been going on for 30 years and that they are leading nowhere. Let us remember 1982, Meech and Charlottetown. The member has witnessed many reports, the Spicer commission and hearings; all for naught. What does he expect?

I believe that, in this matter, he cannot claim naivety. It cannot be said that the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce is naive; he has too much experience. What I cannot accept is that he wants to increase the percentage needed in a referendum. Now that we know that the sovereignists needed only 0.6 per cent to obtain a majority, he wants to increase that criterion.

I would like to ask him what he thinks of the support received by the Maastricht accord in various European countries. In seven countries, I believe it was carried by a majority of between 50 and 52 per cent. Is the hon. member questioning these referendum results which have led to the accession of some countries to the European union and which, by the same token, forced those countries to give up part of their sovereignty? Does he find that unacceptable?

I really would like to appeal to the democratic principles of the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and ask him to tell us what he thinks of what I have just said. Also, while we are at it, could he tell us what he thinks of plan B which is being promoted by a certain Liberal candidate and which talks about the fragmentation of Quebec. I would like to know what he thinks of it because of his long parliamentary experience. I await his answer.

• (1700)

[English]

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's questions.

To begin with, I did not suggest we needed long consultations. I agree with him that the discussions have gone on for a long while and they need not go on for another long period of time.

What I was suggesting, which would be my plan B, and what I thought the government had in the speech from the throne, is that there must be some understanding with respect to the clarity of the question. What I was saying is that one should not be able to break

up a country that has existed for 129 years on a vague and ambiguous question with a marginal vote.

If the question was absolutely clear and direct, that would be fine. For example, in the last referendum the question referred to an accord. I met many people as I campaigned who thought the reference to an accord was to an accord between the federal government and the provincial governments. Whereas it really referred to an agreement between the three parties that supported the yes position. There was reference to a very complicated bill. I read it but most people who voted in the referendum did not.

What we need are not long consultations, but to respect democracy and the rule of law there should be a clear, direct, unambiguous question.

I suggested that the majority should be more than a simple majority for legislation. There were never any rules with respect to majority. It is not that we are changing the rules now. The federal government never laid down any rules. As a matter of fact, we simply sought to win the referendum campaigns that were put to us by the provincial government. However, we did not say these should be the rules. I believe we should now say there are rules but we are not changing existing rules.

With respect to what the majority should be, I do not know. I have no suggestion to make now but I think that could be worked out. Certainly even to amend a club Constitution, even to amend the charter of a corporation one does not follow the simple procedures one does to pass simple bylaws or simple legislation. To amend the Constitution of this country we require two-thirds of the provinces representing 50 per cent of the population.

I do not speak only of referendums coming from Quebec because we recently had another one in Newfoundland with respect to removing the rights of religious minorities in schools. On Referendums on constitutional issues anywhere in the country that would have the effect of changing some very basic provisions, we should have an understanding as to what the rules of the game should be.

The results of these referendums affect the whole country. I cannot accept when some of my colleagues in the Bloc and the Parti Québécois say this affects only Quebec. It does not affect only Quebec. It will affect the whole country. As a matter of fact, it could affect North America to a certain extent.

The rules of the game have to be clear. I believe in democracy if, to a clear question, there is a substantial majority, although I cannot say what that substantial majority should be, and it is clear that the people of Quebec want to say yes to a clear question on this issue. It is then clear that we have to negotiate. We have to also make clear that the results of the referendum alone have no legal or constitutional consequences but are simply a basis for negotiation, much different than many people thought when they voted the last time.

*The Address*

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the throne speech, although I feel that what I should do is go to *Hansard* and pull out the last throne after the last election and repeat myself because there really is not much there that is new.

I will make an effort, though, to address a couple of things. I want to talk a bit about the enormous statement in the throne speech regarding justice. It is a little paragraph of about seven lines. There was nothing there to speak of but I will try.

However, before I do that I would like to get into a couple of things that were not in the throne speech which I think ought to be. I did hear a throne speech from the people, very capably delivered by our member for Beaver River. I would much rather speak to that one because there is some awfully good stuff in there.

What was not in this one is something that is of major concern to Canadians all across the land. I have been doing lots of travelling and talking to people from lots of places from coast to coast, the grassroots. They say when legislation comes out of this room it should reflect the wishes of the people. I could not agree with them more, absolutely correct. Legislation that comes from this place ought to reflect, must reflect, the wishes of the taxpayers, the wishes of the people.

• (1705)

When one operates as we operate in this room, one takes the Prime Minister and a handful of front row fellows or ladies who might be in charge of some portfolio who go behind closed doors somewhere, then emerge and tell their caucus members they will have employment equity and they will vote yes, that they are going to have gun control and that they will vote yes, that they are going to have this and they will vote yes, that they will have that and that they will vote yes. If they do not, they will be punished. They could even get kicked out of the party. That is not a democracy. That is not legislation according to the will of the people. That is dictatorship.

The people I talked to would like to see that come to an end. The people in this place should have the ability and the opportunity to represent the people who sent them here. That is not a whole lot to ask for. It is thoroughly disgusting when they come from behind closed doors and are ordered by a small group on what should take place.

I will read from a newspaper statement. It was a description of what one citizen felt was wrong with this. I used this line quite a bit across the country: "Our country is ruled by unelected, dictatorial and imposed judiciaries who were put into place by a self-serving parasitic fraternity".

That is pretty strong but that is exactly how people are beginning to feel. The kinds of decisions made are not reflecting their wishes.

There are things happening in this wonderful land—it is the best in the world, I agree and I sure want to keep it that way—that do not reflect their opinions. Decisions made at parole boards are an example, or decisions at a refugee board or some other judiciary body. No one is accountable for any of these decisions and that is what they do not understand it.

I would really like to see a throne speech address these things, saying we will have a little better democracy than what we have been accustomed to. For a change, we will allow the people to debate an issue before the decision is made, not after.

What a farce to stand in the House of Commons and debate an issue that is supposed to be decided here when it has been decided five days before. Is that democracy? No, it is not. That is the kind of thing they would like to see from a throne speech in my riding, something that would change and make them feel like they are having a little more say in how their country is run. That is not a whole lot to ask for.

When we get to the judicial part, I have to really smile. I saw the Minister of Justice stand in his place the other day answering questions, saying to the Reform Party: "You did not vote for Bill C-37. You did not vote for Bill C-41. You did not vote for Bill C-45. You did not vote for Bill C-68. Therefore you are the bad guys. You are the ones who are not looking after our victims", et cetera.

In most cases every one of those bills was highly debated with amendments put forward that addressed the victims. That is what was defeated from that side of the House. There was no concern for the victims when these amendments were offered on their behalf. Do not point across the way; point at yourselves when those decisions are made.

Look at some of the headlines across the land: "Small schools". One does not get this in national news but in community news all the time: "Parents fear violence at high school escalating". That is happening across our land.

• (1710)

Do I hear anything from this party regarding the violence in schools? I have gone into the schools and asked: "Are any of you frightened? Do you have any fear"? They all are. There are problems out there. I hear nothing from over there except a lot of rhetoric.

Then they say we have the Young Offenders Act, Bill C-37. Bill C-37 was supposed to do something. I have a hard time understanding how that document could be accepted by the government and at the same time it instructs the justice committee to travel across the land to see what people want done with the Young Offenders Act. I thought that was supposed to fix it.

*The Address*

Let me read an article that came out of my local newspaper about a 16-year old girl who was charged for assault. She bashed a girl's head against a brick wall: "Mid way through the court proceedings the crown prosecutor asked the judge to instruct the accused to take the matter before the court more seriously. The girl and friends in the gallery were apparently laughing and joking among themselves as the judge spoke". I have been to court and I have seen these things and that is how they take it.

I have spoken to kids in schools and asked: "What do you think about the Young Offenders Act"? They tell me it is a joke: "If you think I am not going to be afraid or that I am going to try and help the crime problem by ratting on somebody, forget it. There is no protection for me".

Even worse, I have an article quoting a top notch lawyer, an ace lawyer, a really good one. I am told he is a tremendously good one from the Vancouver area by the name of Russ Chamberlain: "The pushy Richmond lawyer, champion of culprits, says 'crime, victims and citizens, anti-crime groups, are blood thirsty whiners wanting revenge'". That is how he talks about the victims. Then he goes on to say: "Crime victims want an eye for an eye. They want someone else to fix their petty problems and that their pitch for personal vengeance can improperly affect a jury's verdict. Victim impact statements are just venting the spleen and do not serve justice and should be outlawed, banned completely".

I have a few more quotes. One is a lawyer in the legal system, a top notch lawyer making these kinds of statements: "Petty grievances, weepy tears. Victims are not doing any good for us in our wonderful justice system". He must be a card carrying Liberal.

Another article is from a president of a Liberal association. Guess what the president of this Liberal association says. He is from Fraser Valley West, talking about the rally we had concerning victims the other night, a successful rally with 2,200 people: "The rally is an easy emotional heart string puller for an extremely complex problem". I do not like using this language, but it is quote: "It is easier to sit here and piss and moan for 20 minutes". That is getting to be very common language in the House. I guess that is a new word they learned on that side of the House and they are spreading it around.

We have comments from a president of a Liberal association who says that victims are sitting around whining and moaning and that it is doing no good, but 2,200 people came to that rally and they were not all victims. Many were, but not all of them. They are angry.

The government ought to be ashamed of itself that the best it could come up with in a throne speech is seven lousy little sentences when the problem concerns the whole country. It ought to get out and take a look.

In the two and a half years I have been here we finally have something. It is from my colleague from Fraser Valley West, victims' rights. We will be fighting for that.

According to everything I have seen, we will not see much of a response from that side. We have not seen it in the past and I do not expect to see it in the future. If I thought for a minute there was any hope, then section 745 would be out of the Criminal Code today. It has been demanded by Canadians from all across this land for two years that killers should not be let out in 15 years. But no, we sit and let it die. We do not bring important things like that up. We talk about horses or what should be the national sport.

If the government were serious about doing something about crime it would wake up and pay attention to what is happening. It had better start. I do not care what kind of qualifications this minister has. If the best he can do is what he has done in the past two and a half years, he ought to quit. He is doing a lousy job and he ought to resign. He has done nothing except produce documents that are very controversial all across the land.

• (1715)

If the Liberals had any dissension within their own group they were scolded. They were scolded because they voted against Bill C-41. They were scolded because they voted against the gun law. There were darn good reasons why they should have voted against those bills.

Let us get some democracy back in this House. Let us get some people in here who are dedicated to doing the job. Let us represent the people across this land and quit being so self-serving and I will applaud this place forever.

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.):** I want to raise a number of questions with my colleague.

The first one is with respect to his first comment which was an indication that the legislation should reflect the people's wishes. I do not have a lot of difficulty with that assertion. Could the member tell us how many people in the ridings his party represents were or were not in favour of gun control and whether or not his colleagues voted in line with the people's wishes on that legislation?

The second question is with respect to debate. A point was made that decisions are already made before we debate. It was my understanding in a number of instances, for example peacekeeping, that we did have the debate before the decision was made, but perhaps the member has information that I do not have.

Perhaps I can get the member's reaction to my final comment. He did point out that apparently someone who was a Liberal and who was the president of an association had made some remarks with respect to a particular meeting which he disagreed with. I would caution him in suggesting that because one remark can tar the whole group. He is not without knowing there have been quotes from Reformers, and I could help him with some quotes if

*The Address*

necessary, that are considered racist, and I do not necessarily think that can be applied to the whole party.

**Mr. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I hope I can remember all the questions. I am getting old, but I will try to remember them. I think there were three.

In regard to gun control, let me start with my own riding. According to all the efforts we made to find out, 86 per cent of the people opposed it. However in a neighbouring riding in the city of Calgary I believe there was one riding where it was determined that they supported it. In Vancouver, if I am not mistaken, there was one riding that supported it. Those two members voted for the gun law and guess what? They did not get scolded. Most of us happened to vote against it and no one got scolded for it because we were representing the people.

It is hard to tell but every place I go to the question of the gun legislation always comes. It is simply a matter of people asking whether or not it is going to go through. They do not seem to realize that it has received royal assent and they do not understand exactly what it is all about. As near as I can tell, most who attend the meetings I am at are opposed to it if they are in the rural setting. In the urban setting it is not usually an issue.

The member mentioned one decision that was made prior to debate.

**Mr. Duhamel:** The reverse, where there has been a debate without the decision having been made.

**Mr. Thompson:** There has been debate without the decision having been made. I am sorry. My reference was to decisions that are made and debate followed.

**Mr. Duhamel:** Yes, but there are instances where that is not the case.

**Mr. Thompson:** I would hope so. I would not hope it is not always like that. I would hope that the decisions are not ever made until it is debated but I know that is not the case and that is a real problem.

I have forgotten the last question. I knew I would forget one.

• (1720)

**Mr. Duhamel:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague had quoted a gentleman who had supposedly made some remarks with regard to a rally or meeting. I think there might have been an attempt to suggest that everyone in the party was as such.

I simply pointed out there have been some remarks identified as racist that have been made by Reformers but that does not suggest that all Reformers are racist. I think we have to be very careful with that kind of commentary. I can produce those remarks if my colleague doubts my honesty on it.

**Mr. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I did not get a question out of that; I got a statement and some advice. That advice is well taken. I have certainly been painted and tarred with a brush that does not hold true to me.

The point is it was made public in a newspaper by a leader of a group. When people are in those positions they ought to be a little more sensitive toward the needs of the people that were being represented at this rally, who were the victims. That certainly was not the case.

**Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reply to the government's throne speech delivered last week. By tradition the throne speech outlines the government's vision for the nation which will ultimately be reflected in a legislative agenda presented in this second session of the 35th Parliament.

I became politically active out of my concern for the future direction of our society and to address the problems that our families from across the country are facing.

In examining this throne speech and this government's record, it is clear to me that this government has failed to acknowledge the problems and challenges facing the Canadian family. In doing so the government has ignored the foundation of our society, which is the family.

As the Reform Party's family issues critic I have concluded that family is not seated at Mr. Chrétien's throne.

**The Deputy Speaker:** To the hon. member, we are all freshly back here and we cannot refer to each other by our names. We have to say the member or the Prime Minister.

**Mrs. Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's throne.

I put to you a simple question: Are Canadian families in a better position than they were before this government was elected? The record shows that like its predecessors, Liberal government policy continues to attack your family and mine.

Families are overtaxed due to government overspending. A 1995 Fraser Institute study found that taxes on the average Canadian family rose by 1,167 per cent from 1961 to 1994. In 1984 average family after tax income was \$43,204, while in 1993, 10 years later, it was \$43,225. In other words, after tax family income had risen by \$21 in 10 years. For the family, this has meant less disposable income to spend on their children, less to invest in their family's future, and less choice.

Many will claim that this level of taxation is justified by our excellent social programs. Reform believes that social programs must be targeted to those most in need. Why would we make such a statement? Does present government policy really serve Canadian social policy now and in the future?

*The Address*

According to a recent study, Ottawa's fiscal mismanagement and unsustainable social programs mean that the next generation will be paying in taxes double the amount that they will receive in benefits. In spite of this the budget to be tabled on Wednesday will most likely include more tax increases such as perhaps the gasoline tax increase. My constituents in Port Moody—Coquitlam have sent me to say that they vehemently oppose gas tax increases.

Need I remind you that this government proposed to scrap the GST during the last election campaign. The throne speech however simply replaces the GST with a national sales tax. It is another of at least 26 broken or forgotten Liberal promises.

The government's record stands in contrast to Reform's approach to home economics. In our address to the people delivered before the government's throne speech, we outlined the feedback we have received from Canadians. In that address we stated that Canadians will look to government to introduce: a plan to eliminate, not just reduce, the federal deficit by 1997-98, and a proposal for tax relief to stimulate job creation and improve consumer confidence by leaving more dollars in the pockets of Canadians; and a commitment to reform the tax system to make it simpler and fairer.

• (1725 )

These initiatives would create the financial flexibility that families need and deserve so that they, not the government, can decide what their priorities should be. Just as families must balance their books, so too must the government. Yet the government's throne speech offers no such vision and no such hope for Canadian families.

Another issue that is of concern to families is the care and raising of their children. It is interesting to note that the rise of the two income family is directly related to their financial decline caused by higher taxation and less disposable income.

The economic necessity of the two income family is at variance with the wishes of many Canadian parents. A 1994 Angus Reid poll found that 40 per cent of Canadian parents who work would rather stay home to raise their children if they could afford to do so.

What is the approach of this government? Last December an ill-prepared human resources development minister announced an insulting child care program. It was a \$720 million insult to taxpayers, a \$720 million insult to parents who do not believe in an all knowing nanny state, a \$720 million program that was an insult to parents who want a choice.

The throne speech completely failed to recognize the critical need to expand the choices and options available to parents in providing care for their children. The negative consequences of institutional day care that the government espouses are starting to come to light. A recent study by Dr. Mark Genuis of the National Foundation for Family Research and Education found that non-pa-

rental child care has direct implications for the family and society. The study stated that "insecure bonding to parents in childhood is a direct cause of clinical levels of emotional and behavioural problems in adolescence, including youth crime".

A proactive, family friendly, innovative proposal would be to convert the child care expense deduction into a child care tax credit. Currently the child care expense deduction is available only to those parents who use non-parental child care. Other methods of child care, for instance home care, are not eligible for that deduction.

My colleague put forward Bill C-247 which addressed this problem. That was stifled by this government. This proposal would have expanded the options and choices available for parents by recognizing that there are many superior forms of child care the government can and should promote.

Another issue related to children and family is that of child support payments and their enforcement. Inaction by this government has meant that the needs of custodial and non-custodial parents and their children have been left unattended by this government through the first half of its mandate.

Last April the Reform caucus agreed to a position on this issue. We believe that families should be treated equally within the tax system. We believe that awards for child support must be consistent and fairly taxed. Our principle is that support is not income but the fulfilment of an obligation of a parent to their children. The tax deduction that a non-custodial parent currently has would be eliminated and the additional revenues could be targeted directly toward families and children in need.

Of greater importance, I would expect the government's proposal to address the issue of fair and effective determination of child support orders. One innovative reform is that of the unified family court which would emphasize mediation rather than the present litigation. It would reduce the adversarial nature of resolving issues such as child support payments should family breakdown occur. The unified family court is already implemented in some jurisdictions such as Ontario and Saskatchewan. I have introduced a private member's motion in the House to debate this reform. Child support decisions must be family support decisions.

The throne speech made reference to a growing crisis of confidence in the United Nations. This crisis of confidence seems very well deserved. Last year the UN committee that monitors implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recommended that Canada become a spank free zone by abolishing section 43 of the Criminal Code.

It is that section which provides parents with the legal protection to reasonably discipline their children. That is a prerogative that has been long recognized in our law and by parents. Such a domestic policy should not undermine the family. Neither should

*The Address*

international policy and activity have that effect. The convention on the rights of the child and the more recent Beijing platform for action have real consequences that are identifiable.

• (1730)

Prior to even attending the UN-Beijing conference on women, the government announced its federal plan for gender equality. Do Canadian families know that the government has put gender feminists in power to analyse and prioritize every policy decision in 24 federal departments and agencies? Does this reflect the priorities of Canadians and Canadian families? I think not. I know not.

There must be greater accountability for the effect and impact the UN and the international obligations that the government makes in our name. For instance, the Beijing platform for action will have sweeping ramifications for the future direction of our public policy and yet it was never presented or even talked about in this House. It is with this in mind that I have introduced a motion to debate this accountability issue.

In conclusion, families are not better off than they were before the 1993 election. In my judgment, the throne speech reflects on a government that will continue to place many other priorities ahead of Canadian families. The priority of the government should be the future. The Prime Minister characterized that future as one of tolerance, respect, generosity and sharing.

The birthplace and nurturing of these qualities are not at the spigot of government programs but in the homes across the land. These qualities are not found in a government endorsed call to arms for the rights of women or the rights of children but instead are found in the strength and unity of our families.

The government's throne speech talks of a caring society and social union. Such ideals are not achieved through intrusive, activist and expansive government programs. They are best achieved through a strong and compassionate society, sustainable for future generations that has at its heart and as a foundation strong, viable and stable Canadian families.

**Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for her remarks because I find myself very sympathetic to her position on the family.

During the election campaign, I well remember canvassing from door to door in an urban portion of my riding. I went past house after house where no one was home, where the houses had a double garage and double driveway but the house itself was very small. It was very clear that both parents were away. The children were either in local day care or elsewhere. Therefore, the member brings up a very important point.

However, the member was a little unfair when she suggested that the economic necessity of both parents working is a result of

taxation. I suggest to her that it is a trend that has occurred as a result of changes in the labour force, changes in the marketplace and changes in the global economy.

I wonder if she has taken that into account and has any suggestions on how one could address that in the context of the economic necessity of both parents working.

**Mrs. Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I too look at the streets of my neighbourhood and my city and have visited other communities across Canada. I have talked to many Canadians about this very issue.

It is true that more choice is available to Canadians. More women have the opportunity to work. It is also true that the cost of living, the demands on families and the effect of the dollar that they receive in income which has continually been eroded to where there are statistics that state that it now takes twice the working hours to support a family than it did 25 years ago. When that statement is taken to its logical conclusion, it almost demands two people working to do that.

When we talk about average family income being the same, that means that more women actually have entered the workforce in the last 25 years to make up the difference to maintain that standard of living.

• (1735)

As I mentioned in my speech, 40 per cent of those parents who do work would prefer to be home. Does that tell you something? They are not working necessarily by choice.

Not long ago, I read an article about a backlash that radical feminists are very nervous about. There is actually a trend now, when one talks about trends, for women to choose to stay home. Many women have been in the workforce and have seen that it is not all it is cracked up to be. The pressures and tensions are more than they want to take on.

One study shows for 60 per cent of parents where both are working who have children below three register severe levels of tension just co-ordinating activities and the life that two full time jobs can force on them. That is being recognized by the women and men of this land.

We need to step back and ask what is causing this. It is that an average family puts half of their earned income into taxes. It takes more earned hours to create a lifestyle that is affordable.

We need to address taxation. We need to address the debt. We need to address the deficit first. We need to get the deficit down. We need to help families by giving them some relief, some hope that there will be tax relief so that they can make the choices regarding how they want to raise their families and how they want to afford what we force on them as a lifestyle in Canada.

*The Address*

They need choice courtesy of the government. I challenge the government to give them that choice by giving them tax relief.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in response to the speech from the throne. Might I pick up a remark the Prime Minister made in his address in speaking of particular challenges following the referendum result in Quebec.

His comments are: "This is not a time for major constitutional change. We must continue to adapt, modernize and develop our federation, focusing on practical steps within a spirit that respects the principles of federalism". There are some profound truths in that statement and a recognition of the social limits to law and to legal change.

I wrote in a work published a number of years ago in an earlier pre-parliamentary phase of my life that not all times are ripe for Constitution making, that it is an error to attempt a fundamental revision of one's constitutional, governmental system in a period of rapid, historical change.

If one does produce a document in such a period, the likelihood is that the product will jell the process of social change. It will act as a brake arresting that change, and it will only lead to confusion and unproductive labour.

When changes occur of a fundamental, total nature in a constitutional system, they are in periods of great national euphoria when there is a consensus, however fleeting, usually after a victory in a great war or a great social revolution.

We are reminded of General de Gaulle's successful venture in 1944 which led indirectly to the adoption of the fourth French Republic Constitution, and again the exercise in 1958. Or we could go back to the origins of the American Constitution, not so much the unsatisfactory articles of Confederation but the great Constitution which is, of course, the only Constitution older than our own.

It is an important lesson to remember that in this period when quite clearly Canada is experiencing fundamental social change as a result not merely of factors common to all the world community, the revolution in infomatics, but also the impact of large scale immigration from many parts of the world on our society. I think in terms of the proportion of our existing population. The impact is far greater than earlier historical models, such as the United States after the revolution of 1848 in Europe, or other societies elsewhere in the world.

• (1740)

Canada in transition is really a description of the sociology of our country at the present time. But some parts are changing more quickly than others. I think, if I may say so, with some pride my own special community in British Columbia is changing much more quickly, much more radically, much more dramatically than other parts of the country.

Some have seen in this, because of the responses that it has produced to particular constitutional exercises like Charlottetown and Meech Lake before it, some opposition perhaps to other parts of the country and some inevitable antagonism. I think that would be a wrong view of an important historical process in which we participated.

It is a fact that voters in British Columbia rejected the Charlottetown accord by a majority 70 per cent to 30 per cent. Now members will be aware that under provincial law we are required to hold a provincial referendum before any future project of constitutional change at the federal level can be submitted to our legislature for ratification.

With respect to the Charlottetown accord, I am attempting a historical synthesis of obviously numbers of different opinions differently expressed. But there was an objection in some respects to a feeling of historical datedness in the approach to the Charlottetown accord. It was too particularistic an attitude, one that jelled the status quo. A good deal of this opposition focused on the attempt to jell the membership of the House of Commons with an artificial, for all time, 25 per cent quota for one province.

The opposition was not to the province as such. The opposition was to jelling the constitutional institutional framework of government in a period of emerging great historical change.

In making this point I will stress again that in the post referendum debate that has followed, no responsible British Columbia political leader, either federal or provincial has engaged in negative comments in relation to Quebec or the Quebec people. There have been no demands for sanctions from British Columbia and no talk of partition, no opposition or hostility to the Quebec fact as such. This does suggest that a larger constitutional optic is needed.

If I tell the House that the quest for fundamental constitutional vision is already proceeding in my province, it is an invitation to join in that.

It is a recognition that we have achieved a distinct society in our own right, a community of communities. It will compel substantial modernization of the constitutional governmental structures the Prime Minister spoke of in his response to the speech from the throne. It will necessarily affect all federal institutions: the Senate,

*The Address*

the House, cabinet and Parliament. And not least, as someone who has been a private member without any responsibilities, even as a parliamentary secretary until very recently, the necessary relations between the House of Commons and cabinet.

One thing being discussed with great interest is whether the Westminster model is out of date in terms of the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. Would we do better with a separation of executive and legislative power, not simply on the American model, but on the French model or more particularly the contemporary German model.

Do we need better electoral laws? If we live in a community of communities with many different national communities, we face a situation as, I succeeding you, Mr. Speaker, as president of a committee devoted to Vietnam I recognize the reality of how difficult it is for Vietnamese to be elected in my province to Ottawa under the present electoral law.

Is the present made in Westminster electoral law necessarily the most suitable for Canada at this time? I stress this by simply saying that the answer to the particularistic problems that have been expressed in Charlottetown and Meech may better be seen in a larger constitutional vision. If I am asked, can it be done today, the answer is no. I spent the last two weeks lecturing to numbers of groups ranging from 1,300 Catholic educators assembled in my province to special ethnic communities that said: "We want to be part of the Constitution making process. Can we join it?" I said: "Yes, you're welcome".

● (1745)

I anticipate this work will take a number of years to achieve. I do not expect it to be ready in the present Parliament. I think by the year 2000 this generation of Canadians will have a rendezvous with the Constitution Act.

It can be done by a constituent assembly. The fatal flaw in most of these proposals is that many of the sponsors seem to think of an elitist group of people nominated by various other people. A constituent assembly has to be elected. If we follow the French model, the ultimate constituent assembly was the French Assemblée nationale, the people who drafted the fourth French Republic Constitution and the fifth. If the legislature were selected for that purpose I could see a Parliament, not the next one but the next one after that, elected to give us a new Constitution and with a one-month mandate to do so.

In the meantime the other species of change the Prime Minister spoke of are proceeding. In this House I rose a year ago in defence of a new law on self-government for the Dene and the Metis in the Northwest and Yukon territories. Members of one of the opposition parties asked me the question: "Is that subject to the charter of

rights and to the Constitution?" I said: "It is not expressed in the bill but as a matter of constitutional first principles it must be so unless it is specifically excluded".

If members have read the recent Nisga'a treaty negotiated on the federal side by the same minister responsible for that bill, they will notice he has picked up the suggestion made in this Parliament during question period that the Nisga'a treaty and the institutions under it are deliberately made subject to the constitutional charter of rights and subject to the Constitution. This is the way, law in the making, the useful role that Parliament can play.

In a similar way I was involved years ago as an adviser to two provincial premiers in different provinces. I gave negative advice on the construction of the airport at Mirabel. My opinion was widely quoted and in the end was not followed by the federal government. Clearly one was on the right side of history. One gave sound technical advice. Notice that the transport minister has moved to correct, to negate the negation in Kantian terms, by allowing the carriers to transfer back to Dorval. This is the pragmatic spirit that is present in federal-provincial relations, the new federalism, which is co-operative federalism, not levels of government fighting with each other.

My message is, in this period of historical transition, when the centrifugal forces that reach their pathological outlet in Bosnia and places like that and the centrifugal forces, supranationalism, European union, these sorts of forces, are in an uneasy alliance, constitutional change goes on. I think we will have our rendezvous with the Constitution Act in its totality four or five years from now when this citizen activity comes to a head.

In the meantime constitutional change is going on. It is coming very positively and concretely from government ministers and it is an invitation to all of us to take part in the process.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure about the pathological or the centrifugal arguments on any of this but I do have a question for the member that has to do not so much with his last comments. In his new role as parliamentary secretary to the fisheries minister I know he is very interested in fisheries issues. He must be. I am hoping he will do a good job of representing the concerns on the west coast where he is from.

I have a concern which is echoed by many people in the fishing community, in sport fishing, aboriginal fishing and all the fishing communities. It is the decision by the federal government to potentially close a good number of the fish hatcheries on the west coast. There is nothing in the throne speech that deals with it. Is the parliamentary secretary to the fisheries minister prepared to advocate that we keep those fish hatcheries open or is he going to toe the line and say shut them down?



*The Address*

• (1750)

**Mr. McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, I have a certain amount of past history that I cannot put behind me. I do not believe I have been noted either as a scholar or an advisor for toeing the line.

I was invited by the Prime Minister about a week ago to assume a new job. Eighteen inches of briefing books arrived at my desk; this is included in them. I have read half of those books which is about 3,000 pages. I have noted the subject. I am committed to maintain a viable west coast salmon fishing industry by every means possible.

The member will notice from public statements of the last day or two that we are taking a strong line in terms of maintaining our position under the Pacific coast salmon treaty with the United States. I have examined that problem but I will prefer to save my response until I have a little more experience with those briefing books.

I will assure the hon. member in the spirit of his question that I will do my best to see that we maintain our west coast fisheries.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, sitting here listening to the hon. member, whom I congratulate on his new role, I was reminded of my days as a student at Université de Montréal. Incidentally, I would like to remind the hon. member of a professor, a former colleague of his, with whom he published a book on constitutional review.

I know that the hon. member is from the moderate wing of his party and I caught myself thinking how nice it would have been, in light of things to come, if he had been the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs instead of the current minister. I wish he had held that position because the meaning of the old Jesuit proverb, according to which the relevance of what you say is not determined by how loudly you say it, is lost on the current incumbent. During the referendum debate, if we had had someone like the hon. member to speak to on the other side, we would certainly have been able to lay the basis of a real dialogue.

I know that you would like me to put a question to him, and that is exactly what I am about to do. The hon. member is quite familiar with the constitutional background of this country, which rests on three main doctrines—special status, associated states and sovereignty-association—which I have had the pleasure of studying as part of a master thesis that no one has read.

Does the hon. member agree that the partnership offer that the Government of Quebec put on the table during the last referendum campaign is the best way to achieve reconciliation between the two founding peoples of Canada, and would he mind rising in his place and telling us whether or not, as a constitutional expert, he is prepared to concur with this offer?

**Mr. McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, the problem is as follows. If we restrict ourselves to a definition of a certain special status, we are bound to fail. Back home, in my province, history shows that there must be a referendum on such constitutional amendments. There must be some evolution of the constitutional approach.

We must consider reforming the bases of institutions such as Parliament, the Executive Council and its relationship with Parliament, and the Senate, and think about creating a constitutional court. You certainly remember that such an approach was advocated by your professors at the Université de Montréal, including Professor Jacques-Yvan Morin. It is in this context that we must examine the issues advanced by the main forces behind the quiet revolution.

I have tried to show that, where I come from, there is no opposition in principle to Quebec or the demands of Quebecers. But we do want a serious constitutional approach that would include the constitutional demands of all the provinces and all Canadians.

• (1755)

I wish to thank the hon. member for his comments. As it did not seem to be a question, I cannot give an answer.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate the throne speech. I am especially pleased that since the Liberal government came to power over two years ago we have worked hard to meet many of our goals in the red book.

Since being elected as the member of Parliament for Saint-Denis, my priority has been to respond to the concerns and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Saint-Denis, which I have the honour and privilege to represent in this House.

[*Translation*]

This throne speech outlines our action plan for the second half of our mandate. Our objectives are the same. This throne speech focuses on three main themes: employment and economic growth, the safety of Canadians, and how to modernize the federation in order to strengthen Canadian unity.

In the area of economic growth, young people are certainly the most important concern for me and my constituents of Saint-Denis. Today's young people face many obstacles before they can join the labour force and thus gain experience.

The Liberal government is committed to helping young Canadians develop their potential, so that they can join the labour force, adapt to it and succeed. We must all join forces to help our young people find jobs.

*The Address*

The Liberal government has already launched a number of youth programs I would now like to talk about. So far, youth service Canada has funded over 270 projects benefiting 4,200 participants engaged in community activities.

In my riding of Saint-Denis, I managed to put in place two such projects providing work for 25 young people. So far, almost \$300,000 has been invested in Saint-Denis through youth service Canada for the creation of two small businesses.

For example, thanks to youth service Canada, 15 young people in my riding will be able to start their own business. This project, co-ordinated by the Parc-Extension youth centre, is unique, in addition to meeting a specific need in this area, which is considered to be among the poorest in Montreal and perhaps even in Canada.

Young people who participate in this project repair various pieces of sports and recreation equipment before distributing them among low income families. They see to the effective operation of their business while collecting the equipment donated.

I think that this project in the Parc-Extension area is very important because, on the one hand, it will help young people overcome the obstacles hampering their access to the labour force and, on the other hand, it will help them regain confidence in themselves.

Also, in the Villeraie neighbourhood, Renaissance Montréal helped ten young people aged 18 to 24, with difficulty integrating into the labour force, gain work experience in the recycling and sale of used consumer goods.

These two examples show that we do care about our young people.

I should also mention the program for young trainees which, in 1995-96, should help some 24,000 young people by easing the transition between school and work, thanks to the co-operation of the education, industry and community sectors. As an example, the Institut de formation professionnelle sur mesure, which is in my riding, created 13 jobs for young people, thanks to a \$200,000 federal subsidy.

Finally, the Liberal government will rely on the spirit of partnership displayed by Team Canada to create jobs for young people. To this end, we are working in close co-operation with the provinces and the private sector. Moreover, as early as this summer, we will double the number of summer jobs for students in the federal public service.

[*English*]

I welcomed this announcement that will help our youth to make the transition into the working world. The skills of our young people are Canada's greatest resource for the future.

• (1800)

Both government and the private sector must work together to provide them with opportunities. Another area where the government and the private sector must work together is in helping small and medium size businesses.

Saint-Denis industries consist mostly of small and medium size businesses. Every day in my riding office I hear of small businesses going bankrupt or leaving Montreal. They are the only job creators in my riding and they need this government's support.

While we set out a concrete strategy for small and medium size businesses that helped a few obtain funds and knowledge in order to compete in the present economy, much more must be done.

The government has been negotiating with our financial institutions to assure better financing for small and medium size business people. It is my hope that tomorrow the finance minister will take a harder stance against these same institutions in his budget speech.

Last year financial institutions marked record profits. My message to them is to provide more help to small and medium size businesses that continue to be the engine of Canada's economy.

The issues the government is dealing with in Canada are being faced by governments around the world. Economic uncertainty and sustainability of social programs are issues that are being addressed as governments are trying to redefine themselves.

[*Translation*]

The second theme of the speech from the throne is the security of Canadians. While economic growth is essential, our government has always felt important to ensure the sustainability of our social measures.

We reiterate our commitment to medicare and to the principles underlying the Canada Health Act. We will also propose measures to sustain Canada's elderly benefits system, and particularly the Canada pension plan.

In co-operation with the provinces, we will work to draft a bill designed to implement a reform of the Canada pension plan. A joint federal-provincial paper setting out the problems and challenges facing the plan has already been released for public consultation.

Those are two very positive measures that have been very well received in the riding of Saint-Denis as well as across Canada.

Another measure that I care a great deal about is the improvement of our child support system. With the particular objective of helping low income families, that measure will be very well received by women and single parent families in the riding of Saint-Denis.

*The Address*

By acting in this manner, the government is recognizing that equal opportunity begins first of all with our children.

[*English*]

This measure will make the system fairer in my opinion. Children will no longer be caught in the middle of custody cases as victims and will receive the full benefits that are essential for them, especially in their early years. This measure is a positive step in helping low income, single mothers provide their children with basic care.

The new employment insurance system to be implemented July 1, 1996 also contains in my opinion several measures to help low income families, particularly single mothers fighting to stay above the poverty line.

One of the most fundamental problems we are still dealing with in every corner of the globe is poverty, especially child poverty. 1996 is the year for the eradication of poverty. The importance of the issue cannot be underscored. A healthy quality of life is the first ingredient to ensure that citizens everywhere can become contributing members of society.

How is a child supposed to grow and take his or her place in our community if he or she does not have the bare essentials to begin with? Poverty, particularly child poverty, must be overcome if we are to regain our strength as a nation.

Too often we associate child poverty with third world countries, but there are over 4 million Canadians living in poverty, of whom 1.2 million are children. This is unacceptable in a country like Canada. We must as a government continue to make assistance to our poor our number one priority.

[*Translation*]

Another major theme of the speech from the throne is international security. Human rights are an important element of Canada's foreign policy and are central to the values and concerns of Canadians.

Freedom, democracy and the rule of law are the foundation of our action in favour of security and prosperity in the world.

• (1805)

[*English*]

I am proud of the position Canada has taken on numerous issues involving the respect and promotion of human rights around the world. Canada must continue to play a leadership role in this area.

My involvements with NATO have made me very sensitive to the important role Canada plays in providing its voice to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It is my hope that we can maintain this presence and help resolve issues like the problem of Cyprus which, after 21, years remains unresolved.

I wish to also applaud the initiatives the government is putting forward on the issue of child labour and I look forward to our active role in helping to solve this very serious problem.

In addition to what I have mentioned, the throne speech underlines the importance that unity plays in helping to re-establish our economic stability. Simply put, political stability leads to economic stability.

[*Translation*]

Our action plan to keep this country together is clear. The referendum held on October 30 has raised fundamental issues about the future of our country. Quebecers have decided to remain part of Canada, but not at any price. They want to see changes. As a matter of fact, all Canadians wanted changes. They want a more modern federation, a federation better suited to present day realities.

The government proposes to work hand in hand with the provinces and all its other partners to explore new avenues and find new ways to operate. The Prime Minister has invited all Canadians to show their openmindedness and to work for change.

[*English*]

What unites us is greater than what divides us. The values we share as Canadians are as relevant as ever. As I said when I stood for the first time in the House, Saint-Denis is a microcosm of Canada. With cultural communities originating from every corner of the globe, we have created a unique environment of sharing and understanding one another. Proud to be Canadians and Quebecers, we showed during last October's referendum that we want to continue to be both.

Political instability has led to the demise of one of the most beautiful cities in North America. Montreal once had the potential to be the jewel of the east coast. Now it is slowly becoming a has been city, with economic flight continuing. I lay the blame for this squarely on the shoulders of the Bloc and PQ leaderships whose shortsightedness has destroyed—

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry, but your time is up. Is there unanimous consent to let the hon. member go on for a few minutes.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Bakopanos:** The Liberal government has demonstrated through its actions the strength of our commitment to Canadians. We cannot improve the situation alone. We need the co-operation and support of all provincial and municipal governments to improve Canada's economy. For my part, I will continue to work diligently and effectively with my government for the good of my constituents.

*The Address*

I thank them once again for their continued support, loyalty and encouragement. I appreciate the time to finish.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Saint-Denis for her interest in social issues. Since she represents, as she put it so eloquently, a riding going through very tough times, I would like to ask her a few short questions, so that other members can also have the same opportunity.

She mentioned the youth strategy. She also talked about the youth service Canada program. She was pleased to say that 25 jobs were created in her ridings thanks to two projects. She is lucky, because many ridings represented by hon. members from the Bloc Québécois have been unable, so far, to get anything from the Minister of Human Resources Development.

I want to remind the hon. member that 17.2 per cent of young people between 15 and 24 years of age are now jobless. In Quebec alone, we have 143,000 young people under 30 who are currently unemployed. The unemployment rate in this age category did decrease slightly, by three-tenths of one per cent, but since Bill C-17 was passed, allowing the Liberal government to make the first cuts in the UI program, the number of welfare recipients in this age group has risen by 20 per cent.

I would simply like to ask the hon. member how she can say that the Liberal government's employment strategy has been successful in the last two years, when the evidence is to the contrary.

**Mrs. Bakopanos:** Mr. Speaker, as I said at the end of my speech, where there is political instability, there is always economic instability.

As I said, I believe the Bloc Québécois is, in a way, responsible for the unemployment rate in Quebec. When small and medium size businesses leave Quebec because they do not have the political stability they want, they cannot create jobs for young people.

• (1810)

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have just one small question.

Last year in the House Quebec started to be blamed for Canada's economic situation, and this is sure to continue in the months to come, and people began to point their fingers at the sovereignist movement.

I would like to point out to my hon. colleague that there is a sovereignist movement in Taiwan, which is not in Canada. There are 51 elected sovereignist members in Taiwan who want to be sovereign from China and no one talks about economic insecurity in Taiwan. On the contrary, people want to do business there.

The Canadian political situation is not responsible for the insecurity we have here, it is the Canadian debt.

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think a comparison can be made between Taiwan and Canada, because the sovereignty movement is not at all the same. But if one looks at what is going on in Montreal, as I pointed out in my speech, when one talks to the small and medium business owners in my riding of Saint-Denis, the question always comes back to the same point. If there is political stability, there will be job creation, people will be prepared to invest when they are sure that Quebec is staying in Canada.

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the member for Saint-Denis is as follows: Unless I have been dreaming for a long time, is there a separatist movement in Newfoundland, in Ontario and in other Canadian provinces, and, if not, why would there be unemployment in these provinces?

**Mrs. Bakopanos:** Mr. Speaker, there is no movement in the other provinces, but we come back to the same question. The rate of unemployment among young people is higher in Quebec than in all the other provinces.

Moreover, we have set up programs to correct this problem. In my speech, I mentioned programs for young people. I am talking about 25 jobs—people will say this is not much, but in a riding like mine with all I that I described in my speech—there are 25 young people who are not unemployed, who had never had the opportunity to work, but who were able to start up a small business. I find, in our present context, that the government has done things to improve the situation.

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on the speech from the throne delivered on February 27, at the opening of the second session of the 35th Parliament of Canada.

I believe that this speech has no substance, and is nothing but a series of good intentions and vague promises. It opens the way to a Canada-wide referendum to decide on the future of Quebec. It seems to me that the federal government is denying and disregarding the legitimate right of the people of Quebec to decide its future alone, and this is totally unacceptable.

In spite of the mounting expectations and pressing and repeated demands of Canadians and Quebecers, this document contains no real measures to stimulate the economy and create jobs. This speech contains nothing for regions experiencing serious difficulties; it contains for Montreal, which is facing serious problems; it contains nothing that could give hope to the people of my riding, Bourassa, in Montreal North, who are going through hard times. Given the present situation, Canadians would have had the right to expect a plan for economic recovery. Instead of that, the government of Canada puts on the table a jumble of old commitments that were not honoured during the first part of its mandate.

*The Address*

The Liberal government's record in the first half of its mandate is very disappointing. The future is more uncertain and worrying today than it was two years ago.

• (1815)

Many people are concerned about cuts in social programs, particularly in unemployment benefits. Employment security is a thing of the past. Generosity and compassion for the most disadvantaged in our society and protection for the most vulnerable tend to diminish and even disappear.

The Canadian economy continues to stagnate. But in spite of this economic downturn, Canadian businesses have had record profits. Statistics Canada reported recently that, at the end of the 1995 fiscal year, these profits totalled \$95 billion compared to \$80 billion in 1994, an increase of 19 per cent.

It must be said that, in 1994, business profits had already increased drastically during the year, from \$17 billion in the first quarter to \$23.6 billion in the last quarter. Total profits for the 1994 fiscal year climbed by 44 per cent to reach \$80 billion.

On the other hand, salaries increased by only 0.9 per cent in 1995, which is less than the rate of inflation. This means that workers saw their actual earnings decrease. In this context, I understand why there were many strikes and many demonstrations against employers, even against certain governments, including the government of Ontario.

[*English*]

I would like to take this opportunity to send my support and my solidarity to the members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union who went on a strike against the budget cuts imposed by the Mike Harris Conservative government. This is a struggle for justice. I hope this conflict will not be prolonged indefinitely and that the Harris government will resume negotiations to sign a just and equitable collective agreement.

[*Translation*]

The speech from the throne states that economic growth depends on trade. True, imports create employment. The government says it will carry on efforts to extend NAFTA to other countries. I agree with the principle of liberalization of trade.

I recently visited Chile, a country that is supposed to join NAFTA. However, it is on hold because of internal problems in the United States. The promise made by government leaders and heads of states in Miami in 1994 has yet to be fulfilled.

I pointed out something to the Government of Canada. In the beginning, the government wanted to exclude parallel agreements on labour and the environment from the negotiation of an interim

bilateral trade agreement between Canada and Chile. I thought it was unfair and unacceptable on the part of the Government of Canada to be excluding social measures from the bilateral agreement between our two countries, because I believe any trade agreement, any trade treaty must include social measures in order to protect the workers and small businesses who will be affected. Such agreements must protect the rights of workers, in particular their right to form a labour union, to negotiate collective agreements, to strike, as well as the principle of non-discrimination, pay equity, the minimum working age in order to prohibit child labour, measures concerning occupational health and safety, minimum wages, etc.

• (1820)

Fortunately, there is now, here in Ottawa, a Chilean delegation negotiating this agreement with the government of Canada and, thanks to pressures from Canadian and Chilean organized labour and thanks to our own pressures, the federal government has finally decided to negotiate such social clauses with Chile.

The speech from the throne mentions that the government will review the Citizenship Act. The new Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has already begun to make statements about that. There are two controversial topics: first, dual citizenship, and the federal government's position is not clear yet. It has only served one purpose: to threaten Quebecers during the last referendum with the loss of their Canadian citizenship, should they become independent.

There are 400,000 Canadian citizens who have dual citizenship, some even have multiple citizenship, including a number of government members and ministers. When the bill comes before the House, I would like the government to recognize what is already a right in Canada, dual citizenship.

With this bill, the government wants to strengthen national unity, but I believe the results speak for themselves. Once again, when the bill is debated, it will be apparent that there are two nations, two official languages, two main cultures, and indeed, two countries: Canada and Quebec. As far as we, in the Bloc Québécois, are concerned, our position is clear. We are in favour of maintaining the acquired right of dual citizenship.

Another question the minister wants to raise is that of the oath of allegiance to the Queen. We all know that this is a sensitive issue. Many English Canadians feel some attachment, even a profound attachment, to the Queen of England. I must say the debate on this point is not very fierce in Quebec. In spite of all the respect we have for the Queen, we feel that the reference to her in the oath of allegiance is somewhat a thing of the past and that Canada should follow the example of Australia, which eliminated any reference to the Queen of England in its oath of allegiance.

*The Address*

When I became an MP, I did not want to take an oath of allegiance to a Queen that I see as a foreigner. I come from another country. In Chile, we did away with the King of Spain a long time ago. But I was told that if I wanted to become a member of the House, I had to swear allegiance to the Queen.

Mr. Speaker, you indicate that I must conclude. I find this throne speech very disappointing and I think there is no vision of the future in it.

**Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Bourassa comes from Chile, a country with a lot of political problems.

The hon. member for Bourassa is an immigrant. He comes from a country where there is violence and instability. The hon. member is a refugee. Welcome to Canada, hon. member.

I would like to ask him this: Could he tell us, from his own experience in Chile and now in Quebec, whether political instability costs jobs and creates unemployment?

**Mr. Nunez:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth for his excellent French.

**An hon. member:** It is true.

**An hon. member:** But not for what he said.

• (1825)

**Mr. Nunez:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what Chile the hon. member is talking about, because its dictatorship is a thing of the past; today, there is democracy in Chile. That is why I went back there, to see the fruits of democracy.

Here, dear colleagues, I do not think the economic crisis is attributable to what you call political instability. I think Canada is a very democratic country, and so is Quebec. In comparison with the Latin American countries I have known, there is no political instability. The causes of economic crises are to be found elsewhere: in the deficit, in government mismanagement, in an unfair tax system, etc. In fact, the causes have to be looked at from that point of view, in my opinion.

**Mrs. Maud Debieu (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on February 27, the federal government opened the second session of the 35th Parliament. At a point half-way through its mandate, Quebecers and Canadiens were expecting a throne speech that would give a little inspiration to this government, which seems to lack it, and a vision or, at least, some clarification as to its intentions.

I have rarely seen a stranger mix of clarity and vagueness. During the October referendum period, the Prime Minister had

promised the people of Quebec major constitutional and political changes. The throne speech confirmed that we have, on one hand, a government without direction on the constitutional front and without any new ideas other than doubling the number of summer jobs for young people to solve the glaring unemployment problem.

Changes considered as being important during a referendum campaign have become mere cosmetic adjustments a few months later.

As I mentioned earlier, the throne speech is a mix of clarity and vagueness in what it says, what it hints at, and what it does not say. On the clear side first: fine, noble and generous principles are mentioned in the throne speech. On page 1 alone, for example, we find at least 12 words calling for generosity, compassion, altruism and openness. This is clear, but these are only principles. Is there anything clearer than principles?

Another example of clarity: when we are told that the federal government is prepared to withdraw from its functions in such areas as labour market training, forestry, mining and recreation. On the vague side, and what is more revealing, is what the government does not say. He neglected to say that Bill C-111 had already announced the transfer of occupational training to the provinces.

Moreover, as the leader of the official opposition said, in its speech from the throne, the federal government has finally admitted that it has interfered, and still does, in areas under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. In the same breath, it undertakes to withdraw from certain areas and it even has the nerve to claim that it will turn over these areas of jurisdiction, which are not its own, to municipal governments or to the private sector. This is a strange way indeed of reversing policy.

There is something else that does not appear in the speech from the throne and it is the natural tendency of the federal government to centralize to preserve the social union of Canada—a new expression that evokes many future encroachments.

Strangely enough, the speech from the throne does not say a word of the fact that three other areas, namely forestry, mining and leisure, are also exclusive provincial jurisdictions. It does not mention that, besides those three areas, the federal government proposed in the failed Charlottetown Accord to withdraw also from social housing, tourism and municipal affairs.

Is my time already over, Mr. Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to continue? There are five minutes left.

*The Address*

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

[*English*]

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Since someone said no, the hon. member will have to wait for another occasion.

It being 6.30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

(The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

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# CONTENTS

Tuesday, March 5, 1996

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>		Mr. Zed .....	278
Mr. Zed .....	275		
<b>Committees of the House</b>		<b>Speech from the Throne</b>	
<b>Procedure and House Affairs</b>		<b>Debate resumed on Address</b>	
Mr. Zed .....	275	Mr. Eggleton .....	278
<b>Food and Drugs Act</b>		Mr. Lebel .....	281
Bill C-222. Motions for introduction and first		Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville) .....	283
reading deemed adopted .....	275	Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac) .....	283
Mr. Szabo .....	275	Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) .....	285
Bill deemed read the second time and referred to		Mr. Szabo .....	286
a committee. ....	275	Mrs. Cowling .....	286
<b>Committees of the House</b>		Mr. Collins .....	288
<b>Procedure and House Affairs</b>		Mr. Silye .....	288
Motion for concurrence in second report .....	275	Mr. Harper (Churchill) .....	288
Mr. Zed .....	275	Mr. Rocheleau .....	289
(Motion agreed to.) .....	275	Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville) .....	290
<b>Petitions</b>		Mr. Schmidt .....	291
<b>Health</b>		Motion .....	292
Mr. Duhamel .....	275	Mr. Silye .....	292
<b>Criminal Code</b>		Mr. Szabo .....	294
Mr. Perić .....	275	Mrs. Finestone .....	295
<b>Rights of the Unborn</b>		Mr. Simmons .....	296
Mr. Perić .....	276	Mrs. Finestone .....	297
<b>Taxation</b>		Mr. Dubé .....	298
Mrs. Ur .....	276	Mr. Bernier (Gaspé) .....	298
<b>Taxation</b>		Mr. Dubé .....	300
Mr. Szabo .....	276	Mr. Dubé .....	300
<b>Health</b>		Mr. Fillion .....	302
Mr. Szabo .....	276	Mr. Pickard .....	302
<b>Taxation</b>		Mr. Fillion .....	304
Mrs. Terrana .....	276	Mr. Shepherd .....	305
<b>Human Rights</b>		Mrs. Brushett .....	306
Ms. Skoke .....	276	Mr. Harris .....	306
<b>Employment Centres</b>		Mr. Morrison .....	307
Ms. Fillion .....	276	Mrs. Brushett .....	307
<b>Taxation</b>		Mr. Solomon .....	308
Mrs. Venne .....	276		
<b>Justice</b>		<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS</b>	
Mr. Frazer .....	276	<b>Middle East</b>	
<b>Taxation</b>		Mr. Graham .....	308
Mr. Frazer .....	277	<b>Family Fair</b>	
<b>Taxation</b>		Mrs. Venne .....	309
Mr. Bélisle .....	277	<b>Fisheries</b>	
<b>Canadian Wheat Board</b>		Mr. Cummins .....	309
Mr. Morrison .....	277	<b>The Late Sir Robert Williams</b>	
<b>Human Rights</b>		Ms. Beaumier .....	309
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre) .....	277	<b>Hon. Lucien Bouchard</b>	
<b>Age of Consent</b>		Mrs. Chamberlain .....	309
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre) .....	277	<b>The Late Marguerite Duras</b>	
<b>Gasoline Tax</b>		Mrs. Dalphond—Guiral .....	309
Mr. Gilmour .....	277	<b>Child Support</b>	
<b>Health Care</b>		Mrs. Hayes .....	310
Mr. Schmidt .....	277	<b>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</b>	
<b>Distinct Society</b>		Mr. de Jong .....	310
Mr. Strahl .....	278	<b>International Women's Week</b>	
		Ms. Brown (Oakville—Milton) .....	310



<b>Economic Recovery</b>	
Mr. Adams .....	310
<b>Hamilton</b>	
Ms. Phinney .....	310
<b>International Women's Week</b>	
Mr. McCormick .....	311
<b>Montreal Neurological Institute</b>	
Mr. Daviault .....	311
<b>Goods and Services Tax</b>	
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre) .....	311
<b>Gemini Awards</b>	
Mr. English .....	311
<b>Huntington's Disease</b>	
Mrs. Brushett .....	312

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

<b>Securities</b>	
Mr. Gauthier .....	312
Mr. Peters .....	312
Mr. Gauthier .....	312
Mr. Peters .....	312
Mr. Gauthier .....	312
Mr. Peters .....	312
Mr. Loubier .....	313
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	313
Mr. Loubier .....	313
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	313
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Manning .....	313
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	313
Mr. Manning .....	314
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	314
Mr. Manning .....	314
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	314
<b>Department of Citizenship and Immigration</b>	
Mr. Nunez .....	314
Mrs. Robillard .....	314
Mr. Nunez .....	314
Mrs. Robillard .....	315
<b>Canadian Waterways</b>	
Mr. Cummins .....	315
Mr. Mifflin .....	315
Mr. Cummins .....	315
Mr. Mifflin .....	315
<b>Citadel of Quebec</b>	
Mr. Jacob .....	315
Mr. Collenette .....	315
Mr. Jacob .....	315
Mr. Collenette .....	316
<b>Goods and Services Tax</b>	
Mr. Solberg .....	316
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	316
Mr. Solberg .....	316
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	316
<b>Cuba</b>	
Mr. Sauvageau .....	316

Mr. Eggleton .....	316
Mr. Sauvageau .....	316
Mr. Eggleton .....	316
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Alcock .....	317
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	317
<b>Canadian Wheat Board</b>	
Mr. Breitreuz (Yellowhead) .....	317
Mr. Pickard .....	317
Mr. Breitreuz (Yellowhead) .....	317
Mr. Pickard .....	317
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Laurin .....	317
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	317
Mr. Laurin .....	317
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	318
<b>Interprovincial Trade</b>	
Mr. Strahl .....	318
Ms. McLellan .....	318
Mr. Strahl .....	318
Ms. McLellan .....	318
<b>Fisheries</b>	
Mr. Regan .....	318
Mr. Mifflin .....	318
<b>Communications</b>	
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	318
Ms. Copps .....	318
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	319
Ms. Copps .....	319
<b>Indian Affairs</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	319
Mr. Irwin .....	319
Mr. Duncan .....	319
Mr. Irwin .....	319
<b>Corporate Downsizing</b>	
Mr. Solomon .....	320
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	320
Mr. Solomon .....	320
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	320
<b>Speech from the Throne</b>	
<b>Resumption of debate on Address in Reply</b>	
Consideration resumed .....	320
Mr. Solomon .....	320
Mr. Bodnar .....	321
Mr. Marchi .....	322
Mr. Pomerleau .....	324
Mr. Thompson .....	325
Mr. Telegdi .....	326
Mr. Bellehumeur .....	326
Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil) .....	328
Mr. Asselin .....	328
Mrs. Picard .....	329
Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil) .....	330
Mr. Mitchell .....	332
Mr. Ménard .....	333
Mr. Schmidt .....	334
Mr. Canuel .....	334
Mr. Allmand .....	335
Mr. Dubé .....	336

Mr. Thompson .....	338
Mr. Duhamel .....	339
Mrs. Hayes .....	340
Mr. Bryden .....	342
Mr. McWhinney .....	343
Mr. Strahl .....	344
Mr. Ménard .....	345
Mrs. Bakopanos .....	345

Mr. Dubé .....	348
Mr. Pomerleau .....	348
Mrs. Bakopanos .....	348
Mr. Sauvageau .....	348
Mr. Nunez .....	348
Mr. Bryden .....	350
Mrs. Debien .....	350

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