



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, September 25, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

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

OFFICIAL REPORT

On page 19 of *Hansard* Wednesday, September 24, 1997,
the second member's statement should start:

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 25, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments which were made by the government.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with section 3(32) of the Canada Elections Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of a form prescribed by the Chief Electoral Officer, pursuant to subsection 46(1) of the act.

* * *

CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT BOARD ACT

Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-2, an act to establish the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

• (1005)

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

* * *

DNA IDENTIFICATION ACT

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-3, an act respecting DNA identifica-

tion and to make consequential amendments to the Criminal Code and other acts.

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

Hon. Andy Scott: Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that it is the government's intention to propose that this bill be referred to committee before second reading, pursuant to Standing Order 73(1).

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

Hon. John Manley (for the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

* * *

CANADA COOPERATIVES ACT

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-5, an act respecting co-operatives.

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

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[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-201, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (oath or solemn affirmation).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to introduce a bill to amend the Parliament of Canada Act concerning the solemn affirmation.

[*English*]

Presently members of Parliament swear allegiance exclusively to the Queen. I now present a private member's bill that would require the newly elected MPs when they are elected to swear allegiance to Canada and the Constitution as well as swearing allegiance to the Queen.

Routine Proceedings

I would like to thank all those members who read my proposed amendment, as I did, at the swearing-in ceremony.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry but I did not see the hon. member for Abitibi second the motion when I read it.

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

* * *

CANADA HEALTH ACT

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-202, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (nutrition services).

• (1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to introduce a bill to amend the Canada Health Act concerning nutrition services.

The purpose of this bill is to include the terms “nutrition services” in the definition of “insured health services” within the present Canada Health Act.

Nutrition is an essential component of an individual’s health. We know that Canadian dieticians are the only health professionals with the proper training and skills to assess a person’s nutritional health. Moreover, the Canadian government recognizes them as a key resource in drawing up health policies such as Canada’s Food Guide, which provides guidelines for a healthy diet.

I therefore believe that it is important, both for the public and for the professional association of dieticians, that they be officially recognized and integrated into the Canada Health Act.

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

* * *

[*English*]

AGREEMENT ON INTERNAL TRADE IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-203, an act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to introduce my private member’s bill, an act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act.

The agreement on internal trade, which was signed nearly three years ago, was a start. However, it has not been completed. The

main obstacle to completion has been the term consensus which was used by the negotiating committee comprising of cabinet, representatives from the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

This committee has interpreted consensus to mean unanimity. Therefore, any one government, regardless of the population it represents, can impede the progress of the agreement and of the Canadian economic union. This is what has happened many times.

My bill will allow the federal government to use its constitutional responsibility under sections 91 and 121 of the Canadian Constitution to complete sections of the agreement on internal trade.

It is important to note that this action will only be taken in situations where a co-operative agreement between the provinces has been sought and has not been reached. This proposed approval formula will require the agreement of at least two-thirds of the provinces that have at least 50 percent of the Canadian population. This provision will facilitate the removal of internal trade barriers and present growth opportunities to Canadian businesses which previously have been restricted by these interprovincial trade barriers.

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

* * *

CULTURAL GRANTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ACT

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-204, an act to require that in the advertising and at the opening of a cultural project supported by public money a public acknowledgement of the grant be made.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals speak quite frequently of protecting Canada’s culture which is a very noble cause I am sure. They speak of it in terms of motherhood and apple pie.

The difficulty is that many times Canadians are appalled at the choices they make or the people who they assign to make the choices of the projects. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of accountability of those dollars.

The purpose of this bill is to raise awareness of Canadians to the choices that the appointees of the Liberals are making. Second, it will give some acknowledgement to the long suffering taxpayer.

On the positive, it is my contention in this bill that when the decision-makers are aware that their choices are going to be made public they will be making more responsible choices.

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

Routine Proceedings

• (1015)

USER FEE ACT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-205, an act to provide for parliamentary scrutiny and approval of user fees set by federal authority and to require public disclosure of the amount collected as user fees.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a bill to provide for parliamentary scrutiny and approval of user fees set by federal authority and to require public disclosure of the amount collected as user fees.

In the 1993 auditor general's report the AG said: "We are concerned that Parliament cannot readily scrutinize the user fees established by contracts and other non-regulatory means. There does not exist a government wide summary of the fees being charged, the revenues raised and the authorities under which they are established".

The design of this bill is to ensure that there is scrutiny and that we get a handle on the fact that revenues from user fees have doubled in the last 10 years under Liberal and Tory governments, something that should concern all Canadians.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

THE SENATE

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in the House of Commons to present a petition signed by members of my constituency who are residents of several communities, Williams Lake, Horsefly, McLeese Lake, Tatla Lake and Lac La Hache.

My constituents call on Parliament to urge the governor general to appoint a duly elected person to the forthcoming vacant British Columbia seat in the Senate of Canada.

INDIAN POINT

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition from leasees of Indian Point subdivision on Adams Lake in my riding.

Most of these people are senior citizens who retired to homes on land they are leasing from the Adams Lake Indian Band. They are listing many grievances against the crown, including having to surrender their homes without compensation when their current lease ends in the year 2010.

The petitioners pray that the House of Commons will urge the federal government to compensate them. I strongly urge this government to grant their request.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition signed by 396 people from the riding of Bruce—Grey and area.

Prompted by the events in Cambridge, Ontario the petitioners wish to draw to the attention of the Parliament the issue of nudity in public places. They call on Parliament to clarify and reinforce the relevant sections of the Criminal Code that prohibit indecent exposure and nudity in public places.

[*Translation*]

GASOLINE TAX

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition signed by 25 constituents in Carleton—Gloucester.

The undersigned call upon Parliament not to proceed with an increase in the federal tax on gas.

[*English*]

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition. Pursuant to Standing Order 36, allow me to present to the House a petition signed by 25 petitioners of Carleton—Gloucester.

The petitioners ask that Parliament amend the Criminal Code to ensure that the sentence given to anyone convicted of causing death while driving impaired carries a minimum sentence of seven years and a maximum of fourteen years.

• (1020)

THE FAMILY

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table today. The first one is from a group of residents of my riding of Cypress Hills—Grasslands who are petitioning Parliament to ensure that section 43 of Canada's criminal code is retained in its present form so that parents will still have their existing right to discipline their children in a reasonable manner as they see fit.

I have two petitions to present which are identical in form and content also from residents of my riding.

They wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, even though not officially ratified by all provinces, has ramifications that if the convention is fully ratified and implemented in Canada, bureaucrats and the courts will be legally required to determine what is the best interests of the child, not the parents; that by ratifying the convention Canada—

The Address

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The rules say the hon. member cannot read the petition. He may only summarize the petition in his remarks. I would invite him to stick to the rules in this regard and give us a summary of the petition rather than read the entire petition to the House.

Mr. Lee Morrison: They request that Parliament support Motion No. 300 which states that in the opinion of the House the government should authorized a proclamation to be issued by the governor general amending section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to recognize the fundamental rights of individuals to pursue family life free from undue interference by the state and to recognize the fundamental rights and responsibility of parents to direct the upbringing of their children and urge the legislative assemblies of other provinces to do likewise.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

The Deputy Speaker: I am in receipt of a notice of motion under Standing Order 52 from the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 52 to seek leave to move a motion to adjourn the House for the purposes of having an emergency debate on the multilateral agreement on investment.

With your permission I will say a word or two as to why I am seeking that emergency debate. This is an agreement which is presently being negotiated in the context of the OECD between Canada and other OECD countries. It is an agreement which when arrived at will bind Canada for 20 years. It will tie the hands of future Parliaments. It is an agreement which has not been debated in the House. The government has signalled no intention to have it debated in the House or to have an appropriate public consultation process. It is an issue which concerns a great many Canadians with respect to sovereignty and the ability of governments to act in the public interest and the increasing restrictions on that ability of governments to act in the public interest and in the common good.

I believe it only makes sense that we use this standing order to allow ourselves the opportunity to debate this particular agreement, to hear what the government has to say and to hear what other members of Parliament have to say on this very important matter.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has heard the representations of the hon. member and has made a review of the material submitted in respect of the application. While no doubt the matter is of considerable interest, the Chair does not take the view that this is a matter of emergency or one that would justify setting aside the normal business of the House in order to debate the subject.

I note that the House is currently debating the address in reply from the Speech from the Throne which offers a very general debate in which members are free to make remarks on any subject they wish. I would like the hon. member to participate in that debate in respect of this matter at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1025)

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from September 24 consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to take part in this reply to the Speech from the Throne which was laid before the House two days ago.

Our government has presented a comprehensive agenda, one that speaks to the basic values of Canadians. It ensures opportunity for all members of society in all regions of the nation and creates jobs, especially for our young. It ensures universal quality health care for all. It provides every child with a fair chance in life, as the prime minister spoke so eloquently about yesterday, and it maintains a united country able to fulfill these values and reach the dreams he talked of yesterday in the House.

The Speech from the Throne outlined Canada's ability to trade with and draw investment from all parts of the globe. This is essential to the success of that agenda.

With regard to international trade, the Speech from the Throne addressed four key elements. The first outlined the important role trade plays in the economic life of Canada. Most important, it is

absolutely crucial to the creation of jobs. One out of three Canadian jobs is directly tied to trade. Forty per cent of our GDP is directly tied to exports and trade, which is one of the highest, if not the highest, percentages of any western economic base.

Canadian sales abroad come to more than a quarter of a trillion dollars. Every \$1 billion of trade in merchandise creates or sustains 11,000 jobs for Canadian workers.

[*Translation*]

The benefits of trade extend to every part of our economy and affect all Canadians, the farmer who grows wheat, the engineer who designs tractors and the factory worker who builds planes.

[*English*]

We are all touched by trade and we all share in its benefits. Around the world barriers are coming down, markets are opening up and opportunities are being created which were simply unimaginable a few years ago, opportunities which are absolutely critical to Canada's continued economic prosperity. Canadians have come to the full realization that we are too small a nation to simply to trade with each other.

Second, the Speech from the Throne underscores that to take full advantage of these opportunities we must expand our trade base further. To do so governments must work better and smarter. Departments must speak to each other in a consistent single message. We must seek closer partnerships with the business community. We must redefine the role our trade associations and chambers can play for business people who are seeking new markets abroad.

Expansion will ultimately mean that small and medium size businesses will have to play a greater role in Canada's global trade. They must become a more integral part and focus of our global trade strategy. Currently only 10 percent of Canada's small and medium size firms directly export. A great number of small businesses are suppliers that feed the large corporations that do trade. We know there is more room to grow for small and medium size businesses in the world of export.

While Canada is very much an exporting nation, we have not become a nation of exporters. Fifty large corporations account for over 50 percent of Canada's trade. Our goal therefore is to double the number of companies exporting by the year 2000, which will mean a greater take up by the small and medium size firms.

• (1030)

It is only logical that if we point to small businesses being the cornerstone of our domestic economy, if we speak to small businesses creating the jobs in all of our communities, it stands to reason that by increasing and encouraging more small businesses to join our large ones on the international field we will reap the very

The Address

same benefits that these enterprises give our communities domestically.

To be successful in this doubling of the number of companies which will be in the export business, it will also mean harnessing the energy and talent of our women entrepreneurs, for one-third of Canadian firms today are either owned or led by women entrepreneurs, firms that are providing almost two million jobs for Canadians across the country. On top of it all, women CEOs are creating jobs at a rate nearly four times the national average. This is a track record that we cannot ignore because clearly it is creating benefits that we cannot forgo.

That is why in November I will be leading the first Canadian business women's international trade mission to Washington, D.C. We expect more than 100 women entrepreneurs and executives will join us in exploring the lucrative \$11 billion mid-Atlantic market. This mission will include new entries to the export field and experienced exporters who will perform the important role of mentoring.

[*Translation*]

The cultural and educational sectors will also be part of a team marketing products that generate wealth and employment while enhancing Canada's image in the world and making us proud to be Canadians.

[*English*]

Utilizing the capacity of our modern economy and the diversity and strength of our citizens, the entire world must be Canada's market. Therefore we are building on our transatlantic heritage to Europe and our close links with the United States. Of course we are a Pacific nation as well and our view of the Americas does not stop at the Rio Grande. Canadians have links to every corner of the globe.

People and companies trade with countries they feel most comfortable with, in languages they can speak and in cultures they understand. That is one of Canada's biggest advantages. Indeed it is Canada's competitive advantage in the sense that no part of the world is alien to our Canadian citizenry.

More than anything else the team Canada missions which our Prime Minister began have demonstrated these very strengths and are broadening the spectrum of Canadians involved in global trade. Large as well as small and medium size firms, women entrepreneurs, Canadians of all origins and backgrounds, provinces, municipalities, educational institutions, all are on team Canada thereby giving Canadians a stake in every part of the world and every part of the world a stake in Canada.

That is why I am confident that the next team Canada voyage in January to Latin America will continue this winning tradition and above all will promote the formula that Canada works best when Canada works together.

The Address

The third element raised by the Speech from the Throne is that we must devote the same kind of energies and effort to attracting investment as we do to stimulating trade in merchandise. Direct foreign investment in Canada increased by some 8 percent last year, reaching almost \$180 billion.

[*Translation*]

Investments bring us capital, research and development, as well as strategic and financial alliances that can help small businesses move from exclusively regional to world markets.

[*English*]

Ultimately investment generates jobs. For every \$1 billion worth of investment in Canada, 45,000 jobs over a five year period are created or sustained.

• (1035)

At the same time the multilateral agreement on investment which we are negotiating currently with the OECD will provide us with a secure and stable framework of rules for Canadians investing abroad. That investment is sizeable. At the end of last year Canadian investment not only by companies but by pension funds of our seniors and Canadians across the country was estimated at over \$170 billion.

To promote more investment in Canada however, we must be even more aggressive in promoting Canada around the world. The world is growing ever more competitive by the day. As more countries industrialize we cannot assume that our share of global investment will remain constant. In fact in a number of countries while our investment and our trade is going up, our market share in that region is going down. It means that we cannot rest on our past laurels. It means that we have to compete with the best. We have to keep up with the Joneses and sometimes you are as good as your last trade deal.

That is why it is a priority for me and this government to put forward the case for Canada and to remind people around the world that the country the UN found to be the best place to live is also one of the best places to work and to invest. It is to remind people, as the Prime Minister did yesterday, of the extraordinary efforts that this government placed in putting our economy and our finances on a solid footing; yes, for Canadians at home first and foremost, but at the same time making it more attractive for investors abroad.

Finally the Speech from the Throne emphasized the leadership role that Canada plays and must continue to play in liberalizing trade around the globe. Freer trade has been positive for Canada. Over the past few years our export figures have increased exponentially. It is no accident that Canada is expected to record the highest rate of employment and growth of all the G-7 countries this year and next.

It is important to note however that if trade has been successful for Canada—and it has—we can attract investment and promote more trade as long as we are dealing in a transparent, rules based system of law. That assures nations like ours the opportunity of equal treatment with larger trading partners. Rules for Canada and for other countries are the equalizer. That is why Canada must always help to write the rules and not walk away from the table where the rules are being written.

Whether it is the successful Canada-U.S. trade relationship, the largest that the world knows—every day \$1 billion moves in trade between our two countries quietly and effectively and it is 95 percent hassle free, so at no time should we allow the 5 percent of irritants to define this great relationship—or whether it is in helping to set the agenda at the World Trade Organization, it is this rules based system which has allowed us to reduce our barriers to trade while at the same time promoting our vital interests as a nation.

Canada is also helping to draw the countries of Asia-Pacific closer together, a region which includes the world's fastest growing economies.

Last year the Prime Minister signed an action plan with the European Community that speaks to a strong and dynamic future, including increased trade and investment, rather than simply resting on past glories, as great as those glories were.

Canada is also championing the free trade area of the Americas and is seeking a closer relationship with the countries of Mercosur.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Three years ago in Miami, the concept of a free trade zone of the Americas seemed a far off dream. Three weeks ago in Brazil, I became convinced more than ever before that plans for a trade agreement covering the entire hemisphere are about to materialize.

[*English*]

It is absolutely vital that Canada continues to look outward not inward, because if the world moves without you—and make no mistake that the global march is very much on—then who really gets left behind?

The world has experienced protectionism and has suffered through its consequences. The protectionist rage which snapped a golden age of trade in the U.S. in the 1930s turned a severe recession into a great depression. The world learned from this rather dark lesson, leading to Bretton Woods and the creation of an international rules based trading system.

Canadians know that we cannot build a fortress and lock ourselves inside. Neither is our goal free trade at any cost. On the contrary, we must always preserve and promote the values and traditions that Canadians hold dear.

The Address

Trade and investment are simply not a matter of crunching numbers or posting figures. The bottom line for trade should be and must always be people, and their bottom line is jobs. It provides the revenue we need to maintain a quality life and a universal health care system. It provides those revenues, the national wealth we need to secure a good start for all of our Canadian children and to provide opportunities for all Canadians in all parts of our country.

Yesterday the Prime Minister talked of trying to help youngsters get on to the other side of the fence, to lower the fence and to help them see the other side which as he said is always greener. I believe that on the matter of trade, Canada is doing just that. It is jumping over that fence.

It was not too many years ago that our country contemplated a free trade agreement with the United States. There were concerns, indeed fears, among Canadian communities of whether this deal would work for Canada, of whether we would be able to survive, of whether we would be able to be competitive with the largest economic market the world knows. Thanks to a rules based system and thanks to an independent way of breaking those log jams, not only has Canada been able to survive, but Canada has been able to win.

That is why we went on to sign NAFTA, and a free trade agreement with Chile, and a free trade agreement with Israel. Canadians obviously have recognized the absolute necessity of connecting with the bigger world outside of Canada for the purposes of keeping our economy strong and prosperous.

Canada has rare strengths and enormous potential. We are competent, we are competitive and we are confident. In the world of global trade and investment, Canada has come of age.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the minister to his new portfolio. As he said during his speech, trade is a very important area for Canada. He noted that barriers to trade are coming down worldwide and that Canada is very dependent upon trade. I would agree with him.

I welcome the Liberal caucus to the area of free trade. One by one, the Liberals are slowly becoming believers. It was not always the case. In some cases they are actually born again free traders. I welcome that conversion, albeit a little bit late.

• (1045)

I am concerned with the government's approach in a few areas and would like to ask the minister some questions on that. I am concerned about its approach to adopting new trade regimes around the world such as a new trade deal with Chile.

We are now talking about one with Mercosur, which I welcome, but we have not done the homework to make it possible for our businesses to take advantage. We have the worst record in the G-7 countries of trade barriers within our own country. As a matter of fact, we have more barriers to trade in Canada than there are in the entire European Union. That is simply not acceptable.

When the minister talks about barriers coming down, I suggest the next time team Canada is out on a mission perhaps it should take a team Canada mission right here at home to dismantle trade barriers that are making it very difficult for our businesses to take advantage of our trade deals.

In fact a private member's bill was introduced this morning by my colleague from Lakeland talking about just that. I would hope the Liberals on the other side would support that private member's bill and maybe even lift it up and adopt it as their own to get rid of the trade barriers that are limiting us.

I am also concerned that the government is not using the processes the minister talked about to settle disputes. We have a very good dispute settling mechanism within NAFTA and now within the World Trade Organization. What happened when it came time to use them on durum wheat a couple of years ago, softwood lumber and Helms-Burton? They never used the processes that were put in place.

I challenge the minister to tell me why and what they will do about that instead of accepting export caps and accepting intimidation from the United States. I want to know why we are not using the processes that have been put in place.

I want to know what the government is doing to bring down internal trade barriers in this country. At our committee on small and medium size enterprises we heard businesses state that they had actually moved from Ontario into Michigan because they could do better trade with the provinces in Canada that way than they could from Ontario. That is simply unacceptable.

What will they do to correct this problem? What will they do about using the processes we have in place to settle disputes?

Hon. Sergio Marchi: Mr. Speaker, let me first congratulate my hon. friend for being appointed as his party's spokesperson on international trade. I say to him and to his colleagues that I very much look forward to working with him on this important file to the benefit, ultimately, of Canadians and the Canadian economy.

He also touched upon the history of the Liberal Party. I urge him to reread the history of political parties a little more carefully. If he did so he would see very clearly that the history of the Liberal Party has always been one of a trade liberalizing party, a party favouring and wanting to bring down barriers.

The Address

On the contrary, the history of the party he and many of his colleagues supported before the Reform Party, namely the Conservative Party, has always been one of protectionism and building up the walls. In terms of the free trade agreement debates and the NAFTA debates, yes, our party had something to say; but our party, whether it was Mr. Turner, our former leader, or our trade critics at the time, never said that we were against freer trade.

We stood up for fair trade. We stood up for and spoke to a rule based mechanism. We spoke to a dispute mechanism that would not allow the might to be right but for the dispute to be settled based on facts.

Those are the battles the Liberal Party has fought, which has resulted in the side agreements on both labour and environment and the rules we as a country need to survive and obviously do very well. I think the member has the history on that issue quite backward.

He talked about the business community not being prepared to look as aggressively to a free trade area of the Americas or Mercosur. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our business community is incredibly bullish in the opportunities it perceives for companies in our country in the area of the Americas.

Our trade has shot up. Our investments in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico have gone up. It has actually come from the business community for us to be facilitating trade by getting our policy signals right. It is very anxious to be in the free trade area of the Americas. Obviously it is anxious to get on a plan to go with the Prime Minister to another team Canada mission in Latin America.

• (1050)

Yes, the member is right about internal trade barriers. He is absolutely right that as we liberalize trade around the world, as we look to liberalize the Americas or APEC or get closer to Europe or the United States, that somehow in a very contradictory way these ancient walls still exist in Canada.

We have been working very hard on that file. My colleague, the Minister of Industry, has brought together his provincial colleagues numerous times. There was a reference in our throne speech to bringing down those walls. In the last meeting of the premiers I took considerable hope in the fact that all premiers but one was prepared to begin to bring down those barriers.

I urge the member and his party to talk to the provinces that have fought and resisted those barriers coming down. It is not this government. We have actually tried to lead the coalition and consensus of the provinces to bring down the barriers and ultimately make those companies better prepared and more competitive to face the world.

The member's last point was on dispute mechanisms. He said that we needed to work closely with the business community. On the other hand he said that we had to use those mechanisms.

When it comes to whether we should or should not activate those mechanisms quite often it comes from advice from the industry. If we take any commodity, many times the overwhelming consensus of not wanting to trigger a mechanism does not come essentially and exclusively from a government or a minister but from the industry. It too has to size up: "Do we go to the wall? Do we fight on this issue? Or, do we try to manage the trade so that we will forgo the kinds of expenses and the kinds of energies obviously implicit in any fight on any mechanism?"

I am also concerned and troubled, if it begins to set a trend, that every issue will get managed. Managed trade is not freer trade and one way trade is a dead end. We have to take stock of how the industry feels on a particular issue as opposed to simply going to the wall and in the end only hurting the industry even more.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The idea of the 10 minute question and answer period is that there be an opportunity for a number of members to rise. I do not know why the minister was so particularly anxious about receiving a question from the NDP that he used up all the time. He was asked a question and he went on and on. The idea is to have a variety of questions and answers. I did not feel that the entire 10 minutes had expired.

The Deputy Speaker: There were approximately 20 to 25 seconds left in the 10 minutes and the Speaker decided to terminate it because I did not feel that a question could be asked in 20 seconds and answered in 20 seconds.

Perhaps members who spoke were long winded for a period of questions and comments, but I think the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona who has been in this place a long time knows that sometimes the questions are short and the answers are short and sometimes they are long in both cases. This happened to be one of those where there was a lengthy question and a lengthy answer.

I am sorry that the hon. member did not get a chance to ask a question, but I am sure he will have an opportunity later in the day.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I start by congratulating Mr. Speaker and his peers on ascending to the chair once again. I know of the Speaker's interest in this position. I know he will enjoy his time even though, as some people suggest, it may be a difficult Parliament.

The Address

I also congratulate all members of the House on their election to the House of Commons. It is a great privilege to be here.

I certainly thank the constituents of Medicine Hat for placing their trust with me once again. It is a great honour. I will do my level best to ensure that I deliver their message loud and clear to the House of Commons.

I rise to address the throne speech delivered on Tuesday by the governor general. I will touch on what I think is, at least in the economic spirit, the key point in the throne speech from which all decisions in it will flow. That is the decision in the spring during the election campaign when the government said that it would devote about 50 per cent of its surpluses, any surpluses that it realized, to new spending. The other 50 per cent would go toward tax relief and debt reduction.

• (1055)

What criteria did the government use to determine how this formula would work? What were the criteria? I do not recall any consultation with the people of Canada asking them how they wanted to spend any surpluses. I do not recall that at all. I do not recall any focus groups or any polling. I do not remember any of that.

Two years ago when the government decided it would create a new \$2 coin, there were consultations to decide what would go on the coin. However there were no consultations on what to do with the 75 billion \$2 coins the taxpayers send to the government every year. There were no consultations on that, but it was very committed to ensuring that we got the \$2 coin with the polar bear.

The next issue implicit in the government's decision not to consult people is its belief that the money from the Canadian public actually belongs to the Liberal Party. That seems to be implicit in this.

The issue here—and it is something successive Liberal and Tory governments have missed for a long, long time—is that money belongs to Canadian taxpayers. Canadian taxpayers work hard and long, in fact probably longer and harder than just about any country in the industrialized world, to produce taxes for the government to spend on their behalf. Certainly it is time for governments to recognize this and acknowledge them in the form of consultation process. Unfortunately that did not happen.

Specifically in the throne speech, once we get beyond the decision to spend 50 per cent on new programs and the decision seemingly to spend 50 per cent on tax reduction and debt reduction, we encounter the actual words in the speech. There is one line about tax relief and debt reduction. We should gild it. It should be framed. It is on page 4 and is the only reference in the whole document. It reads:

It will seek to devote one-half of the surplus in this mandate to addressing the social and economic needs of Canadians. The other half will go to a combination of reducing taxes and the national debt.

Where does it go after that? For the next 20 pages all we hear are plans on how to spend Canadians' money. It does not even end there, because on a subsequent day we have the Prime Minister announcing in his speech that we will spend even more money in a new endowment the government thinks is necessary for the millennium.

Then we hear that the government is contemplating buying helicopters, the self-same helicopters it chastised the Conservatives for wanting to buy. Truly I wonder what is going on here. It is as though Pierre Elliott Trudeau never left this place. There is a social program in every pot.

We should be very concerned. It has taken us 27 years to get out of a deficit situation but the government, ignorant of the 27 years that have gone before us, now seems intent on going back and starting to spend all over again.

The big concern—and I am glad to see the media is raising this as well—is that the government never set a base line anywhere in the document upon which it will determine its surpluses. Now it is very possible that it will spend all its surpluses before we even get to a surplus point. It is already borrowing against future surpluses.

We will have a very insignificant surplus. Therefore we will not have the money that should go to Canadians in the form of debt retirement and tax relief.

One question the government needs to answer very soon is what is the base line upon which it will determine what the surpluses really are. Then we can have an honest debate within the narrow bounds the government has laid out about how much money should go to taxes and debt retirement. I am very critical of what is in the throne speech from an economic point of view. I am very disappointed. However, I believe it is the role of the official opposition to also offer some constructive criticism. I would argue that the Reform Party has done that in spades over the last few weeks by offering not only a discussion paper on some of the alternatives to what we could do with the surplus but to inform the debate and start a consultation process.

• (1100)

We believe it is very important to consult with Canadians on this issue. As I pointed out earlier, it is Canadians' money. They deserve to have a say in the whole issue. It is a novel approach in this place to recognize that the money belongs to Canadians. They worked long and hard for it. In a moment I will tell the House just how long and hard they work compared to citizens from other countries around the world.

We have produced a document called "Beyond a Balanced Budget". I want to draw from it right now to explain how the Reform Party would approach the ad hoc debate that is occurring

The Address

today in the country about what to do with any surplus. It is ad hoc because the government has chosen not to involve Canadians in it. However, in our role as official opposition we have decided that we would like to do that. We do that by asking seven basic questions.

First, what is a realistic projection of future surpluses once the federal books are balanced?

Second, what is the optimal level of government?

Third, can these surpluses be increased by more responsible federal spending?

Fourth, what is the optimal level of taxes?

Fifth, what is the optimal level of debt?

Sixth, how can we change the spending patterns of government to better reflect the priorities of Canadians?

Seventh, if a public consensus can be achieved with respect to an appropriate level and pattern of federal spending, taxation and indebtedness, what measures are required to ensure the federal government respects those targets and lives within its means?

Those are the seven questions that we want to put to Canadians. We have already started the process and we argue it is something that the federal government should do. If Canadians want to read this document it is available to them on the Internet at www.Reform.ca/babb. I will try to remember to mention that at the end of my speech as well.

Let me go through some of those seven specific areas to lay out why the Reform Party has huge concerns about the whole approach the government is taking with what would be a surplus, if the government does not spend it all before it actually got there.

The first point comes from the section in our document on the size of the surplus. What is a realistic projection of future surpluses once the federal budget is balanced?

The first point I want to make is that when we use the government's own projections we find that probably by the year 2001 or 2002, which would be the end of its mandate, it will have a surplus of approximately \$14 billion annually. That is a very conservative estimate. Others estimate as much as \$20 billion. Of course, that suggests that the government will be spending about \$7 billion to \$10 billion on new programs every year by the end of its mandate. This is the same sort of increase we had in spending during the 1970s that got us into this whole problem in the first place.

The second section I want to touch on is the part on the optimal level of government. I point out in the second section of our paper this quote. "While provincial spending increased from 2.5 percent of GDP in 1960 to 6 percent of GDP in 1995 and local government

spending went from 4.74 percent to almost 6 percent, signifying greater participation in the provision of direct goods and services in each province, the federal level only dipped from 6.2 percent of GDP to 4.22 percent of the GDP over the same timeframe". In other words, the provinces and the municipalities have done their part. In their jurisdictions they have done what they needed to do to realize the needs of their citizens. However, at the same time the federal government had trouble letting go. It cannot for a moment consider, and this was especially true under previous Liberal administrations, letting go of some power. I would argue that is one of the reasons we have a constitutional problem that never ends. The neverendum they call it, and it is certainly true.

• (1105)

We argue it is time to look at the optimal level of government. We want to talk about responsible federal spending and whether these surpluses can be increased. During the election campaign we pointed out how we could shrink the size of government while improving services for health care, higher education and research and development. That would leave us with bigger surpluses. In the third section we talk about that. \$24 billion in surpluses under a Reform government with the chance to implement some of our ideas would mean more money for deficit reduction, more money for tax reduction and money that would go toward important programs like health care and higher education.

In the fourth section we talk about the optimal level of taxes. It is important, especially after the international trade minister has spoken, to point out how much we are at a competitive disadvantage to other trading partners around the world. In the G-7 Canada is the highest taxed as a percentage of personal income tax to GDP of any country, by far. Our personal income tax rate is 52 percent higher than the rest of the G-7 nations and 25 percent higher than the industrialized countries in the OECD. Canada's personal income tax rate is through the roof.

This has a tremendous negative impact, like the brain drain for instance. We lose all kinds of very highly qualified people to the United States and other countries around the world because the personal income tax burden drives them away.

If we were able to drop those tax burdens we would have an increased labour supply, increased participation in the labour force, lower gross wage costs for employers, increased entrepreneurship and business start-up. There is no end of benefits to lowering personal income tax. It is time for the government to start to consider those things, and we want to talk to the Canadian public about it.

In the fifth section of our paper we talk about the optimal level of debt. We point out the horrendous impact of the debt. We pay \$47 billion in interest payments on the debt each and every year. That

The Address

adds up to a tax burden of \$3,518 in taxes per year or \$295 each and every month for every Canadian taxpayer.

If we had that money to apply to health care, we could run every single hospital in the country for two years on one year's interest payments on the Canadian debt. It is time to start reducing the debt. We make that argument forcefully in our paper but the government has shut off that option by deciding it is going to spend its way to prosperity.

In the next section of the paper we talk about responsible spending. We point out that because of things like interest payments on the debt the federal government has reduced its transfers for health care by 35 percent. Yesterday the health minister tried to deny that it is 40 percent, so we will grant him that it is just 35 percent, \$6.8 billion. And Liberals claim to be members of the party of compassion.

The Liberals have closed more hospitals in the country than any provincial government, yet they say that they care about Canadians. If they truly do, it is time for them to come to grips with the problem of the debt, with the problem of taxes. Specifically, if they get a handle on government spending and quit spending more and more and more, they will be able to devote more money to the programs Canadians really care about.

In the final section of our paper we talk about the need for government to be accountable. I know that is a novel theme in this government. We know the government has promised in the past to be more accountable. The Liberals talked of ethics, watch dogs and that sort of thing but it has never come to be. We argue very strongly that it is time we had balanced budget legislation.

As we point out in our paper, a balanced budget law would be an important first step in reassuring Canadians from coast to coast that the painful tax increases and reductions in the social safety net that were made necessary by previous governments will never occur again.

That is what is in our paper. We will be going across the country during the next several months asking people to help us bring forward some recommendations for the federal government, to give it a road map so it understands where Canadians are at on these important issues.

• (1110)

Outside of the unity debate there is probably not a more important issue that the government will deal with in its mandate, yet it has decided to shut Canadians out of the process. I think that is ridiculous.

This whole debate reminds me of a mutiny. It is as though a mutiny has occurred on the ship of state, while the captain, the Prime Minister, is on shore golfing, and the first mate, the finance minister, is asleep in his cabin. The Minister of Canadian Heritage along with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of

Transport have taken over the helm of the ship of state—and I am borrowing an analogy which the leader of the Reform Party used yesterday—and decided to go to Sweden because that is where they saw the land of opportunity. However, they are going from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario but they have decided not to use the Welland Canal. They are going down the Niagara River. It is scary. I do not have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, what is at the end of the Niagara River.

Envision the Minister of Canadian Heritage with a parrot on her shoulder and a patch over both eyes. As they go down the river a din is heard in the distance. The minister says "Oh listen to the people applauding. They can hardly wait for us to arrive". The finance minister, now swabbing the deck at sword point, is saying "No, I don't think that is applause".

Can you imagine what the Canadian people are saying? They hear the rabble upstairs, they hear all the noise and they are very concerned because they too can hear the din. It is time for the government to recognize where it is headed with this throne speech. It is heading toward the falls. It is time it allowed Canadians to come up out of the hold to take control of the ship and turn it around. We will never in a 100 years solve the problems of the 1990s with the solutions of the 1970s.

It is time for the government to wake up and recognize that Canadians have a stake in this. This is the most important economic decision the government will make in its mandate, the most important decision it will make as it leads Canadians into the new millennium. Let us ensure that Canadians have a say in this. Let us ensure that their values are reflected in the direction in which the country goes.

Let us have some appreciation for the fact that the small business people are the job creators. Let us understand that they want to have some of the \$13 billion EI surplus. Let us understand that they are frightened to death that we are going to pass on a burden of \$600 billion worth of debt to their children. Let us have some appreciation for where Canadians are at and let us make sure that from here on the government hears what Canadians are saying. In the government's absence, the Reform Party will be there to stand up for them.

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Reform Party, both this hon. member's speech and the leader's speech yesterday. Their rhetoric and their imagery is improving. Unfortunately, their content and their comprehension remains at about the level of the previous Parliament.

I want to question the hon. member on the point he raised in his speech about the lack of consultation with the Canadian people. The issue of what will be done and where we will be going once the budget is balanced and once we have surpluses was a major plank in the Liberal platform. It was put to the people during the

The Address

electoral campaign and the majority of Canadians voted for the platform, as is evidenced by the composition of the House. If that is not consultation, what is?

Specifically, what is the member's opinion of the electoral process? What is the point of going to the people with electoral platforms and having them judged and voted on?

• (1115)

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest it is the ultimate naivety to suggest that every Canadian across the country decided they were going to cast a vote on the basis of one line in the Liberal red book. My friend says it was a major plank. I do not recall any ads running based on the 50 percent spending promise. I recall all kinds of ads where the prime minister was sitting down to coffee and suggesting that things were wonderful with him, but I really do not recall those ads about the 50 percent.

I would argue, and I think my Conservative friends over here would argue, on the big debate about national unity during the election campaign that a lot of people voted on that basis. A lot of people voted on the basis of cutting taxes. A lot of people had it in mind that there was an important issue of taxes that needed to be addressed and they cast their ballot on that. Some people cast their ballot on the basis of the MP who was running.

I would argue that it is simplistic for the member to suggest that the whole election campaign was based on that 50 percent promise. I would also mention that all the provinces have not only got balanced budgets now but they consulted their people. Then they had elections and they won. By and large, they won them.

It is extremely naive for the member to suggest that the reason that Canadians voted the Liberals in with a diminished mandate was because of their promise to spend 50 percent of any surpluses on new spending.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's comments on the throne speech. I appreciate his thoroughness and his straightforward comment.

He has obviously read the throne speech. Could he find anywhere in the throne speech where the government indicates its plans to purchase helicopters as a top priority?

I listened carefully when it was being read. I do not remember hearing any comment. I reread the throne speech and I saw no reference at all to the multibillion dollar purchase of helicopters.

It seems to me that if this were a priority of the government, it should at least have been mentioned in the throne speech.

My other question is that tax reform, as was indicated, was a major discussion in the last federal election and again I do not see much reference to tax reform in the throne speech. Does he agree with me that there was no mention of the helicopter purchase and could he clarify for the House his party's view of the purchase of helicopters? Do they support spending these moneys now on search and rescue helicopters?

Also he made comments about tax reform. Has his party given much thought to the fact that if there is going to be any tax reduction that it be in the form of reducing the GST as a way of assisting Canadians from all parts of the country at all levels in the socioeconomic scale?

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate hearing from the hon. member for Kamloops. He always provides thoughtful questions. He has asked me a number of questions.

First of all, I too have scoured the throne speech and I have yet to find the reference to the EH-101 helicopters. It just is not in there. Perhaps it was a typo.

Perhaps, on the other hand, the government is going to announce new programs each and every day which cannot all be included in this document unless it expands it dramatically.

The member also asked about tax reform. Tax reform is extraordinarily important. Canadians have talked about it for a long time. It is not in this document. I do not see it anywhere in the throne speech. It is not in here at all.

When we go to town hall meetings people often ask why we do not have a flat tax in this country, why the taxation system is not simplified. It is not in here at all.

My hon. friend has asked me about the GST, a very important issue. I think it is notable by its absence from the throne speech. Obviously the government is somewhat reluctant to talk about the GST. It has had its problems with it in the past, and we need not go over that. That is well known.

Suffice it to say my party believes very strongly that should we one day decide to balance the budget in this country, we hold out the option of reducing the GST in stages as we go along. It is part of our blue book policy. We leave that open for Canadians to tell us to do that.

• (1120)

That is part of our consultation. We have talked about a number of different tax reforms in our document. One that I think would have perhaps even a greater advantage than reducing the GST would be raising the minimum exemptions. Then it would truly help low income Canadians. In the election campaign we argued that we would take 1.3 million Canadians completely off the tax rolls by lifting up those minimum exemptions. That is the Reform approach to helping low income Canadians.

The Address

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with the number one issue that the member referred to. I would have thought the number one issue would be jobs.

When we look at Atlantic Canada, in some areas in the province of New Brunswick we have 40 percent unemployment. When we had the chamber of commerce take a look at our area and to ask what can we do, it said "we are not at a point at the present time whereby we can be independent of government assistance".

I hear people in the Reform Party stand up and say no more government programs, no more government assistance, no more need for it across this country. There is need. We want to be independent. We will be independent. We will get there but we cannot do it now. The government programs that have been put in place for the last three years have hurt us dramatically. We have the breakup of families. It is very difficult for our people. They want their dignity. I would think jobs would be number one and we cannot just do that with tax cuts. We have to have government programs.

I would like to hear from the member of the Reform Party on where he stands on that.

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, I thought all the NDP members were at that end.

The Reform Party plan would deliver about \$1 billion in tax relief to Atlantic Canada. We argue that is a much more effective way of ultimately not only delivering money into the hands of people in Atlantic Canada and allowing them to have more money for consumption but also ultimately what it does is allow small businesses to start to spring up. It starts to change the economy in Atlantic Canada.

We have outlined an entire plan to help Atlantic Canada get out of the morass that it is now in because of successive Liberal and Tory governments.

Our plan will lift Atlantic Canada up in terms of the economics of the country to the level of the other provinces. That is our plan.

I do not believe that we can continue to send transfers to Atlantic Canada all the time without other reforms that go on to fix the economy fundamentally so that it can take advantage of its ties with New England and that sort of thing so that we can ultimately give Atlantic Canadians the hope that they really do need and really do deserve.

Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to share my time with the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville.

It is an honour for me to be in this rather august Chamber representing the great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

My duty is to articulate the concerns of my constituents, to be their advocate. But in a broader sense we as federal members of Parliament have an even greater obligation, and that obligation is greater than to our own political parties. That obligation is to our country.

Our mission is not merely the preservation of political power but to harness the awesome strength that we have been given and channel it toward the perpetuation of freedom, peace, prosperity and unity. We must not bicker among ourselves when the future of our country hangs in the balance.

Our strength as a nation will be immeasurably enhanced if we continue to foster actively an environment that is conducive to achieving even greater unity as a nation. We must all be invigorated by our triumphs of the past, by the magic of the present and by our hopes and dreams of the future.

It is the endless possibilities of the future that we as parliamentarians must look toward by generously accepting new people, heartily believing in new ideas and boldly encouraging innovation. We must accept the value of dissent and daring and savour courageous controversy as a hallmark to courageous change.

• (1125)

It is necessary to remember that in order to achieve this vision for the future we must allow those blessed with the talent to reach for a higher calling, a higher destiny, on their own merit. It is equally important to remember that we must help those who through no fault of their own cannot help themselves.

There are some people who argue that the principal function of government is to clear the decks, clear the obstacles out of the way of the strong and the cream will rise to the top, whether that cream be rich and powerful individuals or rich and powerful regions of the country. This is wrong.

I unquestionably defy anyone who expounds the survival of the fittest model of living. That may be the basis by which we describe the process of evolution, but a government must associate itself with a higher moral and philosophical order. A country as blessed as Canada should be able to somehow find room at the table for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, work for the idle, care for the elderly and infirmed and hope for the destitute.

Some people say that we should not care about the other people, that we should treat them with disdain, that we should charge on and do our own thing. We must remember that we are a family. We are one family and we must stick together. We must share both benefits and burdens, strife and success fairly and equitably for the good of all.

Personally speaking, I am one from a family of ten. I have five sisters and four brothers. We do not always agree on everything,

The Address

but at the end of the day we come together. We are one. No family, no political party, no province and no country which ignores its troubled regions and troubled peoples while watching others thrive and prosper can call itself justified, decent or responsible.

It is the duty of any political party that wants to be given the mandate to lead our country in the future to reach out to all people in a non-partisan fashion. It is precisely this ability that marks the signature of a great leader. All great leaders have had an uncanny ability to take with them not only members of their own party, not only selected individuals, but with a unique combination of courage, determination, introspection and imagination an entire country.

[*Translation*]

However, imagination is no substitute for reality, and the reality is this: when citizens stand together, we feel stronger as a country. My son Tyler, who is 12, goes to a French school in Pembroke, Ontario. I think this is wonderful, but what is not so wonderful is that some Canadians would destroy our country for purely selfish reasons.

[*English*]

If need be we must join a crusade to keep this country together. We must turn lethargy into energy. We must counter misguided passion with focused conviction. We must overwhelm narrow minded nationalism with broad minded federalism. We must overpower this scurrilous innuendo with the unmasked truth.

The truth of the matter is that we live in a country called Canada which is acknowledged as the greatest country in the world in which to live. This acknowledgement comes as a result of our tremendous strengths. We are a very decent nation, capable of understanding, compromise and diplomacy. We are also a very accomplished nation. It was a Canadian who discovered insulin. It was a Canadian who invented the telephone, although considering the fact that I have two teenagers, I am not so sure about that invention for the time being.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

It was a Canadian who won two gold medals for speed skating at the Olympic games.

[*English*]

It was a Canadian who conceived of the notion of emergency forces, not for war but for peace. These are but a few of the accomplishments that Canadians have come forward with to leave a lasting legacy.

However this is not enough. We must do more. We must continue to work to make sure that every yesterday is a vibrant and beautiful dream of happiness and every tomorrow is a magnificent

vision of hope. We must continue to reach out to our fellow citizens, strengthen our bond and our identity as Canadians. We must continue to pursue excellence on behalf of our country Canada. We must continue to relentlessly challenge not only our own standards but those of the international community. We must continue to make our Canadian voice heard distinctly and bravely among other nations in the world.

As their federal member of Parliament, my duty is to galvanize the will of the citizenry of the great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, to represent their voice here on Parliament Hill bravely, with intense passion, fervent conviction and undying and unyielding determination so that we may travel through the 1990s and into the next millennium proud of our noble heritage, supported by our family and friends, enriched by our diversity of talent, invigorated by our unity of vision, empowered by our infinite hope, our undying optimism and our indomitable spirit. This is my duty and I will do so without fear and without favour.

I ask all members of Parliament to join with me in my resolve. For a newer, brighter, more beautiful frontier is within our grasp. Let us not fail at this critical time. Let us, yes, sprint forward together and continue to build a great country called Canada.

I close with the immortal words of Longfellow when he said, let us work and leave behind us footprints in the sands of time.

[*Translation*]

Longue vie au Canada.

[*English*]

Long live Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was listening with great interest to what the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke had to say, and I heard him defend this great Canada of ours as only assimilated French Canadians are capable of doing.

I want him to know that he is a perfect example of what I would never want to be. In this House he represents a diminished Quebec, a Quebec that has been swept under the rug, a Quebec that they want to erase from the map, the francophones that they intend to extinguish sooner or later, and as far as they are concerned, the sooner the better.

However, if we look at the history of Canada, although people say there were two founding peoples, the francophones were here first, 150 years before the new bosses of my hon. friend opposite. But how many are left today? They used to be the majority, but now not even 25 per cent of the population of this country speaks French. Some of them changed sides, and he is one of them. He should realize that.

It is sad but true that in a country that supports multiculturalism and has two official languages, one has been ignored and given no consideration whatsoever.

● (1135)

This is the reason for the presence of the Bloc Québécois members. They, too, are here to promote the rights of their electors, the rights of those who elected them to this House and just as legitimately as in the case of the hon. member. Maybe he decided to obliterate his past—footprints on the sands of time, as Longfellow put it—maybe he brushed all that away, maybe he sided with the Governor General in trying to tell us that the deportation of the Acadians was a sort of Club Med excursion, all expenses paid. I have no problem with that. There have always been people in the history of francophones in Canada to join those who oppose us, our adversaries, and to diminish us. I think the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is one of those, and he should be made aware of it.

I would like to know whether the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke acknowledges Quebecers as a people and their presence here for 350 years. I would like to have his answer, because this is the subject of an amendment to the speech from the throne. I would like him to tell me whether Quebecers are a people and whether he can reconcile that with the remarks of the Minister for International Trade, who said earlier he was capable of promoting Canadian culture.

But what is Canadian culture? I would like to hear what he has to say on that. Is it selling the Calgary stampede in Paris? Perhaps he could do that, but that is of no real interest to me. Just as selling the songs of Gilles Vigneault around the world is of no interest to the Reformers. I would like him to say how he plans to reconcile the two cultures, if he will admit that there are two in Canada. He would first have to admit that there are two peoples in Canada, and I am not sure he could do that.

So, I would ask the hon. member, not knowing where he is coming from, whether he acknowledges that Canada has two peoples and, if so, how he can promote the French culture he has totally lost.

Mr. Hec Clouthier: Mr. Speaker, my Canada includes Quebec and my friend opposite, even though he does not think Canada is a great and wonderful country. I am only a modest woodsman, but I fear he may have been hit on the head by a piece of wood. I cannot find the right words. It is great for me, I feel very strongly for that part of the country, and there is no problem.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I point out to hon. members that this is a five minute period of questions and comments following on a 10-minute speech. I think we might resume debate.

The Address

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke on his maiden speech. His points were well taken and I look forward to his continued participation in the debates of this House.

I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your recent appointment as Deputy Speaker of this assembly. I have every confidence that the team assembled possesses the necessary skills and abilities to successfully oversee the affairs of this 36th Parliament of Canada.

[*Translation*]

I am very happy to be here today.

[*English*]

The riding of Leeds—Grenville is a dynamic mix of agriculture, business, industry, the service sector and with the support of an efficient CTC and the efforts of enlightened entrepreneurs is fast becoming a tourist destination for the world.

As a newly elected member for this great riding, I want to thank all my constituents for their support and confidence. I want to assure them that although I am truly honoured it is the tremendous responsibility of representing them in Parliament that will serve to guide my actions.

As is customary in a maiden speech I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my predecessor, a man who quietly and effectively went about his work, a man whose actions demonstrated not only the political knowledge to differentiate between right and left but also a clear and fundamental understanding of the difference between right and wrong. He provided me with a vision of a better day as well as a weekly allowance and occasionally the keys to the family car.

● (1140)

History will show that Jim Jordan was a politician who clearly cared more for the public than he ever did about public relations. Throughout his career this approach was all too often dismissed as unsophisticated and old-fashioned but I believe he was ahead of his time. And as the political pundits are predicting chaos for this session of Parliament, it might serve us all well to revisit some of his qualities.

I am proud to add my voice in support of the Speech from the Throne. I wish to preface my comments with the point that the very fact we are now engaging in a discussion about how we might spend surpluses is a tribute to the sound monetary and fiscal management of the 35th Parliament of Canada.

The tough decisions and sacrifices that Canadians made have served to open doors of opportunity for us as a country. But we

The Address

have some fundamental decisions to make. The key here is that we are now in a position to debate and make those decisions and not have those decisions made for us.

One of the central themes of the throne speech was the commitment to co-operation between various levels of government.

I was born into a family of seven boys and can attest to the fact that co-operation is far easier to preach than to practise. But open participation in competent, transparent processes with clear evaluation mechanisms is the key to Canada's continued success on the world stage.

There is no doubt as recent history has shown that certain traditional federal powers have been better exercised at the provincial or even the municipal level, but gravity need not be the only force at work in this process. If the federal government is to exercise its responsibilities in a global and highly competitive world, then certain traditional provincial powers might be better exercised at the federal level. When we talk of a collaborative approach to strengthening and modernizing Canada's social union, let elected representatives focus on allocating powers to the government level where the interests of Canadians, not politicians, will be best served.

I was particularly pleased to hear the reference in the throne speech to environmental technologies and the potential for growth and global leadership. If we commit to targeting this vital sector with the goal of developing commercially viable, sustainable development practices, then we as a nation will not only have demonstrated the ability to live within our means, but we will also have developed the capacity to live within our world.

I want to be clear about this concept. It does not involve disadvantaging Canadian companies by enforcing high output standards. Certainly, regulation is required. But we need to put our collective energies into how governments can support sustainable practices given the self-policing concepts of profit and competition inherent in free markets. Canadian firms will be able to expand into emerging markets with higher quality products at lower prices because of, not in spite of, sustainable practices.

The political risks of such initiatives are being eliminated as successes are being documented. The popularity of recycling programs demonstrates that when efforts toward sustainability can be brought into a legitimate arena, the public will respond. The challenge for us then is to clearly bring all aspects of sustainability into the realm of legitimacy. That is going to require some fundamental shifts in thinking and a healthy dose of collective effort.

Business and engineering schools will need to begin to teach decision making models and algorithms that incorporate comprehensive costing principles. Certainly, disposal and remanufacturing

costs are every bit as real as inventory and transportation costs. Industry will need to recognize sustainable growth as the opportunity that it is.

As we continue to saturate markets and as technology shortens traditional product life cycles, the latent demand for this sector will present Canadian companies with opportunities to develop and market proprietary technologies globally. Companies will need to work in consultation with the government to ensure that policies such as lifetime product stewardship have appropriate phase in periods to allow for the necessary design changes.

The government needs to show leadership through co-operative domestic regulation and aggressive global negotiations to allow the industries committed to the future to prosper and grow. I have every confidence that Canada can and will be at the leading edge of sustainable technologies. The co-operative and incremental adoption of economically successful sustainable practices is critical to the continued success of Canadian society and I feel will be an area of considerable comparative advantage well into the next century.

• (1145)

The throne speech also directed necessary resources toward the problem of youth unemployment. The lack of secure employment manifests itself in any number of social symptoms. By treating the problem we can begin to break some of the cycles that served to frustrate the youth of this country.

As a representative of a riding that has seen its fair share of downsizing and restructuring, although the youth need jobs, so do the displaced workers. We must strive to address both the long and short term requirements of society. As a government we must strike a balance between the present and the future.

The throne speech outlined a strategy for expanding opportunities in aboriginal communities. As I worked on the text of this response to the throne speech, I spent a great deal of time and energy struggling with the semantics of the complex concept of sustainable development. I smiled at myself as I recalled the Iroquois practice of making decisions based on the impact they would have on the seventh generation from now. I cannot help but wonder what other wheels we as a nation need not reinvent if we can restore the health back to these cultures.

I regret the fact that time does not allow me to comment on all aspects of what I truly believe is an enlightened framework, but there are a few more points I would like to mention. It strikes me as we talk of the new millennium that January 1, 2000 is a day after December 31, 1999. Let us not miss the opportunity to accomplish as much as we did in the last two years in the next two years. Let us commit to working toward, not simply planning for, the new millennium.

The Address

In key areas of challenge such as unity, health care, crime and poverty the speech contained a common theme. There is considerable evidence to support that early and aggressive intervention can be correlated to positive long term outcomes. As my predecessor would have said, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Let us commit as a Parliament to focusing on that elusive ounce of prevention for I believe it sets a much less confrontational and much more productive agenda.

Let us remember that democracy is a precious thing but it is merely a means and not an end. It is what we choose to do in this place, not the fact that we are in this place that transforms shared values into actions.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my comments and statements will be brief. It is amazing that the Liberals can predict the weather now. Winter has come early to Ottawa as this is the biggest snow job throne speech I have ever heard or seen.

I remind the members of the Liberal Party that in 1956 my mother, father and six children immigrated to Canada. We did not have to pay a head tax to immigrate to this country. That is how good it was back then. Under the current policies it would have cost my family \$8,000 to immigrate to this great country and he is talking about what a great society it is and how great and wonderful it is. I would like to see him answer to my parents or any new immigrants coming to this country who will have to pay \$8,000 for a family of eight to immigrate so they could receive the opportunities he has so eloquently described.

The Liberal Party should also be thanking all those millions of people they have placed in poverty, especially our children, under their scorched policies. They are following the Reform right down in a rush to the bottom. They are ripping up labour contracts and denying people their basic rights. May I remind the member from Ontario that when he denies a child sustenance or food or anything that is called child abuse. When they take that sustenance away from millions of Canadians it is called balancing the budget.

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I was describing where I think we need to go as a country. We certainly face challenges. I caution the member that this notion that the good old days were comprehensive good old days is deeply rooted in myth.

If this country were bankrupt, the problems the member is describing, which I do not deny exist, would be compounded right up the social ladder. It is important that as members we try to at least deal in reality. By painting pictures of things that may not happen is not serving the interests of Canadians.

• (1150)

Ms. Elinor Caplan (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate both of my colleagues who spoke for the first time

in this House. They spoke about the throne speech which was about vision, hope and confidence. They spoke with pride at being elected to this place. Their families are here in the gallery filled with pride as they have listened to their family members speak in a place where so few of us ever have the opportunity to come and in an environment of freedom and free speech speak our minds and say what we believe.

I am struck as a new member by the differences and the similarities. Certainly the difference that I heard from the throne speech has been echoed by my colleagues who stood with pride to speak about a document that was about confidence, vision and hope.

What I have heard in response troubles me. This is an opportunity for us in a non-partisan way to share our thoughts and views. I would ask my colleagues, if they came to this House in a spirit of positive nation building, which I know they did, how they feel today to know that not everyone shares the goals of building together and working for this nation. I feel sad that there are those who would tear this country apart.

I believe that my constituents in the wonderful riding of Thornhill expect all of us to do what we can to solve the problems that we face in a positive and constructive way. I congratulate my colleagues for putting forward their vision and speaking to the throne speech document which I think shares the vision of hope, confidence and nation building that should permeate this place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, history has shown that, when two peoples exist within a single nation, they each come to understand that it is in their mutual interest to separate. This was the case with the Austrians and the Hungarians before the 1914-18 war. It was also the case with the Swedes and the Norwegians at the turn of the century and, more recently, with the Czechs and the Slovaks.

I imagine my hon. colleague denies Quebec's right to separate. Perhaps he could tell me if it is because he does not consider Quebecers a people?

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, certainly the world has regions that are separating. However, I would like to remind the hon. member that if he looks at the very regions he is talking about that their desire to enter NATO and their desire to enter the European Union clearly points to the fact that together these groups have a much stronger presence and a much higher quality of life. The partisan feelings that would suggest that we could make it better on our own or that somehow life would be better if we split up certainly do exist.

But if we look at the world, that is clearly the minority opinion. In Canada we have not only two cultures but three. With the

The Address

aboriginal community, the French community and the English community, Canada will be much stronger. I think the people of Canada are starting to realize that. That might very well explain some of the frustration that I am seeing across the way.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment.

First of all, I would like to thank my fellow citizens of the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot who have put their trust in me again in the last election.

I was outraged by the speech from the throne that was delivered two days ago. It was riddled with misrepresentations, distorting reality with respect to the existence of a Quebec people, among other things.

• (1155)

On the subject of misrepresentation, I would like to focus on two elements of the throne speech: public finances and national unity.

As far as public finances are concerned, we must refer to page 4 of the throne speech, which reads, and I quote, “This 36th Parliament opens at a time when we have brought order to our public finances”. The speech goes on to say “The government will continue to be vigilant and responsible about keeping the financial affairs of the country in order”.

I almost fell backwards when I read that, because the Minister of Finance has been anything but responsible in his last three budgets. The Minister of Finance can boast about our public finances being in order. Credit must be given where credit is due, but the fact is that the credit should go not to the federal finance minister, but to his provincial counterparts, especially Mr. Landry, of course. Why? Because they are the ones who had to do his “dirty job”. He did not do a thing to bring about the conditions that will result in a zero deficit as early as next year.

Fifty four per cent of federal spending cuts were made in social programs. The Minister of Finance cut \$4.5 billion from federal transfers to the provinces for education, health and social assistance. This represents a \$1.3-billion shortfall for the Quebec government. Fifty-four per cent of the cuts were made in that area.

Yesterday, the finance minister replied to a question from a Reform Party member on taxes. The other major contribution made to bring order to our public finances is the taxes paid by Quebecers and Canadians. Since 1994, the Minister of Finance has let tax revenues increase by \$23 billion. That money comes from taxpayers’ pockets. The minister is now talking about \$2 billion in targeted tax cuts. This is the least it can do after collecting an additional \$23 billion since 1994. Taxpayers are getting a little treat from the finance minister after years of tightening their belts.

Third, it is easy to boast about bringing order to our public finances, considering that the finance minister literally robbed workers and employers by improperly dipping into the employment insurance fund. Last year, the minister pocketed \$5 billion, even though it has been years since the federal government contributed to the employment insurance fund. This year, the minister will take \$7 billion from that fund. So, it is easy to boast and to brag, but taxpayers will not forget that the Minister of Finance made himself look good at the expense of Quebecers and Canadians. What did the minister himself do in all this? What was his own contribution?

In the 1994 budget speech, the Minister of Finance told us that departmental spending would be cut by 19 per cent. The minister has not kept his promise. Departmental spending has been cut by only 9 per cent over the last four years. The minister has not made even half the effort demanded of those who are ill, of students, of the most vulnerable members of society, especially welfare recipients, or of those who would normally re-qualify for employment insurance, but, because of the new employment insurance policy introduced last January, find themselves back on welfare.

Here too, he can go on about how unemployment is down. Of course it is. The unemployment figures, meaning the number of people actively looking for work, have dropped, but entire families are now stuck on welfare because of the minister’s new employment insurance policy, which also happens to be generating surpluses that he is using to reduce the deficit. These folks no longer show up in the official unemployment figures. This is not what being a responsible government means.

What is our charming Minister of Finance going to do with the surpluses he is generating? He will move right into areas of provincial jurisdiction. Do you know why? Because the throne speech, just like the first throne speech we heard in this House, tells us that the federal government will be barging into areas of provincial jurisdiction, including education. We are told in the throne speech that the federal government will measure the readiness of Canadian children to learn. Education comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and nobody is ever going to interfere in education, which comes under our jurisdiction.

All these investments being announced in Quebec’s areas of jurisdiction, after what they did to Quebec’s public finances in particular, have been in the works since March 1996.

• (1200)

If I may, I will quote the President of Treasury Board who, in the March 8, 1996 edition of *Le Soleil*, publicly admitted the federal government’s strategy, a strategy which consisted of dumping its problems of public funding onto the provinces, getting the provinces to do the dirty work, so that it can come out looking good to all of the taxpayers.

To quote the President of Treasury Board in the March 8, 1996 edition of *Le Soleil*, "When Bouchard—he does not even have the decency to show a little respect for the Premier of Quebec—will have to make cuts, those of us in Ottawa will be able to demonstrate that we have the means to preserve the future of social programs".

Such is the strategy of the federal government: to make Quebec look like the bad guy when it comes to social programs and to the health sector, when in fact they are the main ones responsible. They then come along with great fanfare to announce that they will be putting programs in place, that they will help our young people and improve the health system. Such behaviour is odious and absolutely hypocritical, particularly when it is at the expense of the least advantaged and the sick.

Our campaign platform was clear with respect to sound management of public finances, as well as the battle against poverty. Our program had six points, basically.

The first was that we were calling upon the federal government, since public finances are getting in better shape, to give back what it has swiped from the provinces, that is to say return the \$4.5 billion it has stolen yearly from social programs in order to fund social assistance, postsecondary education and health. These are no small amounts we are talking about.

Just looking at the health transfers the federal government was making to the provinces in past years, for every dollar cut by the Minister of Health since he has been responsible for this sector, 93 cents were used to reduce the federal deficit. And for all of the social programs, every time a dollar was cut from social programs in Quebec, 78 cents of it were used to reduce the Minister of Finance's deficit.

This is a lot of money, and if for the past year the federal government had done its job, if it had not slashed social transfers to the provinces, the Quebec government would no longer have a deficit. The problem would have been settled long ago, and our books would have balanced.

Next, considering that the country's financial situation has improved, we asked the government to reduce employment insurance premiums. Not a cosmetic 6 cent per \$100 of insurable payroll. We suggested a reduction of about 30 cent per \$100. Why? For the simple reason that the Bloc Quebecois is on the side of jobs and job creation.

If the government meant what it said when it talked about job creation, it would have consistently reduced employment insurance premiums, because they kill employment. Any direct payroll tax as substantial as employment insurance premiums is bound to kill employment.

The Address

So, since the government's finances are in better shape, instead of this nickelling and diming, instead of these intrusions in Quebec's jurisdictions, without so much as a by your leave, because it is so important to hand out cheques with a big Canadian flag, the Liberal government should consider what people need and put more money into the employment insurance fund and social programs.

My third point is that since the new employment insurance system came into effect last January, the benefits and usual protection for workers who lose their jobs were greatly reduced. We are therefore suggesting that the federal government, since they are in a better position financially, get back to a better approach that would genuinely help unemployed workers get back on their feet and remain on the labour market instead of being forced to go on welfare, which is no way to help families get back on their feet, especially if it keeps them out of the labour market.

The fourth suggestion we made in our campaign platform, and it is still valid, is to have a targeted tax reduction. Not the kind of generalized, useless tax reduction which does nothing to stimulate consumer buying and job creation, but targeted reductions based on a logical analysis of the tax system.

• (1205)

In this regard, I am particularly proud to remind people that the Bloc Quebecois conducted two major studies in the past year and a half. One was on reforming corporate taxation to make it fairer with fewer of those loopholes that allow hundreds of millions of dollars annually to avoid federal taxes.

We also put forward a document on improving personal taxation to make the system fairer and to ensure that families, especially low and medium income ones with children, get the benefit of such reform.

We repeat the suggestion to the Minister of Finance that this tax reform should take place in his second mandate. If he was too sluggish in his first mandate to implement our suggestions, which, I would point out, are currently being used by Canadian universities as a good example of tax reform, he should be delighted and accept the proposals of the Bloc Quebecois. In this mandate, however, I think that it would be a good idea for him to make the tax system fairer for lower income classes and not just for his millionaire and billionaire friends and those of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Our fifth proposal would increase tax benefits from \$850 million to \$2 billion, adding \$1.15 billion in child tax benefits. This is a real battle against child poverty. I think that, with the developments in public finances, it is not too late for the Minister of Finance to do the right thing.

Every time I see him put his hand to his heart, I cannot help but wonder if he is feeling for his wallet. If he is really concerned

The Address

about child poverty, he should be spending more in that area and make it a true national priority.

Sixth, it is not hard to understand, in fact it is quite simple: if the federal government minded its business and refrained from interfering in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, I am sure it would save money. Every time the federal government announces with fanfare plans to get involved in education, to put an education program in place, to meddle in health issues and every other area under Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction, that costs money. And, in spite of his financial position, the finance minister is not paying for all this, the taxpayers are.

Every instance of duplication and overlap in programs entails administration costs borne by taxpayers. Taxpayers are also paying twice for federal government employees to do the exact same job as Quebec government employees. The public must know that. That is what I mean by distorting the reality behind public finances.

Something else in this speech from the throne struck me; I was quite shaken by it. It contains, on page 7, third paragraph, a line as disgraceful as they come, in my view, and I quote, "Our future as a country is too precious for us to risk losing it through misunderstanding".

A nation's aspiration to sovereignty is not based on any misunderstanding. It is based on this desire we share to build our own country, a country soon to be known as Quebec. There is no misunderstanding there, and it is disgraceful to suggest such a thing. This would mean that, in the referendum held in 1995, 61 percent of francophones voted yes but did so based on a misunderstanding. Seventy per cent of francophones on the island of Montreal voted yes, but did so based on a misunderstanding. Almost half of all Quebecers voted yes, but did so based on a misunderstanding.

This is probably the most preposterous statement I ever heard. If there were misunderstandings in the history of the relations between Quebec and Canada, they were on the federal side. There were of course a number of such misunderstandings, but I targeted four.

These misunderstandings go as far back as 1867. Here is the first one. In 1867, two founding nations signed a confederation agreement. At the time, it was believed that our French Canadian ancestors and the English Canadians had signed a historic accord between two sovereign nations, two founding peoples. However, over time, we came to realize that such was not the case. Over the decades, English Canada shrank the scope of this confederation agreement. English Canada will not admit at all that Quebec is different. In fact, if we look at the throne speech, we realize that it not only denies that there is any difference, but also that it denies the existence of a distinct society, a distinct culture and, more

importantly, the existence of a distinct people. The throne speech reinforced this first historic misunderstanding. It is a true misunderstanding and it originates with the members across the way.

• (1210)

The second historic misunderstanding was to have believed that, in 1982 when Pierre Elliott Trudeau patriated the Canadian Constitution without Quebec's agreement, we would get down on our knees and agree to this Constitution that we never wanted. Quebecers stood their ground and I am proud of that. We never agreed to this Constitution.

The third historic misunderstanding, and again it originates with the members across the way, is to have thought that, in order to make amends for the historic affront of the 1982 patriation, they could toss any little scrap our way after the failure of the Meech Lake accord and we would go for it, in order to put the problem behind us once and for all, with no regard for our pride or our wish to build a strong Quebec.

They gave us Beaudoin-Dobbie, Beaudoin-Edwards, the Spicer Commission report, and the Charlottetown accord, which was put to a referendum and defeated. They came to us with completely meaningless concepts, empty shells, such as the rather comical idea of principal homeland. Now, after the Calgary declaration, they have come up with unique character. Quebecers are not interested. Quebecers will do exactly what they did to every other meaningless offer they received concerning Quebec's future and reject it out of hand.

Mr. Bourassa had gone much further, and if Daniel Johnson agrees to bow and scrape for mere crumbs, he will go down in history as having bowed and scraped for just that, mere crumbs, putting his electioneering interests before Quebec's true interests.

There is a fourth misunderstanding and it has to do with plan B, to which the throne speech refers yet again. In Quebec, there was a time when fear was an effective tool. So was English Canada's paternalism. We will be hearing a great deal about this with four federalist parties represented in the House of Commons. But it does not work any more. Perhaps plan B could have worked at another time, but it will not now. The Supreme Court and its judges will not change the course of history. We will repel any attack on the territorial integrity of Quebec. And no minister of intergovernmental affairs or member for Saint-Maurice will be able to slow down or stop the people's march toward sovereignty.

There was no misunderstanding in nearly winning the last referendum on sovereignty. There a clear desire to build our own country in Quebec. I have a word of warning for those across the way who may be tempted to crow over the results of recent polls. These polls are no referendum, but let me tell you that, when one is called, Quebecers will speak. They will speak loud and clear and,

The Address

this time, the will say yes for real and that will be the last referendum in the history of Canada.

I would now like to address my Canadian friends in their own language, if I may.

[*English*]

The only way for our common future is not the status quo but the independence of Quebec, a new relationship, a new partnership with Canadian citizens.

Whether or not you want this partnership does not change anything. Nothing will stop the determination of my people, the Quebec nation, to reach liberty, to become a sovereign country. The next referendum will be the right one.

Neither your political representatives, Liberal, Conservative, Reform or NDP, nor the judges of the Supreme Court will change anything. You could not force 7 billion Quebecers to stay in Canada against their desire.

Our aspirations are legitimate and deeply democratic. They do not rely on justice to be planned. The respectable attitude of Tony Blair, Prime Minister of United Kingdom, with Scottish and Welsh people must be for you a source of inspiration.

[*Translation*]

In the meantime, I would encourage my fellow Quebecers to contemplate sovereignty and heed the advice of Félix Leclerc, who once said, and I will close on this: "The fruit is ripe in my country's orchards. This means that the time has come, if you get my drift". I am convinced that Quebecers will heed Félix's advice in the next referendum.

• (1215)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke of tough cuts that were made and dealt with surpluses and what the government should do.

When the member insults the Minister of Finance and the government he is insulting Canadians right across this great country and in his province as well. Those are the people who sacrificed to get the budget back in order. Those steps were necessary.

I also challenge the hon. member to come forth and be positive rather than threatening Canadians across the country. I also remind the member that he does not represent the entire Quebec province but one riding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague, I would like to correct three things he has just said.

First, I never said anything to insult the Minister of Finance. I criticized his budget policy because I consider it savage. If anyone has been insulted in the past four years, it is the poor families in Canada, the sick and the students, who have suffered from the savage cuts of the Minister of Finance and his government.

Second, I would like him to know that, in this House, we are elected to represent all the people in our riding and all the people of Quebec, be they federalist or separatist.

Whatever my colleague may think, and I will close on this point, the Bloc Québécois represents 60 per cent of Quebec ridings. It therefore represents a majority of Quebecers. Furthermore, we will be here in the coming years to remind him of the past and present realities of Quebec and of its aspirations. That may be distressing, but that's life.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member's remarks. I think it is appropriate to remind the member that one of the greatest destabilizing factors to investment in the province of Quebec is the constant threat of separation especially when corporations think about expanding their plants.

Members will know that we are in an economy right now where things are very much on the rebound, people are being hired and plants are being expanded. Business looks for stability and business needs stability.

The member, a respected economist, knows full well that this constant irritant, constant threat of destroying this country is a disincentive to investment which is really hurting those constituents looking for jobs.

I think that when the member talks about the economy and caring and sharing, about those people who are most in need, as he did in his speech, those are the ones who are looking for work. And the best way for them to get work is to ensure that the businesses in Quebec that feel they want to expand feel they will be able to survive in a very healthy, stable marketplace and not one that is under a constant cloud of separation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the past two years, private and foreign investment in Quebec has reached record proportions, in spite of the constitutional debate. And I may remind the hon. member that Quebecers are not the only ones responsible for the fact this debate exists.

• (1220)

If we look at the history of relations between Quebec and Canada, part of the responsibility for this problem is yours as well.

I can assure hon. members that if they were to accept our partnership offer, because we sovereignists are giving them that

The Address

chance, an offer of partnership after a vote in favour of sovereignty, everything the hon. member said about economic growth and employment in Canada and Quebec would be settled.

Furthermore, I can assure the hon. member there is not a single economic indicator that will stop a people from fulfilling its destiny, and we on this side of the House are convinced the sovereignty of Quebec will in the end be a plus for economic growth and job creation. It cannot be otherwise.

Look at the throne speech. We just said that provincial jurisdictions will be interfered with, that it will cost as twice as much in civil servants' salaries, program administration, and so forth, that we would be better off without this perpetual quarrelling, that we could each determine what is best for ourselves and pool our resources when our interests coincide.

It seems to me this is perfectly clear. I think what is happening today in the United Kingdom is marvellous. If Canadians like you were to show the same understanding for the history and destiny of the people of Quebec, I think it would be easier for all concerned.

[English]

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share the same views as my friend from Broadview—Greenwood on this question.

The hon. member, in his thoughtful presentation, referred to the plight of Canada's children. I think we sometimes assume that it is just a matter of fact that we have to have poor children. We have to have people who do not have jobs and who are living in poverty.

I might want to remind my hon. friend, who probably does not need reminding, being the economist that he is, that there are many countries in the world where child poverty does not exist. I refer specifically to countries like Norway and Denmark where children do not live in poverty because their parents do not live in poverty. Poverty is not something that we have to accept as a reality.

It seems to me that in a country as rich as ours we should not have the number of children living in poverty and suffering today because their parents are living in poverty.

Considering the situation that exists in what has to be the wealthiest country in the world, would the hon. member not agree that this is actually, to quote the Catholic bishops, a form of child abuse for a government to allow this condition to continue?

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier: I agree with the NDP member, Mr. Speaker.

It is rather despicable to see the Minister of Finance and government members place their hands on their hearts and talk about the plight of children, given that they themselves are

responsible for a situation which has gotten worse over the last three years.

It is not normal to make cuts based on a budget plan tabled by the finance minister in 1996, to slash, year after year on a cumulative basis, the budget for social programs by some \$42 billion, and to think this will have no impact on child poverty. The government should give us some credit.

There is no doubt that the decisions made by this government have had an impact on child poverty and made parents poorer. Parents got poorer as a result of, among other things, the employment insurance program implemented in January, which consistently reduces benefits and which also excludes many adult workers from the labour force. These people have to rely on welfare.

So, do not try to appeal to our emotions. We are not going to be fooled by the finance minister's crocodile tears. It is not right to present things in that light. The minister should admit he made a mistake in his plan and he should at least put aside the budget cutting scheme developed in 1996.

There is not even any mention of this in the throne speech. The government says it will give back some money. Do you know what the government is doing? The Minister of Finance originally wanted to cut \$48 billion. Now the new figure is \$42 billion. The federal government will cut \$42 billion from transfers for social assistance, post-secondary education and health.

It is despicable to present things as if the government was handing out goodies when in fact it is merely cutting somewhat less than anticipated in 1996, but with the same slash-and-burn approach. The minister should have the decency to rise, to tell the truth and to announce that he is immediately putting an end to his planned cuts for the next three years. This would be an effective way to fight poverty, particularly child poverty.

[English]

Mrs. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Simcoe—Grey. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your recent appointment as our Deputy Speaker.

• (1225)

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]

[English]

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in the House of Commons.

It is a great honour to be back in this Chamber. I say back because in 1975 I sat here in the House of Commons as a student

The Address

participating in a model Parliament in seat 113. I did not think then that I would be representing Nunavut 22 years later.

I am proud to be the first female in the history of my riding to sit in the House of Commons and even more proud to be of Inuit descent.

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

I thank my constituents for the privilege of representing them at this crucial point in the future of Canada and Nunavut.

Nunavut covers 1.9 million square kilometres of our country. That is 20 per cent of Canada. It spans three different time zones and the population is roughly 25,000 people. The land covers fiords, mountains and tundra.

While I was travelling through the communities in my campaign I could not help thinking it was truly a lesson in geography. My constituency goes north to the North Pole, west to the Alberta-B.C. border, south to James Bay and east almost to Greenland. Nunavut has many international borders including Russia, Denmark and the United States.

This vast and untouched area has great potential for a natural resource based economy. Each year more exploration is going on in the north, in particular mineral exploration. Nunavut's high Arctic hosts two lead and zinc mines. This activity benefits northern communities by creating jobs for our population.

We need continued support for sustainable development and training in this sector. Alongside this is the challenge of protecting our environment. We have to make sure our land remains natural and beautiful.

We need to promote fisheries and the processing of country food. This along with tourism are areas that create employment in the north and must be explored as valid industries.

One of the mandates of the Government of Nunavut is to staff its public service with a 50 per cent Inuit workforce. This is a realistic goal considering that the Inuit population of Nunavut is over 80 per cent and the working language will be Inuktitut.

As we speak the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories are training Inuit to staff Nunavut's public service. Nunavut Arctic College has been instrumental in making education accessible and relevant to all Nunavut residents.

Last week in Iqaluit I witnessed the signing of a training agreement between the two governments that will ensure the employment targets are met.

Although governments are now training to staff the public service there have to be mechanisms in place to keep our youth in school and to pursue post-secondary education. There are many barriers that stand in the way of our youth attaining higher

education. One avenue to keep youth in school is through athletics. There needs to be more focus on partnering schools and sport.

Twenty-seven out of twenty-eight Nunavut communities are coastal communities but all are serviced only by air. There are no roads. Air freight is the only reliable way to ship goods and perishable food. Communities receive non-perishables like fuel and construction material by sea lift, many of them only once a year.

Freight is the primary reason for the high cost of living in Nunavut. In many communities a four litre jug of milk costs \$10, a loaf of white bread \$2.69, a five pound bag of potatoes goes for \$6.95 and a case of Coca-Cola will cost \$41. With gas costing 71 cents a litre it is very expensive for northern residents to buy gas so they may go hunting for country food, which is still very much the main diet.

• (1230)

The constituency that I represent cannot be compared to any other part of the country. When I was in Iqaluit, the future capital of Nunavut, it was mentioned that Canadians are as ill-informed about their north as Americans are about Canada.

When I was going to high school in Ottawa I was asked before Christmas break by a classmate to bring back a stamp from my home so she could have one for her collection. This is one example of how true it is that Canadians forget that their country goes much further beyond 60° north. We are part of Canada and proud to be Canadians.

When people outside the north think of the Arctic, they think of igloos, polar bears, and arts and crafts. Carvings and crafts are a legitimate source of income to many families in the north and are relied upon to put food on the table. We have tremendously talented artists who need to have their work marketed. Therefore it is very disturbing for me to see imitation art displayed in stores. No one can replace the beauty of an original carving of the north. Means to promote economic development of art must be explored.

If any culture is truly unique and different within Canada, it is the Inuit culture. Our ancestors came here thousands of years ago, lived off the land and adapted to dramatic changes. In the span of roughly 35 years, Inuit went from igloos to houses, from dog teams to airplanes, and still kept their culture alive because we still use igloos and dog teams.

During my parents' time, Inuit used fox tags and wooden sticks to trade for supplies. Today my father has a Visa card and my mother can use her Interac card to do her banking, even though they do not speak any English.

The Inuit are a very adaptable people and I am very proud of the progress we have made in such a short time. These examples show that Nunavut residents are ready for the challenges that await them. The implementation of our long awaited territory is rapidly

The Address

approaching and co-operation between parties involved is necessary.

I look forward to working with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Interim Commissioner of Nunavut, the president of Nunavut Tunngavik, and the government of the Northwest Territories to make sure that Nunavut residents see a smooth transition on April 1, 1999 which is less than 580 days away. All of these parties, along with regional Inuit organizations, Qikiktani Inuit Association, Kitikmeot Inuit Association and Kivalliq Inuit Association, will be essential in providing me with real input as we face tough decisions.

The division of the Northwest Territories is the most significant and exciting event taking place before the turn of the century. It has not been since 1949 when Newfoundland joined Confederation that something of this magnitude has occurred in Canada.

Establishing the Nunavut territory is my priority as Nunavut's member of Parliament, but it must also be a priority of this House. This is monumental. I urge my colleagues in this House to take this chance to participate in making history in Canada.

It will be by working together and helping each other that we will accomplish the task. This is the way the Inuit culture survived thousands of years in a harsh and unforgiving climate. I was pleased to see this type of co-operation during the unfortunate crises of the floods in Quebec and Manitoba.

I want to close this speech by extending an invitation to those members of this House and those Canadians from across the country who have not yet had the privilege to see Nunavut to come and visit us. I guarantee that their experience will be unforgettable.

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut]

[English]

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, firstly I would like to congratulate you on your new role as Acting Speaker. We look forward to seeing your smile up there every day.

I want to congratulate the hon. member for Nunavut. I want to say to her that I had an opportunity during the last sitting of the House to work with her people with respect to their needs. I look forward to working with them once again. She is absolutely right. She has a unique culture and she understands, like we understand over here, that there are regions of Canada with different needs. We are there to help them.

• (1235)

I look forward to meeting with the hon. member to discuss how we can assist her in creating the Nunavut territory and making it a better place for her people to live.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to pay tribute to the member for Nunavut. In my riding, they would tell her in Inuit:

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuit]

[Translation]

That means "Thank you very much. You are a superstar for having been elected to the House of Commons".

Abitibi covers 802,000 square kilometres, and has 92,000 inhabitants, 68 communities and 68 mayors. There are 14 Inuit villages in Abitibi. So I am very familiar with the Inuit culture. I would like to mention to the hon. member that it is true that, while in the south bread sells for between \$1 and \$1.06, in Nunavut, New Quebec, bread can cost between \$2.50 and \$3.

We have many problems right now. Housing is one of them. I realize that much needs to be done. There are many who say that people in the north are receiving subsidies, but there is one thing that needs to be pointed out to the citizens of Canada and of Quebec and that is that, for every dollar we give our Inuit friends, 97 cents always comes back to the south. They are participating in the economy.

Much remains to be done, particularly in Nunavut and in Nunavik, Abitibi, such as working together and visiting New Quebec. That is the Canadian economy. We will play our part. I wish to congratulate the hon. member on her election.

[English]

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I took great pleasure in listening to the hon. government member talk about the beauty and the uniqueness of the part of the country she is from. Certainly I agree with her.

What is really interesting is that she basically confirmed everything the Reform Party has been saying for so many years, that every part of this great country of ours is unique and distinct and has its own unique and distinct character. It is very refreshing to hear a Liberal member agree with the Reform Party and take a route other than saying how unique and distinct the province of Quebec is. I thank the hon. member for bringing that up.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Mr. Speaker, I know that Canada is a country known for respecting all the different nationalities that come to it. We are very proud to be one of the original nationalities, but I believe that Canada has room for all the different people who come to this country. I am proud to be a part of it.

The Address

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the new member for Nunavut on her maiden speech in the House of Commons.

I had the opportunity to travel to that part of the world a year and a half ago with Canada's foreign affairs committee, which was studying the Arctic Council in that area. I was greatly impressed.

It is one of the few ridings in Canada that is bigger than my own. I come from Peace River in northwestern Alberta and I can understand the difficulties in representing a riding of that size.

I was also struck by the impact of pollutants in Canada's Arctic and how they can affect people living in the area.

I have worked long and hard as the trade critic for our party to try to resolve the European ban on leg-hold traps and products from those traps from entering Europe. My understanding is that an agreement has been reached. I am wondering if the hon. member for Nunavut can tell the House whether she knows if it is satisfactory in addressing the concerns of the people who live off the industry of fur-bearing animals and whether the agreement will satisfy them.

• (1240)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The member's time for questions and comments has expired. If the member could have a very very brief response, please do so.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know that is being put into place. We have had a bit of resistance to the changing of the traps. As I said in my speech, Inuit are very adaptable people. We are trying to go with the change. I have to research this a little more because as I said I am very new at this and it is such a large territory with so many topics. I hope I can answer it more satisfactorily with a bit of research.

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to congratulate the hon. member for Nunavut. I am sure she will represent her riding with a passion unparalleled. An area of 1.9 million square kilometres certainly brings a new meaning to door to door at election time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your recent appointment. I take this opportunity to publicly congratulate the hon. member for Niagara Centre on his re-election as Speaker of the House. His remarks at orientation for the new members of Parliament were both inspiring and motivating. I certainly thank him for those words of encouragement. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of my new colleagues when I say that his words and actions have

instilled a confidence in all of us based on the characters of those who are chairing this House.

I want to thank the constituents of Simcoe—Grey. I am both honoured and humbled that they chose me as their elected representative. I fully intend to represent them to the very best of my ability in this House. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. I want to assure all my constituents that I have ample access and little restrictions with regard to my input in voicing their comments or concerns to our government. I commit to them that I will take full advantage of this opportunity to voice their feelings.

I would be remiss and somewhat in trouble if I did not take time to thank my wife Sandi and our three children for the love and support they gave me throughout the election. It is something I know I can draw on throughout this term of office.

I have made a special commitment to my riding, one that I hope all residents will join me in no matter what their party affiliation. That commitment is to work hard to maintain and enhance what we believe to be the best place in Canada, and that means the world. I ask my constituents to join in that challenge.

My riding is a diverse and precious place just like the people within it. The agriculture industry in Simcoe—Grey represents the largest geographical make-up and is the largest single employer in our riding. We are a rural riding that has made and will make an enormous contribution to Canada as a whole.

To touch on a few of those contributions, I remind the House of Sir Frederick Banting, as was mentioned earlier, the co-founder of insulin and a World War II hero. Recent contributions have been made by Sue Palmer and Paul Shaw, two of Canada's Olympic athletes. I could spend the rest of the day talking about our many contributions and how proud I am to be a part of Simcoe—Grey riding but time does not permit it.

From our dairy, poultry, cattle and swine producers in Alliston, Elmvale, Markdale and Stayner to the best apple growers in the world in and around Thornbury and Collingwood, these farms are an integral part of Canada's food producing industry and deserve the support and confidence of the federal government. I am very pleased to see that happening.

Simcoe—Grey is a riding that leads in agricultural excellence. For this reason I am extremely pleased that the Liberal government has continued to support the agricultural community in the form of marketing boards and quotas.

I am especially pleased to see the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food leading this industry into the next century. As a result of his extensive background the minister understands that agriculture is the very foundation of this country and must be maintained no

The Address

matter what countries or trade agreements try to threaten that foundation. The farming community can be assured that I will continue to support and endorse this agenda very aggressively.

As I mentioned earlier, my riding is very diverse. Our industrial components had their very foundations shaken, some even destroyed, throughout the mid to late eighties and early nineties. Now, thanks to a strong and fiscally responsible government, we have provided a stable and strong economic environment to allow these industries to rebuild and strengthen their positions in Canadian and world markets. At long last there is a glow of optimism within industry.

• (1245)

I also want to take this time to thank the Prime Minister and his previous government for having the fortitude to take us from what was near certain economic ruin to a healthy deficit free economy in four short years.

I am very grateful for the vision and direction of my colleague, the Minister of Finance. His fiscal formula has been a remedy for success.

I ask my colleagues, when dealing with what looks like a small surplus—it has certainly been talked about today and previously—to remember one thing. The only reason they are in this place talking about a surplus is because of the Liberal platform over the last three and a half years. The formula worked.

Like all ridings across Canada, jobs are at the forefront of the constituents' minds in Simcoe—Grey. I commend the Prime Minister for partnering with the private sector and leading trade missions abroad. I encourage the federal government, as I will encourage my riding, to take these types of proactive steps.

I am also pleased that we have a small surplus coming this year to invest back into social programs that are not just important to Liberals but important to all Canadians. With regard to this forecasted surplus, I strongly encourage the finance minister to stay his course in dealing with the debt. For our children it is a legacy in which I would like to put a serious dent, of course always keeping in mind Liberal values and social responsibilities.

We are known worldwide as a compassionate society with very liberal values. Now that our house is back in order, it will be necessary for us to focus more strongly on these issues.

Simcoe—Grey is likely one of the most well-known tourist destinations in Canada. If it is not, I will certainly make sure it is by the end of this term. For this reason I was extremely pleased that the federal government, along with the Business Development Bank of Canada, initiated a \$500 million lending pool to help accelerate development in private sector, four season type resort areas.

We have a scenic geography that is second to none. We have, and will continue to develop biking, hiking and cross country trails that go on for hundreds of kilometres. We have the largest downhill ski area in Ontario, the friendliest and best run in North America.

I encourage all my colleagues, both sides, and extend an invitation to visit and see our great riding. I extend that same invitation to industry. We want them too, and we need them.

My riding, like many other rural ridings, has been continually losing its most cherished asset to larger urban centres. That most precious asset is our youth.

Initiatives, like partnering with the YMCA, is a large step in the right direction. It offers our youth opportunities within the riding, not only to be employed but equally or more important to upgrade their skills. It provides opportunities to which they may not otherwise have access. This is a program of which I am proud to be a part.

In closing, I say to all my colleagues, irrespective of party, I look forward to working with all of you in order that we may build a country and a future for our children that is second to none.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with my congratulations to you for having accepted the appointment to your position. I hardly need remind you that this is only the third time in the history of this Parliament that a party in power has designated a deputy speaker from outside its ranks. This is a great honour, therefore, and your friends and family, the members of your party and certainly those who elected you will be very proud of you.

I would also like to thank the new member for Simcoe—Grey. I listened closely to his speech and I feel he will make a good MP—or at least I hope so. He strikes me as being full of good will. He gave particular attention in his speech to agriculture and to unemployment. My riding seems rather like Simcoe—Grey, with a number of farmers and many unemployed people.

• (1250)

I would like to ask the valiant new member for Simcoe—Grey, who states his readiness to work with all members of this House, what concrete proposals he wishes to make to his Liberal caucus that will be of any help whatsoever to the agricultural sector, which has seen its net earning power weaken year after year, particularly since 1993 when his party came to power, and to our young people in particular, with their abnormally high rate of unemployment?

And what has his government done to sustain employment since 1993? It has toughened up eligibility for unemployment insurance, particularly for young people, counting not the number of weeks but the number of hours. New workers have to accumulate 910

hours before they qualify. And worse still—my final point—the duration of employment insurance benefits has been shortened.

Since the hon. member for Simcoe—Grey gives me the impression of being very very positive in these, his first days in the House of Commons, what are the concrete proposals he will make to his party caucus, to the Liberal party?

[English]

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Mr. Speaker, I question how well the hon. member listened. I did touch on some of the initiatives of this government. Certainly the YMCA partnering initiative is a major step in the right direction. That is not just offering employment opportunities, it is also offering training opportunities to provide youth with a better lifestyle down the road.

In so far as the agriculture community is concerned, one of the things that I have done in my riding, and I have certainly been vocal in caucus as well, is to open up lines of communication. The member seems to have his facts in error. There has been an increase in the last two years in farming income, certainly in our area.

With respect to opening lines of communication, I have over the summer had the opportunity to have the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food travel to our riding and meet with the farmers, the brokers, the average people out there; not just their OFA representatives, but the actual farmers.

I have taken the time this summer to travel throughout the riding and sit in on the Grey County Federation of Agriculture and the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture meetings. I bring that communication back to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and I tell him how it has impacted.

We have a very unusual situation which is going to be a great reward for the farming and agricultural communities and that is the minister who is leading us into the next millennium. He is a farmer, very well educated in the field and he is being met with an excellent response. I am certainly a pipeline to this caucus and to this government on behalf of the farming community in my riding.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing our speaking slot with my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North Centre.

I join with my parliamentary colleagues to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your ascension to the Chair. I look forward to seeing not only your smiling face but also your good judgment exercised during the next number of months.

The Address

We all listened carefully and attentively to the throne speech as was read by the Governor General. I would like to quote from this throne speech before I make some remarks in my response.

It states:

This is the inauguration of a new Parliament. Let it be also the beginning of a new era of national reconciliation, economic renewal and social justice—.

While there are no easy solutions to the great problems facing our great country, there is a new will among Canadians to make a fresh start in the search for answers.

There is that phrase “fresh start”. It goes on to state:

—a priority goal of my Ministers will be to breathe a new spirit into federalism and restore the faith and trust of all Canadians in the effectiveness of our system of government.

A constant process of consultation and co-operation must be restored. My Ministers are regularly meeting their provincial colleagues to eliminate irritants and to improve services to people where the federal and provincial governments have joint responsibilities.

This throne speech goes on to state:

The process of consensus-building will engage the private sector partners in an era of co-operation on economic goals. In such a context, government would act as a guide, a mediator, a catalyst, becoming less intrusive in the private sector but vigilant over the integrity of the national economy and of national standards—. The three-part strategies of my Ministers is to restore fiscal responsibility, remove obstacles to growth and encourage new investment—This three-part strategy is aimed at renewing economic growth in order to provide jobs our people need and to address the continuing tragedy of youth unemployment—

My government will enter into discussion with the provinces aimed at a comprehensive overhaul of our pension system—

Consultations will also begin with the provinces to consider the most effective means of providing increased federal support for the improvement of—health care—

Canadians are deeply troubled by the incidence of crime, especially crimes of violence—

It goes on and on.

I am glad my Liberal colleagues here are applauding because this is the throne speech of Brian Mulroney. It sounds exactly the same.

Some hon. members: Liberal, Tory, same old story.

Mr. Nelson Riis: This is the same throne speech. They did not even bother to re-write it. It was a new governor general, that is all. This throne speech is worth nothing. This is absolute pap. Yap, yap, who cares? I looked through here to find out where the helicopters were mentioned because the government announced today that a major priority is to purchase billions of dollars worth of helicopters. There is not a mention of helicopters in here. This is pap.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Kamloops is a very experienced member and he knows that he is not to use props in the course of his debate. While his point may have been one that he feels he should make in this way, I am sure he knows it is wrong

The Address

to perhaps over-dramatize things by tearing up books and so on in the course of his speech. I would ask him to restrain himself.

He may recall that in the last Parliament we had incidents of this kind and the Speaker intervened. I am reluctant to do so with such an experienced member, but I feel in the circumstances I should draw the rules to his attention.

Mr. Nelson Riis: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I got so worked up that I just could not help it. However, I do have another whole version of it here. Pap is pretty cheap.

When I listened to the throne speech in the other place, I reflected back on the last number of years here. I go back to the Tories because it is basically the same group, only different faces.

I remember as a kid having my mother read me a story by Robert Louis Stevenson, called *The Wreckers* where unscrupulous people on a desert island would light fires on the rocks at night to lure ships into thinking it was a harbour. The ships would smash on the rocks, people would loot the ships and the people on the wrecked ships would die.

This reminds of the government. This reminds me of my Liberal friends. I wonder if they really know what they are doing to the people of Canada.

There is a reference in the throne speech to the deficit war being won. I suspect that if we listen carefully we would hear the Liberals cheering, saying "We won the deficit war. Yes, we were successful".

If we were to acknowledge the heroes of the deficit war over the last number of years it would not be the Minister of Finance and our Liberal colleagues across the way or our previous Conservative friends in the House of Commons. It would be the long line-ups of people waiting to get into hospital. It would be the thousands and thousands of young people with huge debt loads on their shoulders as a result of having to fund so much of their education. It would be the 1.4 million people who do not have a decent job or perhaps do not even have a job at all. It would be the millions who have part-time jobs and are barely scraping through to make ends meet for their families.

We could talk about others like the 10,000 people every month, month after month, who declare personal or business bankruptcy, who are walking away from their businesses and their homes. In many cases they walk away from devastated families as a result of the economic policies of the government.

• (1300)

They are the true heroes of this deficit war. They should be the ones who are first rewarded when there is a dividend. The minute

there is a surplus we should go back and start mending the safety net that has been ripped and torn apart by the Liberals and by the Conservatives before them. This should be a top priority if we are a caring and decent country.

I look across at these people. They look like nice people but I do not think they care about people. If they cared about people, would they permit having over a million children—they are laughing, Mr. Speaker. I do not think this is funny. They are laughing at over a million children waking up this morning and living in poverty in the richest country in the world. The Conference of Catholic Bishops calls it a form of child abuse, that this is allowed to happen. The government has to accept responsibility for that.

These people sit quietly in their places and give little speeches in the House of Commons about how nice the country is, how great they are and how hardworking we are all going to be. This country is in a mess for a growing number of people.

I acknowledge that luxury car sales are up. I acknowledge that the Toronto Stock Exchange is at historic levels. I admit that corporate profits have never been higher and the banks are happier than they ever have been in our banking history. At the same time increasing numbers of Canadians are living in poverty, increasing numbers of people are losing their jobs, their businesses and their homes.

What will the government do about this? Let us look in the throne speech. We are positive, happy people trying to find some goodness left in this world. There must be some goodness left in this government. There must be something in here about what it will do about the 1.4 million people who do not have jobs today. Is it mentioned?

I am being asked to talk about something new. The Liberals would love me to shut up about this topic. They would love me to stop talking about the 1.4 million people who are out of jobs? They would love me to stop talking about the people in Atlantic Canada who met our caucus and said they have not worked in four years because of this government's policies on free trade, NAFTA and now the multilateral agreement on investment.

There is a slow erosion in our country of what our parents and grandparents before them struggled to build for generation after generation into one of the best countries in the world. We have people by the hundreds of thousands lining up to come here because of what they built and what the government is tearing down systematically budget after budget after budget.

This has to stop. We cannot sit here passively, talking about minor shifts in trade and changes to trade policy or tinkering and so on with various social programs. At the same time as we sit here

today, the Minister of Finance has tabled legislation in the House to radically change the way seniors receive their pensions.

When we cut through all the red tape and all those provisions, what does it say? It says that hundreds of thousands of seniors in the future will receive fewer benefits.

Is that the kind of country we are? Is that what we have come to? Is there anything in this throne speech about a national child care system? I heard minister after minister promise to introduce it. I heard Tory ministers promising to introduce it. Now it has reached a point where they were too embarrassed to mention it in the throne speech because they know nothing will happen in the budget.

Things must change. I am pleased to be here with a group of very progressive New Democrats who on a daily base in the House will remind the government how it has been cruel and continues to be cruel to many Canadians. That has to change and change soon.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate you on your appointment.

I was not surprised to hear the member from the NDP trying to draw a parallel between us and former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Aside from his actions in tearing up his speech, he failed to draw to our attention that the Brian Mulroney and Conservative era left us with a humongous deficit of \$42 billion that we inherited in 1993.

It is nice of them to say that we have to do this and we have to do that, but if we are adding debt and debt we will never be able to implement any of the programs such as the scholarship fund. Unfortunately he was not listening.

• (1305)

He failed to bring forth that just last week one of the local papers in the greater Toronto area stated that employment levels were as high as they were in 1989. They have been rising. They all talk about doom and gloom. They do not want to talk about the good news that has been happening out there. They do not want to talk about the fact that in 1993 unemployment rates were 11.5 p. cent and today that are at 9 p. cent and dropping.

We have to point out to the people that spending our way out of this is not the solution. The member is saying "Let's open the purse. Let's spend. It doesn't matter how much debt we will have. Let's just keep adding to it".

Mr. Nelson Riis: Was that a question, Mr. Speaker? It was kind of a rant, I thought.

The Address

My hon. friend is right. The government announced that it will do something to help students some day in the future. Is this not nice? In fact it was more precise. By the year 2000 it will take some action.

If my friends opposite were sincere about helping young people afford post-secondary education, they would go far beyond having a scholarship program. They would consider doing away with tuition fees in our post-secondary institutions.

I can hear my hon. friend now, that whining we hear all the time: "Where are they going to get the money?" We always hear whining from across the way.

This is not a new concept. Other countries that put a priority on young people's education have long had tuition free universities and colleges. It is not a new concept. It exists today.

Rather than give a tax break to one of the tens of thousands of very profitable corporations that do not pay a single cent in income tax year after year, why do we not close some of those loopholes? Then we could have some money for post-secondary education funding.

We will hear comments any day now—we should be hearing them in question period today—that the government has decided the Cadillac helicopter purchase has been changed into a Chevrolet and now we can afford it. We will be dishing out money now for the helicopters. Fair enough. That is what this job is all about. Helicopters will probably be a lot more important than helping poor children. Buying helicopters will probably be a more important initiative than helping young people afford education. That is a decision that the government might well take.

If it does, let us recognize that as long as it tolerates more than one million children living in poverty it will have to wear on its shoulders what the Conference of Catholic Bishops reminded us is a form of child abuse.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the compassion in the speech of the member for Kamloops as he talked about the people living at the poverty line, the unemployed and the seniors who are scraping to get by.

I have to ask the member for Kamloops, who is looking forward to his \$1 million gold plated MP's pension, where his compassion was when he had the opportunity to say "No thanks. I have a conscience. I can't accept that gold plated pension". Where was his compassion then, when he gets a pension five, six or seven times richer than the union members who have to work 30 years to get one-fifth of that? Where was his compassion? He is no different from the Liberals. He is no different from the Tories.

The Reform Party gave \$30 million back to the Canadian people by giving up their gold plated pensions. We did it because we care

The Address

about Canadians. We care about the debt and we care about taxes. Where is the compassion?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Charlotte on a point of order.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Reform member is mentioning pensions. In defence of the NDP member I simply want to say that he is working in this House for the Canadian people. He is not on pension. That is a ridiculous statement and is completely out of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon member will realize that was not a point of order. It was a matter of debate.

Does the hon. member for Kamloops wish to respond to the comment made by the hon. member Prince George—Bulkley Valley. If so, I will give him a moment. The five minute questions and comments period has expired so I would ask him to be brief.

Mr. Nelson Riis: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. My hon. friend asked about the MPs' pension. Perhaps the best thing he could do would be to ask his own members of the Reform Party to take their pensions.

• (1310)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I begin my first speech in this assembly of democracy feeling a tremendous sense of responsibility given to me by the people in my constituency of Winnipeg North Centre, a constituency which is recognized right across this country as a symbol, as an example of the struggle for dignity, equality and justice in society today.

They have given me a responsibility to fight for things that matter most to people, the things that were missing in the Speech from the Throne, the most important issues that affect people on a day to day basis: the matter of jobs, the matter of quality health care, the matter of good public education, the matter of hope for our young people, the matter of security for working families and the matter of dignity for our seniors.

All of us in the NDP caucus feel the sense of responsibility people have entrusted in us. We will keep our promise. We will not break our commitment to raise those issues day in and day out. We will work as we have never worked before to ensure that their voices are heard in this Chamber.

When I was elected I asked my eight year old son what I should say and do. He said "Tell everyone that we will make Ottawa rock". That is exactly what we intend to do day in and day out in this Chamber.

We are here on behalf of people everywhere saying the rhetoric that ran as thick as syrup in the Speech from the Throne will not

end the despair of people living without work or living with the daily fear of losing the job they may now hold.

It will not relieve the stress on families trying to juggle several jobs, the responsibilities they have for the care of their children and the obligation they feel for their communities and their involvement in community life. It will not end the pain and suffering women feel on a day to day basis because they have to live with the threat of violence.

My sense of responsibility, as I make my first speech in the House of Commons, also comes from those who came before me, those who made a difference in the lives of people in my constituency and indeed everywhere in this country. I am very fortunate to claim both Stanley Knowles and David Orlikow as my predecessors, two longstanding parliamentarians who made a real difference.

Who among us would not be familiar with the dogged persistence of David Orlikow who, for 26 years in this House, fought day in and day out for individuals and for policies that would improve people's lives and ensure some measure of dignity, security and equality among all people of all regions of the country? I am proud to carry on his work. I am grateful for his contribution to Canada and I look forward to his ongoing help and advice.

As my leader said yesterday, I also register a great deal of sadness at not being able to enter this Chamber and see my old friend and colleague, Stanley Knowles, sitting at the table. It was a dream I had. Unfortunately it just was not to be. However we are left with his legacy. The best way we can honour the work of Stanley Knowles is to carry on the work he fought for so long and hard for 38 years in the House of Commons.

All of the issues and policies he fought so hard to achieve are now under attack by the Liberal government today. Canadians can be sure that we will fight to preserve a public pension system to stop the erosion of security for seniors in their old age. We will be there day in and day out.

• (1315)

And we will try to do it as Stanley Knowles would have done it, with honour and dignity and integrity. Mr. Speaker, you can be sure that I will be raising many issues in this House but I will take my critic areas very seriously.

Twenty years ago when I was a parliamentary intern in this place I remember hearing a member of Parliament, a member of the then Liberal government, saying "don't worry about high unemployment among women, after all it is men who are the primary wage earners".

Having been here for the past few days, having heard the Speech from the Throne, are we any further ahead today under this government, or is this government just more subtle about its practice of continuing inequality and discrimination in our society today?

The Address

Is it not the case that the privatization and deregulation and off-loading and cutback policies of this government are contributing to hardship and pain and suffering and greater inequalities facing women in our society today?

If women's equality is important would it not be the case that this government would have long ago honoured its obligations under the human rights act to ensure that women in the federal public service were paid on the basis of equality?

Would it not be the case that instead of offering women half a loaf, this government would have said that before it considers spending \$12.2 million on bonuses for senior civil servants, it will ensure it meets its obligations and ensures equal pay for work of equal value?

Mr. Speaker, you can also be sure that I will be raising, as much as possible, issues pertaining to health care. Medicare is our most treasured national program, a matter of pride, a matter of equality and a matter of real meaningful intervention in the lives of people. That program is in serious trouble and let us not forget it is because of the policies of this government. Let us not allow members of this government to suggest that it is another level of government's responsibility entirely.

Let us remember that this government in 1993 introduced the most regressive social policy in the history of this country, the Canada health and social transfer, and took the single biggest bite out of health care in the history of medicare.

For many of us it was absolutely galling to read the Speech from the Throne and the statement "we will legislate to put back, to increase funds for the Canada health care system to the tune of \$12.5 billion". We now are at the base floor of \$12.5 billion.

This government owes it to the people of Canada and to the future of medicare to ensure that our cash transfer payments for health care reflect the needs of health care, ensure that we are able to meet our obligations and that every Canadian is able to gain access to the best quality care in this country by virtue of being a member of a civilized country.

Deception, absolutely, because in fact the Speech from the Throne did also not mention that under the present formula of this government dollars from the federal government to provincial governments will actually decline in real terms. It does not look at the growth in the economy. It does not consider growth in population.

We will see in real dollar terms a continual drop in funding from this government to the provinces, thereby jeopardizing even further the future of medicare in this country.

There are so many more issues to raise and so little time. I want to acknowledge the challenges we all face. I and many of my

colleagues in this caucus are trying to juggle our work as a members of Parliament and also our responsibility to our children.

Many of us have young children. We are grateful for their support and we recognize that we are not unique. We represent many families, many women in this country trying to juggle so much because of the inaction and the lack of attention of this government to those very important issues.

• (1320)

In the name of Stanley Knowles and others who have fought so hard for these issues, we will be as vigilant as possible to ensure that every person in this country is able to live with security, dignity and hope for the future.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Winnipeg North Centre for her maiden remarks in the House of Commons. As I listened to her I thought about the fact that many of the things she said today are things that, believe it or not, many of us on this side of the House believe in as well. In my riding 50 p. cent of the people who voted for me are New Democrats. It is not a question of us being ideologically different.

In this Parliament we must not throw ideas out in a general sense. We have to be a little more specific in how we get our ideas into play. For example, the member for Kamloops came up with the idea of cancelling tuition for post-secondary education. It is an interesting idea but I do not think we can table an idea like that on the floor of the House of Commons unless we can link some dollars to it. If our ideas are going to have credibility I share the member's son's view that we should try to make this place rock. We really should. This place is a stiff, dull place at the best of times.

If we are really going to have credibility we need to have numbers attached to some of these ideas. It is only through that approach that we will have a reasonable chance of getting some of these ideas into a debate with some credibility attached.

I would like to ask the member a specific question. Does she think it is a reasonable request for when New Democrats throw a specific idea on the floor? For example, I do not believe Bob Rae or Roy Romanow really wanted to close 100 hospitals over 18 months. I believe they had a fiscal dilemma on their hands. They are both good people. When we come back with ideas on how to correct it, I really think numbers should be attached. If the notion of forgetting about the fiscal framework of this country creeps back in, then we will have higher interest rates which will hurt us when we are trying to get jobs going. Could the member please respond to that?

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, if the member is wondering at all why some provinces are trying to do the best they can in terms of limited health care resources, he should start asking his own Minister of Health how we can revamp the transfer payment system so that provinces are not squeezed. He should

The Address

consider the fact that if we take \$6.8 billion out of the health care system, we will be left with enormous pressures on provincial governments, on other organizations and on families.

It is absolutely critical that we all work together to reverse that trend. I look forward to help from the member in convincing the ministers of health and finance that we need to start increasing transfer payments. It may not be overnight that we get it back up to the \$19 billion it was when they took office but certainly we could start today to reverse that so people are not forced into a difficult decision.

The question was how much. We have been very specific on this issue and every other issue. We have said let us work now to increase the transfer payments to provinces at least to \$15 billion. That is a small step toward improving the situation. It would make a big difference.

The member asked for specifics. Give me 24 hours and I could fill that time with the specifics we have suggested. Let me make two very quick references.

• (1325)

In the whole area of health care and caring for seniors and children we have said over and over again that if the government would only look at it as something which is an important social investment and a job creation tool, we would be a lot better off in this country. There are thousands of jobs to be created if the government would just realize that it has a responsibility to ensure that there is a measure of quality care for everyone.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills: And the source of funding?

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: If the member would give me another few hours I could certainly list a variety of measures, especially under the taxation system to deal with precisely that question.

One other quick example is that if we did something as simple as environmental conservation in energy efficiency in our own public buildings, retrofit them, with a small investment we could create 4,000 jobs very quickly. That would not be a cost because it would pay for itself in a short time. There are dozens and dozens of ideas. We will keep bringing them forward in the House. I look forward to the member's supporting our proposals.

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to offer either my congratulations or my condolences to you. I think your job is going to be interesting over the next four or five years. I wish you well and I look forward to it.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Waterloo—Wellington who will speak after me.

I would like to begin by paying tribute to my predecessors who have represented Mississauga West. Mississauga Centre became the new riding in the redistribution and the member previous for Mississauga West is now the member for Mississauga Centre; prior to her Dr. Bob Horner, a good friend and a wonderful man, unfortunately with the Conservative Party, although not his fault; prior to him of course Doug Fisher, a good long time Liberal, and Tony Abbot before him.

My riding has always sent a representative to the government, no matter what party happened to be elected. Fortunately for me it has done so once again.

Specifically I would like to thank the voters of Mississauga West for their confidence in sending me to Ottawa to represent them in this place. Mississauga West is an interesting riding made up of three very distinct communities, Streetsville, Erin Mills and Meadowdale. The perception of the riding is really different than the reality, as is probably true of many ridings. The perception is that it is a riding with high average incomes. It is mainly family and small business oriented, a riding of baby boomers one might say.

In addition we have our share of concerns and problems. I frankly take exception to a member of the House standing in his place and saying that because we are Liberals in the government we do not care about people. That is absolute nonsense. It is stuff that I have listened to for five years in opposition to the NDP in the parliament of Ontario. It is interesting that is almost *déjà vu* in this place.

We care about social housing problems. We need more in my riding. I was the president of the Peel non-profit housing while a member of Peel regional council. I was on that board for nine years. We have women's shelters and a food bank. We want to end the systemic violence against women and children, and no individual or political party in the House has cornered those concepts and ideas.

We have youth unemployment and under employment. I have three sons in their 20s and I am concerned about their future the same as all parents care about the future of their children. We have new Canadians, refugees who need help to adjust. We have crime. We need to fight crime to take back our streets. We in the Liberal Party believe that we can do all of those things by providing a balance.

That brings me to my point with regard the throne speech. We will not govern on the extremes of the right or the extremes of the left. Rather we will bring a balance to the government of this great country. We hear calls to spend more from the left. I sat and watched an NDP government in Ontario take the total debt of that province from \$39 billion in 1990 to over \$100 billion in 1995, which literally destroyed the confidence of one of our greatest provinces. What I hear from the party of the left is to spend more.

The Address

• (1330)

I watched what the Tories did. It was interesting to hear the sound bite this morning on the news of the leader of what I believe is the fifth party in this beautiful establishment, the leader of the Progressive Conservatives, who said that there was a sign over the Prime Minister's door which reads "send it and we will spend it". There was a sign over Mr. Mulroney's door which read "we will spend it before you send it". The NDP sign would say "we will spend it. You send it and we will spend it again". That is the nonsense of getting into extremes.

I find the official opposition to be rather interesting. It is the politics of Ross Perot. It uses analogies like Ross Perot would do when he says on television "If you want to know why the car won't run, you have to open up the hood and look at the engine". I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that they have fixed one of the flat tires on the car. I heard the speaker from the Reform Party this morning go through some incredible analogy about a ship at sea going down the Niagara River. He lost most Canadians and most people in the House before he got on board the particular ship.

An hon. member: He failed geography.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Our plan is a balanced plan. We said clearly and loudly during the election that when we achieve a surplus, 50 p. cent of that surplus will go to the kind of social spending that the NDP talks about and for tax relief, and 50 p. cent will go toward debt reduction.

It is a balanced plan that we believe the people of Canada believe in. Clearly they have sent us here to administer that plan and to deliver it.

[*Translation*]

I would ask my hon. friends in the third party to remember that Canada is a unique and wonderful country. From coast to coast, our country embraces many regions, each different in its own way, including the very unique province of Quebec.

Throughout our long history, we have learned to set our differences aside and work together to build a great country. A great and vigorous country where democracy flourishes, without sacrificing minority rights, a country where citizens can move freely, a country where everyone can speak freely without fear of persecution, a country that is the envy of the world.

I believe all Canadians are prepared to reconcile their differences and continue building their country. Recent surveys show that the vast majority of Quebecers want to stay in Canada. Quebecers want to be a part of this great country.

I would urge hon. members of the third party to respect the will of the majority of Quebecers as expressed in two referendums and

numerous surveys, and give up their plans to destroy this unparalleled success.

I suggest they join us to continue building this country.

[*English*]

I apologize for the quality of my French, but I think it is important that we send the message to the third party in the House that the people of Quebec are sending to you. We want Quebec to stay in Canada and help build this wonderful country.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear what the hon. member from the Liberal Party had to say. In particular, in spite of his pronunciation, I appreciated the few words he said in French.

He referred to Canada as unique. This is a word we are hearing constantly nowadays. Unique and wonderful. And he referred to Quebec as a very unique province. This qualifier adds to the uniqueness. He said that Canada and Quebec should work together. He also referred to two referendums.

What I would like—

[*English*]

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to inquire—and I believe this is a point of order—whether it is customary for an official opposition member who is standing to receive the first question following a debate or whether it is up to the Speaker's discretion. Could you clarify that for me? I was standing in my place.

The Deputy Speaker: I saw the hon. member. There were two members who rose. I noted that the hon. member had been given a question in questions and comments a short time ago and I thought it fair to give one to one of the other members who had risen. I am choosing a round as best I can in exercising discretion.

I do not think it is normal that necessarily the official opposition gets the first question on a government member's question. What is normal is that an opposition member gets it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge and appreciate your customary wisdom. I also want to thank my other colleagues for their smiles and moral support.

As I was saying, our Liberal Party colleague referred earlier to the two referendums which were held. I may remind him, however, that on both occasions, promises were made to the people of Quebec, and in both cases, these promises were not kept.

Back to the Speech from the Throne. In 1994, the throne speech considered the possibility of being more open, in 1996, it proposed

The Address

strategies to that effect, but in 1997, we hear the exact opposite from the Governor General.

I would like to ask the hon. member of the Liberal Party two questions, and I would appreciate an answer. He wants Quebec and Canada to work together. Does the hon. member opposite acknowledge the existence of the people of Quebec? To work together, we must first be who we are. If we are, we can work together in a partnership, something we have offered to do since we came to this House.

Does he acknowledge the existence of the people of Quebec? That is my question. I am waiting for his answer. If he is consistent in what he says, his answer will be a resounding yes. I will now listen to what he has to say.

[English]

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, it is helpful for the member to ask the question and then tell me what I should answer. I appreciate the fact that the two parties are fighting over an opportunity to respond to some of my comments.

Let me say very directly to the member opposite that I certainly—and I believe my government—recognize the province of Quebec as a partner within Confederation. We recognize it as a unique society. I personally recognize it as quite distinct. When we look at language, when we look at law, when we look at culture, there is every reason for the country to embrace the province of Quebec as a distinct society or a unique society, whatever word we want to put on it.

I was in fact cautioned before I made my somewhat embarrassing attempt at French. The reason I was doing it was that hopefully within a year or so I will be a little more proficient and able to address answers to the member in the French language.

• (1340)

I was also told that I probably should not waste my time trying to convert the Bloc Québécois. I can see that is obvious. You have one goal and one goal only and that is to destroy this country. Frankly that is not what—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member but he must address his remarks to the Chair. I invite him to do so and he may continue his answer.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, the party opposite has a clear-cut goal. Having said that, I think it is important for those of us from English Canada, from communities like Mississauga which by the way is designated as officially bilingual because of the francophone community we have there, to say that we do not want the polarization that party seeks. We want Canada to be strong.

We realize that in order to be strong we have to deal with the issue of separation and national unity. We have to send a message from sea to sea to sea which says we are united, that Quebec is a part of Canada.

A vast majority of the people, at least a clear majority of the people in the province of Quebec, has recently stated they are tired of this issue. They are more concerned about the economy and they want to get on with building this great nation.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment as a Speaker of this great House. It is an honour for you and deserving of both you and this great institution.

I represent the riding of Waterloo—Wellington, one of the four new ridings in Ontario and one of four new ridings in all of Canada. I am exceedingly proud, honoured and humbled to represent this great riding. I am immensely grateful to my constituents for electing me to this 36th Parliament. I will undertake to serve my constituents to the very best of my ability and talent.

Waterloo—Wellington captures the essence of Canada. It contains a large city, the city of Kitchener. It contains small town Ontario: Elora, Fergus, Jacobs, Elmira, Baden, New Hamburg, Harrison and Palmerston. It contains a number of smaller towns and villages including St. Agatha, New Dundee, Wellesley, Drayton, Clifford, Belwood, Conestogo, Maryhill and Breslau. It contains that famous place called Punky Doodle's Corner.

Waterloo—Wellington is a rich and diverse riding of urban, rural and suburban people. It contains people from all walks of life and from all backgrounds. Approximately 30 percent of the wealth of the riding is generated as a result of agriculture and agribusiness. Farming is important to our part of Ontario.

I was born, raised and still live on the family farm. My great great grandparents first settled in the area in 1828, arriving via Pennsylvania with the many Mennonites whose descendants still inhabit the area. In fact the highest number and concentration of old order Mennonites and Amish people in all of Canada reside in my riding.

While the histories of my constituents are rich, varied and diverse, they are united in their love of and loyalty to Canada and all that we as Canadians stand for. We as Canadians are respectful of our institutions. We as Canadians are respectful of our symbols. We as Canadians are respectful of our values.

Each of these helps to define us as Canadians. The Speech from the Throne delivered on Tuesday by the Governor General will also contribute to our definition as Canadians. I want at this time to thank the mover and seconder of that speech.

The Address

Canada will march confidently into the 21st century and the new millennium. We have a plan and a vision which will enable Canada to be the very best in every way for its citizens. The foundation of that plan is to balance the books. It is gratifying to hear that the deficit will effectively be eliminated in the next fiscal year.

• (1345)

The trouble with doing something right the first time in over 30 years is that no one really appreciates how difficult it was to get there, but I believe Canadians do appreciate the enormity of the sacrifice to bring the deficit from \$42 billion in 1993 down to zero in the next fiscal year. I believe Canadians appreciate that the many years of sacrifice will pay off in the end, and that end is soon.

Once we are in the surplus situation, the formula as has been noted is an easy one to understand. One-half will support the programs Canadians want and deserve and the other half will go toward debt reduction and tax reduction. With this game plan Canada is poised to lead the industrialized world in economic growth this year and next and beyond. Our plan provides us with the fiscal stability necessary to allow change to be accommodated effectively and efficiently.

Jobs are being created at a remarkable pace but we need to do more. Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is at an unacceptable level. We need to look at establishing a national apprenticeship style program for our young people, recognizing there are provincial implications, but co-operation would be the key here. It would be an apprenticeship program that would marry the needs of society with the aspirations of our young people. It would assist the private sector to meet its labour requirements and ensure that young people would have the opportunity to acquire that important first job.

Even before we turn our eyes to youth unemployment we need to reach out to the youth of our nation. Some of the very most vulnerable Canadians go to school each day hungry. As a former teacher I can say that a hungry child is much more likely to be a problem learner with poor school performance. A hungry child is much more likely to be a behavioural problem. Children with learning and behavioural problems are much more likely to become drop-outs from school and from society. As the former chairman of the Waterloo regional police I can also say that drop-outs from school and society often fall into the trap of crime and become young offenders.

The social and economic impacts of youth crime are unacceptable to Canadians. They are demanding that we act proactively to attack the roots of crime. In a country as wealthy as Canada with its physical and human resources, I find it unacceptable that even one child would go hungry. I believe that we as a caring society and a caring nation need to put in place a program to eradicate child hunger. Investments in that regard made today will pay enormous dividends tomorrow.

We owe our children regardless of the status of their families the opportunity to learn, to grow and to become valued citizens without the burden of hunger. Attacking child hunger and the roots of youth crime must therefore be a priority of this government in its attack on child poverty. I am pleased to see the progress made and the initiatives outlined in the Speech from the Throne. We owe this investment to our children, to ourselves and to the future of Canada.

I personally look forward to voicing the views of my constituents in this great Parliament, and like all good parliamentarians I will listen more and judge less. I look forward to working together with my colleagues for the betterment of Canada. Finally I look forward to helping to continue to build the strong foundation upon which this great country of ours stands, a foundation which will confer prosperity, safety and a sense of community for all Canadians into the 21st century.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member from the Liberal Party talk about how the Liberal Party should be getting a lot of praise and pats on the back for finally doing something right after the last 30 years.

Let us look at what the Liberals have done right. What they have been practising for 30 years along with their friends in the Tory party and their friends in the NDP is more effective ways of wrenching dollars out of the taxpayers' pockets. They not only got it right during the 35th Parliament, but they have perfected it. They have wrenched an extra \$25 billion out of the pockets of Canadian businesses and Canadian workers by raising taxes in more than 36 different areas. They got it right all right, but let us not let them take any praise for it because the Canadian taxpayers are the ones who had to bear the brunt of that tax torture.

• (1350)

I am certain that the member has read the throne speech and he has a good handle on the economic numbers, better than the finance minister had yesterday. I would like to ask the member the question the finance minister could not answer. When exactly can we expect the first surplus after the balanced budget, and exactly according to the Liberal numbers, how much is that surplus going to be? When and how much?

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member opposite, I would not presuppose and begin to answer for the finance minister. I would however say that it seems to me that the Reform Party just does not get it.

There is importance in getting our fiscal house in order. We as a government have been able to do that over the past number of years not only effectively but efficiently. That speaks volumes about the ability of the government to take a terrible financial situation and

S. O. 31

put in place the kinds of safeguards that will ensure prosperity not only for this generation but for generations to come.

It seems to me that that groundwork now having been laid will ensure that prosperity will flow and we can then all share fully in that surplus position.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétién (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speake, before making my comments to the member for Waterloo—Wellington, I would like to congratulate you on being returned to your duties as Deputy Speaker of this House. You certainly deserve it, having proven your mettle in the 35th Parliament, and I trust you will be just as vigilant in the 36th.

I would address my remarks to the member for Waterloo—Wellington, an educator it seems. I understand that he cares a great deal about young Canadians and especially the young people in his riding. Does he consider the abnormally high rate of unemployment among young people to be normal? The rate, unfortunately, did not decrease over the four years his government, the Liberal Party, sat in this House. On the contrary, it increased. The rate of unemployment among young people increased.

Is it the member's intention to propose concrete solutions to his Liberal caucus for improving things for our young people, to enable them to find satisfying work that complements their studies at CEGEP or university?

[*English*]

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member opposite, I would simply say that any rate of unemployment is not normal. We will have to, as will people from all parts of Canada and members on all sides of the House, work to ensure that the kind of unemployment which we have now is brought down to an effective and appropriate level.

I would say to him that we need to continue to work very hard to ensure that is the case. We will press not only government but also caucus members to do that to ensure that the best kinds of jobs will be in place for Canadians.

The Speaker: Debate. Of course I am going to recognize the hon. member for Charlotte. However I was wondering, instead of having you begin and then interrupting your remarks for question period, if you would begin your remarks when the debate reconvenes. Would that be acceptable to you?

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, that would be more than acceptable.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: My colleagues, as it is nearly 2 p.m., perhaps we could begin with members' statements.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Kent—Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Legion Week here in Ontario. We as Canadians owe a great deal to the men and women of the Royal Canadian Legion who in many cases have devoted their lives to the remembrance of their fallen comrades as well as those who have made major sacrifices for the defence of our country.

Legion members across this land take up the torch daily to enhance the lives of seniors, youth, veterans and the disabled. Last year alone \$310 million were raised and spent in communities across this country while three million hours of work were put in by volunteers and members of this great organization.

May I express the thanks of millions of Canadians for the great work and dedication given to us by the Royal Canadian Legion members.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a little fish story for the House today.

A bunch of the good old boys, like Turbot Tobin and Walleye Woodward, were out with their chum the Federal Fisherman. What a time; no worries, no cares, just them and those Labrador sport fish. It was very educational for the Federal Fisherman. During his time there he almost learned the difference between the salmon and a sucker.

I am sure the member for Burin—St. George's urges the Federal Fisherman to make this an annual event so that every July he spends his hard-earned dollars in Labrador. And just like this July, the minister can celebrate his return by flying over Prince Rupert and the salt water fishermen far below.

Is it not wonderful that the Prime Minister does not subtract days spent fishing in Labrador from a minister's shelf life.

* * *

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Fergus, Ontario is located in my riding. Fergus among other things is noted for its architectural beauty which is surpassed only by its natural beauty located as it is on the Grand River watershed. Fergus is also famous as the home of the Fergus Scottish Highland Games.

Recently an opportunity has arisen for the purchase and renovation of the Fergus building that houses the Grand Theatre, which a number of theatre groups call home. A fundraising campaign has

started and is called “the crowning touch to restore the downtown jewel”. Needless to say, I support this very worthwhile effort.

The initiative in Fergus underscores the necessity for Canadians wherever they live to support cultural and community endeavours such as this. The preservation, promotion and expansion of Canadian culture in all its many forms is both necessary and desirable.

I applaud all of those who, like the residents in Fergus, are doing something to support our culture.

* * *

[Translation]

CENTRE DES FEMMES DE LAVAL

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I take special pleasure today in paying tribute to the Centre des femmes de Laval, which is celebrating 15 years of operation.

The centre, whose main goal is to improve living conditions for women, provides shelter, counselling, information and support to all women in Laval.

Be it through information and training or through innovative programs, the Centre des femmes de Laval brings women together to discuss their individual situations, look for solutions and, more importantly, break down the isolation women often unwillingly find themselves in.

• (1400)

As a founding member of the centre, I want to congratulate the board of directors, the staff and especially the volunteers who work in this key player in the Laval community.

Long live the Centre des femmes!

* * *

[English]

ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House for the first time in my new career as a federal politician to congratulate the citizens of my riding of Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford for their magnificent community spirit and fund-raising efforts which have resulted in the development of the new Royal Victoria Hospital.

I was honoured to participate on September 13 with the Lieutenant-Governor and the minister of health for Ontario as we celebrated together this splendid new facility.

[Translation]

It was truly a happy occasion.

S. O. 31

[English]

The 297 bed facility will be the regional hospital for all of Simcoe County and beyond. It is the result of the impressive Building on a Century campaign which saw the community raise \$15 million toward its construction.

The new hospital features over \$25 million in state of the art equipment and will be the location of Ontario's newest breast screening site.

* * *

DR. TOM BOLTON

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago this week Dr. Tom Bolton discovered the first evidence of black holes while working at the David Dunlap Observatory, University of Toronto, located in Richmond Hill.

A black hole is a collapsed star of such mass and density that nothing can escape from it, not even light. There had long been speculation that black holes existed, but Dr. Bolton produced the first credible evidence.

This is an event of great importance, not only to my riding of Oak Ridges, but also to Canada. We are in the forefront of great scientific discoveries, working with the largest telescope in Canada.

The University of Toronto boasts one of the world's greatest programs in astrophysics and with continued support, not only from the federal government but also from committed private supporters, I am sure we can look forward to maintaining Canada's leading edge discoveries and contributions to international space exploration.

I congratulate Dr. Bolton.

* * *

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among Canadian men, with an estimated 80 men being diagnosed every working day. Its incidence is 40 p. cent greater than that of breast cancer and only lung cancer kills more men than does prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer, because it strikes one man in eight, is, like breast cancer, a serious disease which affects huge numbers of Canadian families. Yet prostate cancer, which kills 4,000 men each year, was ignored in the government's throne speech. It continues to receive just one-ninth of the funding of breast cancer research and one-fiftieth of the research money given to AIDS.

September is prostate cancer awareness month so let us begin adequately funding prostate cancer research, not at the expense of funding for other cancer research, but at least to the same levels. We owe it to ourselves, our families and our constituents.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

CAPE PROJECT

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have reason to be proud of Canada's youth.

On September 19, the Canadian Space Agency in St. Hubert hosted an event involving the elementary and high school students taking part in the CAPE project. This project is aimed at sending experimental equipment primarily designed for protein crystallization to the MIR station.

The experiments were developed by young students from across the country in co-operation with their teachers and with scientists who may be their colleagues 15 years from now.

As the member representing the Minister of Industry at this event and a teacher by profession, I have seen for myself that we need not worry about the next generation of Canadian scientists.

[English]

Our government is investing in such programs as CAPE to ensure that more students have better opportunities in finding jobs and more opportunities to learn the skills that they will need in building Canada's future.

[Translation]

I hope the experiments leaving for MIR today, which testify to the inquisitiveness and ingenuity of Canadian youth, will be an unqualified success.

* * *

● (1405)

WORLD MARITIME WEEK

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating World Maritime Week and I want to take this opportunity to draw to the attention of all members the future of the Lévis shipyard.

I would have preferred to talk about good news this week. Unfortunately, the government's lack of action in the shipbuilding sector is just as bad as it was during the Liberals' first mandate.

Indeed, Davie Industries executives have been waiting for months for a positive reply to a request for financial security from the Export Development Corporation, in order to execute a \$125-million contract with Petrobras, a Brazilian crown corporation. The refitting of the *Spirit of Columbus* platform would immediately create 400 jobs.

We are also still waiting for the implementation of a true shipbuilding policy, as promised by the Liberals four years ago. Let us hope that World Maritime Week will be a wake-up call for the Liberal government.

* * *

THRONE SPEECH

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Laval West, I want to congratulate the government on its Speech from the Throne to open the first session of the 36th Parliament of Canada in which it set out its priorities for the years ahead.

Of particular note is its wish to maintain national unity. Our government should be congratulated on its clearly stated intention to contribute to the effort by federal, provincial and territorial governments to develop a more collaborative approach to strengthening and modernizing Canada's social union.

In order to build a stronger Canada, our government will invest in children, in quality care and good health, and will take steps to ensure the safety of our communities.

These are some of the goals that we believe will help bring all Canadians closer together as we head into the next millennium.

* * *

[English]

VANCOUVER KINGSWAY

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to convey to you and to this House that it is a great honour to represent Vancouver Kingsway in this Parliament.

One of the most important strengths of Vancouver Kingsway is its cultural diversity. From around the globe, communities of Italian, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, East Indian, Filipino, Chinese, Greek and others have made my riding their chosen home. Through their cultures and the traditions they have enriched this country.

As the first Asian Canadian woman to be elected to Parliament, I am proud to be their voice here in Ottawa and to champion their diversity.

* * *

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today we read of the sad and unfortunate conclusions of a one-time prominent Conservative senator who, having spent a lifetime trying to change the federation from within, is now reduced to bitter mumblings about B.C.'s separation from Canada. What went wrong?

Perhaps it started with the Liberals and the national energy program, an arrogant, me first initiative that gouged the west and

catered to the east. Perhaps the fault lies with the Conservative leader, the leader of her own party who, bereft of ideas for Canada, clings desperately to the distinct society clause as a solution to national unity.

First it was a report from the B.C. adviser on national unity warning of the potential of western separation. Now a prominent senator has turned her back on her own party, its leader and the centrist ideas for which it stands.

It is time to listen up, Mr. Prime Minister. If he continues to ignore the concerns of western Canada, if he refuses to recognize Canada as a federation of equal provinces and citizens, if he continues to ignore the pleadings for parliamentary and Senate reform, he will have sown the wind only to reap the whirlwind.

* * *

● (1410)

THE LATE DUDLEY GEORGE

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended an event marking a tragic day in our country's history. Two years ago Dudley George was shot dead. He was one of 40 people peacefully protesting at Ipperwash. These unarmed citizens ended up facing the Ontario Provincial Police riot squad and the tactical weapons squad. The responsibility for this anti-native act lies with the current Ontario government.

Just two days ago the government in the throne speech committed itself to "develop relationships with aboriginal peoples based on the principles of partnership, transparency, predictability and accountability". Transparency and accountability, enough words.

I call on the government to support the call for a full public inquiry in Ontario. Each day that passes without a full public inquiry into Ipperwash darkens the stain of the blood spilled at that tragic event.

* * *

OSTEOPOROSIS

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, studies show that elderly people can minimize the loss of bone that may lead to osteoporosis, a debilitating bone disease that affects thousands of Canadian seniors by consuming the higher amount of calcium and vitamin D now recommended by the Osteoporosis Society of Canada.

I urge people over 50 in my riding of Brampton Centre and throughout Canada to add at least one extra serving of dairy products to their daily menu to help keep their bones and teeth strong.

Oral Questions

We can all contribute to improving our own chances for wellness and reduce the future cost for medicare by making the right choices now.

* * *

INCOME TAXES

Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC): Mr. Speaker, taxes are too high. While progress has been made in lowering the deficit, it has come at the expense of jobs and higher taxes.

If Canadians experience increases in their incomes, personal income taxes, EI and CPP premiums reduce those incomes by two-thirds. Taxes in Canada from all levels of government account for more than one-third of the GDP. CPP hikes proposed by this government with current EI premiums will further burden already over taxed Canadians.

Clearly lower taxes mean both economic and employment growth. As a nation that depends on bilateral trade with the United States, the widening tax gap between the two countries continues to damage our standard of living.

If the government is serious about jobs for all Canadians in this new economy, it must now get serious about tax cuts and lower EI premiums as Canadians have earned this right.

We are the only political party that is advocating tax cuts now.

The Speaker: Yesterday I shared with you my intention, with your help of course, to make question period a little more brisk, if you will. I want to thank all of the interveners yesterday, those who put the questions and those who gave the answers. I especially want to thank the Prime Minister who pointed out that he understood that I would be intervening when a certain amount of time went by.

Today I am going to try to tighten it up just a little bit more so that we get in both the question and the answer in 35 seconds and I know that we are all going to co-operate. With that I am going to recognize the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

● (1415)

[English]

THE DEBT

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in 1992 the Mulroney government passed the debt servicing and reduction act. It established a special account to pay down the debt from a special surplus. Of course, Mulroney continued to spend so there was neither a surplus nor any debt reduction. The whole thing was a shell game.

Oral Questions

Now this prime minister promises to put 50 percent of any surplus into a special fund and to pay down the debt and give tax relief from that account while continuing to spend at record levels.

My question for the prime minister is how is his shell game any different from Mulroney's shell game?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the difference is that during Mr. Mulroney's time he moved the deficit up to \$42 billion. We are reducing it to zero. That is a very big difference. According to the Speech from the Throne it will be done in the next year. We are not there yet.

It is amazing the satisfaction I am getting today standing in the House seeing the Leader of Opposition very preoccupied with the fact that we have been very successful in what we did with the finances of the nation.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, anybody could have done better than the federal Tories in reducing the deficit.

What the prime minister failed to mention is that the national debt is \$82 billion higher than it was under Mulroney. What he fails to mention is that his government is ripping \$3,000 more from every average Canadian family in taxes than Mulroney did. And on top of that there are 1.4 million unemployed.

If the prime minister is not playing a shell game, if he wants to make himself different from Mulroney, then why does he not pass the bulk of any surplus on to Canadian taxpayers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we reduce taxes we are not reducing the deficit. That is something people will understand. We said that in the end we will be in a position of surplus. It is coming but we are not there yet because there are still some problems in the nation.

When I look at the program of the Leader of the Opposition, he promised to put \$4 billion more into health care. He is a spender.

That was not a promise from us. We have done it. Right at the beginning of the campaign we said that next year the provinces would receive \$700 million more and the year after \$1.4 billion and the same thing in the years to come. So over the period of our term we will have given more back to medicare.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the prime minister has done it to health care. He has cut the transfer from \$19 billion to \$12 billion. That is a fact.

There are young families out there in which both parents are working and they cannot make ends meet because of high tax levels. There are businesses out there that would hire these younger workers we are all concerned about except that the government is charging excessive payroll taxes, and the throne speech did not

promise a cent of tax relief to those families or those businesses. What it promised are 29 new spending proposals from the government.

My question to the prime minister is who does he think would spend any surplus more wisely, Liberal politicians and bureaucrats or those families and businesses?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wanted me to speak about equality of the provinces. I am for that. I am for equality of individuals. That is exactly why I said yesterday that to make sure that everybody in Canada is equal we will put some of the money in the surplus to give a chance for students to go to university so they will be on an equal footing with the children of the rich people of Canada.

• (1420)

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Reformers believe that any surpluses belong to Canadians and they are really demanding accountability. To lay to rest the confusion over the government's 50:50 promise, will the finance minister provide a separate accounting for the surplus in all future budgets and will he commit to itemizing in the 1998 budget all the new spending announced today? A simple question.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is axiomatic and very clear that in every budget the government accounts for government spending. I can assure the hon. member that I will do that.

The Leader of the Opposition drew the comparison between the Tories and the current government and asked what some of the differences were. There are a multitude. There is another difference. I believe that the then minister of finance, Michael Wilson, wanted to cut the deficit but he did not get the support of his prime minister, and I did.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are glad to see that the finance minister is making up with the prime minister. That is wonderful.

In 1993 the finance minister said no government can operate effectively when its projections fall consistently short of the mark. Yet now even he refuses to set a mark. Is this 50:50 shell game a deliberate attempt to bamboozle the public and to pick the pockets of the Canadian public? That is what we want to know.

The Speaker: My colleague, I am having a bit of trouble with the phrase "a deliberate attempt to bamboozle". I want to caution the member to please choose his words judiciously.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if anybody is going to make up with anybody, perhaps the hon.

Oral Questions

member might make up with his leader whom he consigned to the scrap heap of history yesterday.

Let me be very clear. We are going to balance the budget in 1998-99. There are going to be surpluses. We are going to be in a position to cut taxes. We are going to reduce debt and we are going to invest in the future of Canadians. We will set this out in the budget and in the interim between now and then in the fiscal update we are going to consult with Canadians as to their priorities.

* * *

[Translation]

CALGARY DECLARATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister made a very telling statement on the consultations to be held by the provinces on the Calgary declaration. The Prime Minister said that the federal government might consult Quebecers, going around the Government of Quebec and the National Assembly.

I simply want to ask the Prime Minister whether he knows how the other provinces will consult their citizens on the Calgary declaration.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the provinces have used or will use all kinds of ways to consult their citizens, and I think the Canadian government has the right to consult Canadians throughout Canada. However, I did not say we would.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: No, that is not what I said. I said, in response to a question by the member who asked us to do so immediately, that I did not reject the idea. First we will see what the provinces that agreed to work on this will do, and then we will let you know. However, no one can deny the right of the Parliament of Canada to consult the voters who elect the members of this Parliament.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks about all kinds of ways. We saw a number of these mentioned in the newspapers. But the Prime Minister did not specify what kind of means.

How could he, in a major speech he made yesterday, lend such credibility to strategies as yet unknown, to consultations which may or may not be reliable? How can he try to go around the Government of Quebec and the National Assembly without knowing what kind of consultations the provinces will hold on the Calgary declaration?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each provincial government will decide what form of consulta-

tion it will use. At this point, it seems obvious that each government will opt for different methods.

There are many ways to consult the public. We think that we can consult the public if necessary. I never said we would do so, and we never determined what form this would take.

We are perfectly happy to see the provinces select different methods to consult their citizens, and we hope that at some point they will adopt resolutions in their respective legislative assemblies, each province according to its own lights.

As I said before, as soon as they have presented these resolutions, a similar resolution will be put before this House, and then we will discuss—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the Right Hon. Prime Minister, but the hon. member for Temiscamingue has the floor.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The premier of Newfoundland has stated that his consultation on the Calgary declaration would be done via the Internet, a 1-800 line, or at riding meetings.

Does the Prime Minister, who claims to be so concerned about clarity and transparency, consider this method of consultation to be sufficient and satisfactory?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premier of Newfoundland is the one answerable to the voters of Newfoundland, and it is up to him to defend his proposal.

According to what I have read so far, he has the agreement of the opposition parties to do this. If he is making use of a modern method of consultation, that's fine. Each province will have its own method of consultation.

When the premier of Newfoundland faces his legislature, he will have to justify his consultation formula. It is not up to me to approve or disapprove of it, that is up to his legislature.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: And if the Government of Quebec wants to consult the people of Quebec on the same subject, it can do so, only it is up to the Government of Quebec to decide, not us.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to hear that it is not up to the Prime Minister to decide how the provinces are to conduct their business. At last.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pierre Brien: Since the Prime Minister does not, when it comes down to it, know all that much about how Brian Tobin and his colleagues are going to hold their consultations on the Calgary declaration, how can he use that consultation, whose methodology

Oral Questions

he does not know, as a pretext, in a major speech, to make yet another threat against Quebec?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is of course no connection. I believe the hon. member is saying that the procedure relating to a referendum on secession should only be determined by the secessionist government. This is probably what the member has in mind, but he certainly cannot name one country in the world which would accept such a thing.

The hon. member must realize that the consultation process carried out by the premier of Newfoundland has to do with a policy statement which has no constitutional impact and which only involves that particular province, for the time being. In the case of a secession, the territory of Quebec would be excluded from the Canadian legal order and from Canadian federal institutions, something which cannot be achieved through such a procedure.

* * *

• (1425)

[English]

FISHERIES

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the prime minister.

Our west coast salmon fishery is in dire straits. British Columbians, indeed all Canadians, are offended at the federal government's weak stance in this dispute.

Last week a congressional committee on the Pacific salmon treaty heard testimony in Washington from key stakeholders. Members of this House deserve to know that Canada was invited to testify at those hearings.

Why did the prime minister fail to send representatives to testify at these hearings and to stand up for Canada's interests?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the hon. member, whose experience has been in a provincial legislature rather than in the national legislature, would not understand that in Canada, as in the United States, it is a decision of the committee itself as to who will appear before it. We have no more right to tell American committees who they will have before them than they have to tell our committees of this House who to have before them.

• (1430)

I find it strange that the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party would believe in a principle that would allow other governments the right to attend all committee hearings of the House of Commons and Senate.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no amount of wriggling and slithering on this issue is going to get the government off the hook. The minister of fisheries knows perfectly well that Canadians were invited to testify and they failed to testify.

My question to the minister of fisheries is when is his government going to stand up for the interests of Canadian fishers in coastal communities?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is time for the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party to speak with the leader of the New Democratic Party in British Columbia.

We have consistently had from the New Democratic Party of British Columbia rejection of the contacts with Americans that I have made, with every senator from Alaska, Washington state and Oregon, with representatives of the White House, representatives of the state department and the governors of Oregon, Washington and Alaska. They have said no to such contacts.

However, there is one committee in the United States which we believe to be a domestic affair of the congressmen in the United States and she then says that of course we have not done enough. Is she following the policies of the New Democratic premier or is she announcing a different policy here?

* * *

TRADE

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

He is preparing another team Canada trip for January. The Prime Minister will know that notwithstanding these trips, trade with Brazil has gone down 10 percent, with Mexico 19 percent, Indonesia 11 percent, China 24 percent. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in the meantime continues to repeat and argue that these trade barriers within Canada cost Canadian families on average \$1,000 per year and cost us jobs.

When will the Prime Minister show the same enthusiasm of breaking down trade barriers within Canada as he shows for charting up air miles outside Canada?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I travel abroad I travel with all the premiers of Canada who are always very delighted to travel on team Canada. The business community of Canada is lining up to be on the trip.

In terms of trade barriers within Canada, the Minister of Industry has worked very hard with the provinces and the provinces have worked very hard among themselves to come close to an agreement. If the hon. member is telling us not to respect the provincial governments and just impose a regime, we will look into that.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister has his priorities wrong. My question was not for the premiers accompanying him. It was not for the business community that is going to be accompanying him. It is for the taxpayers who will be paying the bill for the people on the trip; the people who pay \$1,000 a year on average because of trade barriers in Canada.

An internal memo of the Department of Industry established that only 13 percent of the trade barriers had been struck down in the last agreement. When is the federal government going to assert its powers and leadership and deal with internal trade?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the leader of the fifth party that when we travel on these trips all the business people pay for their trips. There is no big cost to the government.

Wherever we go everyone says it is the biggest trade mission they have ever received. There is nothing better than having all the premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada working together to create jobs for Canadians. However, I know the leader of the fifth party is not in favour of the provinces and the federal government working together.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Reform has just learned that the conciliator in the Canada Post labour dispute filed his report with the minister last Monday. When was this government planning to get around to telling the Canadian people that they are now on a 21-day countdown for a national postal strike?

• (1435)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the conciliation officer has reported to me. I will evaluate the report and make a statement before October 7.

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a postal strike is extremely devastating for Canadian business and non-business alike. A strike shuts down Canada's entire mail delivery system.

The minister has already interfered in the bargaining process and he has failed to notify the Canadian public of the imminence of this strike. What is he going to do to protect Canadians from the impact of this national postal strike?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly disappointed that my hon. colleague feels that there is going to be a strike. The collective bargaining process can work and will work. I certainly encourage both parties to work

Oral Questions

together to have a collective agreement that will be beneficial to both the union and the post office.

* * *

[Translation]

CALGARY DECLARATION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we learned through the newspapers that the premiers, including the premier of Newfoundland, have decided to consult their fellow citizens regarding the Calgary declaration. To this end, they will use fax machines, 1-800 lines and the Internet. These are all modern tools, as the Prime Minister said, but they are ill-chosen for a serious consultation on what should be a serious issue.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the fact that the premiers have chosen such inadequate tools for a consultation of this nature says a lot about how little importance they attach to their own Calgary declaration?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premiers will use the means they deem appropriate to consult the public about the seven principles set out in the Calgary declaration, which the government of Canada fully supports.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given the openness displayed by the government, I have a supplementary for the minister.

When will we be told that a premier representing an English speaking province has decided to retain the services of Jojo the fortune teller to find out what the public in his province thinks?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, premiers will choose the appropriate means to consult the public.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today this government is proposing to introduce the single largest tax increase in history. Working Canadians will be forced to pay up to \$3,300 each year in the form of CPP payroll taxes for a maximum pension of only \$8,800 a year when they retire.

How can the Minister of Human Resources Development support such a bad so-called investment for Canadians?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some time ago the chief actuary projected that unless the federal government and the provinces did not come together to deal with escalating premiums, he projected that they would have to go to over 14 percent in order to preserve the Canada pension plan, that

Oral Questions

in fact financial chaos would ensue. As a result of that, together with the provinces—let me be very clear—the federal government put in place a plan for more funding. Yes, it will take the premiums to 9.9 percent. That is substantially lower than the 13 percent recommended by the Reform Party.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the CPP was introduced, the government claimed that Canadians would never have to pay more than 5.5 percent of their earnings to finance the plan, but now we see 9.9 percent, nearly double its prediction.

How can the minister justify making Canadians pay more in CPP taxes when he has actually admitted that his chief actuary of the fund has said that there is no guarantee that increase will give the return that Canadians have been promised?

• (1440)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker. The chief actuary has said that as a result of the actions taken by ourselves and the provinces, as a result of the fuller funding, as a result of some of the changes to the benefits, in fact we have now preserved the Canada pension plan for future generations of Canadians, for those who will receive disability pensions which they would not receive from the Reform Party, for those who would receive maternity benefits which they would not receive from the Reform Party.

In fact we have put in place along with the provinces one of the most modern and one of the most progressive retirement systems in the world. Canadians are very proud of it and the Reform Party should be too.

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[Translation]

CALGARY DECLARATION

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

André Tremblay, the former constitutional adviser to several of Quebec's premiers, including Robert Bourassa, said that the Calgary declaration was an empty shell, that it amounted to next to nothing.

Since even Quebec federalists are calling the Calgary declaration an empty shell, how can the Prime Minister see it as a huge step forward on which we can pin all our hopes?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we are to have quality debates in this House, members would do well not to distort what has been said. The Prime Minister never said that it was a huge step forward on which we could pin all our hopes.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe: He said so yesterday.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Yesterday, that's right.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: We can pin our hopes on the fact that Canada is a country Quebecers want to keep. And that is why the Bloc Quebecois finds the Calgary declaration so annoying. It is annoying because Quebecers want to remain in Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: And that is why they far prefer anything advancing Canadian unity to anything calculated to destroy the country, as one of the Bloc Quebecois members put it, and I am not distorting his words.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister was listening to something else yesterday when the Prime Minister gave his own speech in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I have another question for the minister. Daniel Johnson, who is recognized as a staunch federalist, is one of the few individuals in Quebec right now who can go around and defend, in any event, he is one of those defending the Calgary declaration. In order to sell the idea in Quebec, he tells Quebecers that the unique character recognized in Calgary is the same thing as distinct society.

Mr. Minister, do you support—

The Speaker: Dear colleague, I think he heard the question. Moreover, you must always address the Chair.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact—

Some hon. members: Yes or no?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: —if ever the Calgary declaration were to become an interpretive clause, which is possible, although it has not happened yet, of course, as it is under discussion, the interpretation given would guarantee Quebecers that the courts would take into account today's unique, as opposed to yesterday's distinct, character of Quebec society.

There is not a single serious jurist who would say that being unique had anything less to recommend it than being distinct.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

As the minister is aware, there are in excess of 30,000 illegal immigrants in Canada today. Can the minister confirm that there are in excess of 200 citizens of Vietnam in Canada under deportation order mostly for criminal activity? Can the minister confirm

that the Canadian government is negotiating with the Government of Vietnam to take back a handpicked 100 of them?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm officially is that annually in Canada we have over 200,000 immigrants who will become Canadian citizens and whom we are very proud to welcome. That is the federal system.

Clearly, however, there are always people in life who try to abuse the system, and we have the tools necessary to deport and return to their country those who try to abuse the system. This is the case in a number of countries.

• (1445)

[English]

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the minister that this party is just as happy with all the immigrants who come into this country legally as her party is.

Could the minister confirm, after she checks out what she is doing with the Government of Vietnam, that the federal government is greasing the wheels with the Vietnam government for acceptance of these deportees, that it is using an \$8 million CIDA contract in Vietnam headed up by Marc Lalonde, a former government minister? Could she make sure the former minister is not part of what is going on to solve the problem she has with these Vietnamese deportees who are in Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member of the Reform Party is so proud to welcome immigrants to Canada, he should not really be continuing to try to create myths about immigration. That is just what he is doing with this sort of question and it is unacceptable.

I repeat. In the case of those who abuse the system, who come here illegally, we try to have official agreements with foreign governments so they will take back their nationals who are here illegally. This is the case with Vietnam, China and other countries.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Ms. Jocelyne Bujold Girard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for Canada Post announced that his strategy in negotiations with the postal union was first to let the workers strike and then to negotiate special legislation to force them back to work.

Oral Questions

Could the Prime Minister tell us if this is indeed his government's actual strategy to resolve the postal issue?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the member that I have announced no strategy and that the only thing the government wants is for the two parties—the union and the Canada Post Corporation—to sit down at the bargaining table and come up with a negotiated agreement.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Public Works and Government Services share with the House how the conflict opposing Bradson Security Services and its locked out security officers was finally resolved after almost a year?

Would the minister also inform the House as to the measures the government will implement to avoid such deplorable situations in the future?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me first inform the House that Bradson Security has negotiated a tentative agreement. Members of the union will vote on October 3.

Such a situation will not occur any more because last Friday we went out for new tenders. There is a clause for the future that will allow the suspension of any contractual obligation on both the suppliers and the government in case of a strike or lockout.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the Supreme Court of Canada stated very clearly in a judgment it rendered that the meeting between Ted Thompson and Chief Justice Isaac which occurred on March 1, 1996 was clearly inappropriate and breached the judicial independence of the courts.

Evidence in justice documents filed with the supreme court indicate that a false story and cover-up of this incident were created by senior justice officials. This is unacceptable. In the face of this incriminating evidence and the statements of the supreme court, will the new justice minister immediately dismiss the officials involved in this cover-up?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I point out to the House that what the Supreme Court of Canada said today in a very important decision was that the justice official in question exercised bad judgment but did not act in bad faith.

Oral Questions

Having said that, I reassure the hon. member that I will be taking under advisement that which the supreme court said and I will be reviewing it in the coming days.

• (1450)

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her response. One of her own officials stated that if the real story were revealed “the damage done to the image of the department, the attorney general and the court will be incalculable for all time and the consequences could precipitate the resignations of the minister and the chief justice”.

Again, will the justice minister immediately dismiss those involved in what her own official described as a false story and a cover-up?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out, because it does not appear clear from the hon. member’s question, that the case he refers to decided by the supreme court today is in fact a case we won.

It was a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in which, yes, they did refer to an exercise of bad judgment by an official within the Department of Justice; but they went on to conclude that the exercise of bad judgment should not lead to a stay of proceedings.

I am very pleased to announce to the House this afternoon that the government will be proceeding in a very timely fashion with the three cases involving alleged war crimes.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Considerable time has gone by since the last changes to the employment insurance were introduced. The verdict is clear: ordinary people and seasonal workers are hard hit by the changes introduced by my predecessor, the former member for Acadie—Bathurst.

Consequently, is the government prepared to amend the Employment Insurance Act to ensure that children from families affected by the reform are not sent off to school on an empty stomach?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our employment insurance reform came into effect a year ago. We have been monitoring its implementation very carefully and closely and we are measuring its impact to make sure the interests of Canadians from coast to coast are well served.

I can tell you that, after 25 years of an employment insurance system that did not keep up with changes in the job market, it was imperative that it be reviewed, upgraded and brought up to date because it served Canadians very poorly.

I can also tell you that we are watching the system’s results very closely but we feel that, for the time being, it is in the interest of Canadians to move from passive to active measures within the system.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, are the minister and the government insensitive to the pain and suffering inflicted upon these families? Will this government stop stealing money from the unemployed by using the surplus in the employment insurance fund to reduce the deficit?

The Speaker: In my opinion, the word “stealing” is unparliamentary; I would therefore ask my hon. colleague to withdraw it.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I am sincerely sorry, Mr. Speaker, for using the word “stealing”. So I will say “taking the money”.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we do know is that workers everywhere in this country want to retain jobs and have social systems which help them adapt to the labour market.

That is what we have done with the transitional job fund. It has helped thousands of workers in the Atlantic region work in dignity instead of being limited to continual dependence on an income coming from outside. Our respect for these workers is what has prompted us to commit to active measures with enhanced budgets which give them the dignity of real jobs, by moving from a system of passive measures to active measures.

* * *

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, over the years the government has continuously picked the pockets of Canadians through high employment insurance premiums.

• (1455)

The Speaker: In view of the fact that I just had one member withdraw a word that had to do with stealing, I wonder if the hon. member would consider withdrawing the words “picked the pockets”.

Mr. Jean Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I will.

In the Speech from the Throne the government announced that it planned to go ahead with the seniors benefits, which discourages retirement savings, attacks middle income seniors and earners, and punishes women.

Points of Order

Could the Minister of Human Resources Development tell us what his government has against Canadians who work, who want to work and who want peace of mind and security in retirement?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to seniors benefits we are under great consultation now with seniors right across the country.

The fact is that 75 percent of Canadians will do better. Nine out of ten senior women will do better. We are bringing in these fundamental changes so that middle income and low income Canadians can be assured of a decent retirement.

I would ask the hon. member to hearken back to the last time there was reform, when the Conservative Party sought to bring in pension reform on the backs of the lowest income earners, on the poorest in the country. We will not do that.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, the government is going to let the Minister of Finance take money from Canadians instead of stopping the waste of their hard-won earnings.

Can the Minister of Human Resources Development explain to us why his government is intent on punishing a generation of Canadians in retirement when it has taxed them to death during their working years?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the reform has done was to respond to a need, specifically the need to ensure that there would be pensions in the next century, without having to pay an exorbitant price for them. That is what we have done. We have penalized no one, on the contrary, particularly not those women they speak of. Nine out of ten women will benefit from this reform. This is a reform which was necessary.

We are the first industrialized country faced with these changing demographics to address this problem with such courage. I believe that this government's courage in solving problems by addressing needs, not only for the next few years but for the next generations needs to be recognized.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

In my constituency of Oakville I am receiving letters of concern about our negotiations toward a multilateral agreement on investment.

Is the minister prepared to ensure that there will be public consultations on the MAI and, if so, what mechanisms is he planning to use?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me thank the hon. member for her question.

Currently we are engaged in negotiations to set rules and regulate the investment portfolio because today there are over 1,300 different bilateral investment agreements. In fact Canada has either signed or negotiated up to 50 of the agreements. There is a need to multilateralize.

At the same time I am sensitive to the hon. member and other hon. members. Obviously we need to do that in an open and transparent fashion. That is precisely the reason we have sent members of Parliament information packages, briefed our trade critics, offered briefings to our caucuses, as well as indicated to—

The Speaker: That would bring to a close our question period for today.

* * *

● (1500)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the government House leader to advise the House of the nature of the government's business for the remainder of this week and into next.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me thank my colleague across the way for this excellent question.

The House will continue debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne today, tomorrow and Monday. Tuesday shall be an allotted day. On Wednesday the House will consider a motion by the President of the Privy Council to establish a special joint committee to consider a proposed amendment to the Constitution regarding education in the province of Quebec.

I expect to conclude the address debate next Thursday and Friday.

While I am on my feet I wish to inform the House that it is the intention of the government to refer Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act that was presented to this Parliament earlier today to committee before second reading pursuant to Standing Order 73(1).

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me on a point of order arising from

Tributes

question period. You will have guessed that it has to do with the expression used in question period on which you intervened. It has to do with the expression “picking the pockets of Canadians”.

Mr. Speaker, I have looked in Beauchesne's sixth edition, page 142, the section on unparliamentary language. Unless I am mistaken—and I have not had a lot of time to examine precedents, as you will agree, Mr. Speaker—I have not found it in Beauchesne's. In fact, I think it is an expression that I have heard in this House before. It is an expression that I think is widely understood by members in the House as not being derogatory if that is not the intent of the person who is saying it.

I would respectfully submit that the expression used by the member was an expression that should be allowed.

The Speaker: Many times in the course of the give and take in the House of Commons certain words are used and sometimes, as your Speaker, they seem to be inappropriate. I do not know if this word is in Beauchesne's or not, but sometimes it is the tone used with the word and sometimes it is circumstance, that causes disorder, etc.

I hope the House would indulge me at the beginning. I will have a look at Beauchesne's again of course. However, I would prefer that we use words that are less inflammatory.

I will surely look at the precedents and refresh my memory. If it is necessary I will come back to the House. With that said, this point of order is over unless the member has another point of order.

Hon. Jean J. Charest: Mr. Speaker, I did want to add a very brief comment because I think it is relevant to the way the House will operate and how you will, from the Chair, deal with these matters.

I simply wanted to add that I find the same to be true for the word “bamboozle”. I would appreciate if you would equally give consideration to that word in your research of precedents.

The Speaker: There are no words that I know of which of themselves are unparliamentary because they can be used in such a way that they would not be.

• (1505)

As your Speaker I have to decide matters during the course of the give and take in question period. Surely I should have enough room to make decisions on your behalf so that the debates can continue.

If the hon. member wants me to look up the word “bamboozle”, I will be happy to do that.

I hope that when I make decisions of this nature, that you will grant me enough room. My intentions are to see to it that the House functions properly. I will not intervene any more than I have to.

We are going to go to tributes. I recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona who will be saying a few words about a very dear colleague of ours who passed away, Mr. Stanley Knowles.

* * *

THE LATE HON. STANLEY HOWARD KNOWLES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the last Parliament adjourned we were still fortunate enough to be in the company of Mr. Stanley Knowles, the former member for Winnipeg North Centre. However, as everyone here will know, shortly after the general election of June 2 Mr. Knowles passed away just short of his 89th birthday. At that time he was honoured appropriately on the Hill.

In addition to the special honours that he received at that time from the House, from the government and from the Canadian people in a massive overwhelming way, we have a tradition in this place of paying tribute to former members. It is at this time that I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Knowles, the former member for Winnipeg North Centre, whose association with this place stretched over 50 years, 55 years from the time he was first elected in 1942 up until 1997 when he was still serving as an honorary officer of the table, with the exception of the four years that he spent out of office from 1958 to 1962. But he first ran for Parliament in 1935.

Obviously it was a tremendous span of association with Canadian politics. He was someone who I think was regarded almost universally as one of the great parliamentarians of our time. We will miss him and we will miss having him here with us. Of course as New Democrats we especially regret that he was not here to enjoy our return to this Parliament with the status of an official party. I know that my leader expressed similar sentiments yesterday when she spoke to the Speech from the Throne.

Stanley Knowles was a great defender of veterans, of the poor, of women, of anyone who needed help, of anyone who should have been the object of our compassion, either individually or as a society. He saw government as something that could play a positive role in the economy and in the creation of social programs. He fought especially for the elderly and for pensions and for a decent public pension system in this country and he lived to see many of his dreams realized.

Unfortunately he also lived to see the day when some of those dreams began to unravel as part of the policies adopted in recent years. So many of us here, inspired by his work and by his commitment to such things, intend to continue that work and to defend and to promote the ideals that he represented in this place.

Tributes

One could talk about Stanley Knowles for a long time and never say the same thing twice because there is so much to say about the former member for Winnipeg North Centre but we only have a brief time here today.

I want to extend on behalf of my colleagues and I am sure on behalf of everyone our condolences to his family and our great appreciation of the gift that they gave to us, all the hours that Stanley Knowles spent in this place day after day, night after night.

I remember seeing him the night before his stroke. It was 11 o'clock in the evening in the hallway of the sixth floor of the Centre Block. He always paid attention to Parliament and cared about Parliament and cared about what Parliament was doing and how it was doing it. If there is one thing we can say about Mr. Knowles, it is that he always carried out his duties with a great deal of honour, dignity and a respect for the parliamentary process. We mourn his loss here today and pay him tribute.

• (1510)

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able take part in this tribute to the memory of the late Hon. Stanley Knowles.

He was a vigorous spokesman for the elderly, for the poor, for the less favoured people in our society. He was an outstanding expert on the procedures and the rules of the House. He was one of the ornaments of the House of Commons in this and in previous generations. He will be very much missed. It will not be the same when we look toward you, Mr. Speaker, and do not see Mr. Knowles sitting at the table as honorary clerk, as the proceedings unwind.

On behalf of the Government of Canada I would like to extend deepest sympathies and condolences to the family, the children and grandchildren of Stanley Knowles.

He will be very much missed in this House and in our country.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I also join with other MPs in paying tribute to the late Stanley Knowles.

Mr. Knowles' contributions to this House and to Canada are well known. His consistent advocacy of social legislation to help the old, the sick, the young and the poor, his advocacy in defence of democracy mainly through the development and the improvement of the rules and procedures of the House, his contributions and accomplishments as a social democrat are a monument in themselves and there is little we can do to add to their lustre.

There is one other dimension of Mr. Knowles' life and career that we should not lose sight of in praising his accomplishments as a social democrat. Stanley Knowles began his career as a minister of the Christian gospel. All the old western populace movements, Réal, Social Credit, the Progressives, the CCF, which later became

the NDP, all had a spiritual dimension to their beginnings and their mission.

Mr. Knowles, like his friends and collaborators J.S. Woodsworth and Tommy Douglas who were also Christian ministers in the Methodist and Baptist traditions, was a part of the social gospel movement, a movement that true religion encompassed not only the vertical relationship of individuals to God but also the horizontal dimension of service to one's fellow man.

I think of Stanley Knowles as a servant of Canada, as a servant of his party, as a servant of this House and a servant of the common people. But I also think of him as a servant of a higher master.

It is an honour to pay tribute to him today in all the dimensions of his service.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, on behalf of Bloc Québécois members, to join with my colleagues in paying tribute to Stanley Knowles.

When I became a member of this House, in 1984, Mr. Knowles had just ended his last term as an active member of Parliament. A few months earlier, the Prime Minister had offered him, with the unanimous consent of the House, to sit at the clerk's table. So, during my first years in this Parliament, I often had the opportunity to consult with him. He became an effective conciliator between the leaders of the various parties, as well as a knowledgeable consultant to each party and an exceptional advisor to the House.

No Bloc Québécois member currently in this House has had the honour of sitting with him. However, most of us have heard about him since 1993 and seen him sitting at the clerk's table in the past few years. Everyone knows of his tremendous efforts to introduce social measures in this House.

Mr. Knowles' religious background eventually led him to run for office. Sometimes he would say, and I do not know for sure whether he was joking or not, that it was easier to change laws than souls. This is why he went into politics.

He was elected to Parliament and quickly became an expert on procedure. I think his great parliamentary skills were confirmed during the famous pipeline debate, in 1956. In addition to being an expert on procedure and a man who devoted his political career to the poor, Mr. Knowles was also a good organizer and he had the ability to bring people together. This led him to create the New Democratic Party, in 1961.

• (1515)

It was said that Parliament was not his second home, but his main residence. Stanley Knowles was a man of conviction; he was always prepared to fight for the poor and the elderly. He was a man of courage, in spite of his physical frailty. He suffered from

The Address

multiple sclerosis, but this never stopped him from fighting for the poor.

He was an honest man, respectful of and respected by his political opponents. In a sense, Stanley was the conscience of this Parliament. He will remain a legend in Canadian politics.

To his family, his friends and his party, I express, in my own name and on behalf of my colleagues, our most sincere condolences. I conclude with this beautiful line from the great French author Alexandre Dumas, who said "Those whom we have loved and lost are no longer where they were, but they are still everywhere we are".

[English]

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the tributes the public paid to Stanley Knowles earlier this summer here in this building and in this city and in Winnipeg stand as a monument to a politician who cared deeply for his community and for his country.

Behind the legend there was a mortal who saw his public duty, who was prepared to engage in public life to change things, and millions of Canadians benefited from his efforts, the poor, the veterans, the aged, to name a few.

Mention has been made of the high honour the House gave to Mr. Knowles by making him an honorary officer and giving him a seat at the table. People who watched the proceedings of the House perhaps remember him in that capacity in his latter years.

As we set out at the beginning of this new Parliament perhaps it would be best to remember Stanley Knowles as a politician, a political warrior who was armed with the strongest armour that any of us can have, a writ of election and a seat in the House of Commons of Canada.

It gave him the ability to confront the issues of our time as he confronted the issues of his with determination, unflinching courtesy and hard work. The families of politicians inevitably pay a price for this dedication. I hope that the pride that they are entitled to feel at the end of Mr. Knowles' life tempers the sense of loss which, regardless of age and its infirmities, must still be great indeed.

He was a House of Commons gentleman, a politician, a parliamentarian, and we are better in this country because of his dedication to Canada. On behalf of my party here, our deepest sympathy goes out to Mr. Knowles' family. We want to say that we honoured him greatly and we still do in the remembrance of him.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today also on behalf of my colleague, the member for Winnipeg Centre, since both of us share in the privilege of representing a constituency that Stanley held for 38 years.

Our only regret today as we take up our rightful places in this Chamber is that Stanley Knowles is not looking over at us from his place at the centre of the table in this Chamber. We know that nothing would have made Stanley Knowles happier and prouder than to know that his constituency, one for which he worked so long and hard, had come home to the NDP on June 2, 1997.

The member for Winnipeg Centre and I, and I believe all of my colleagues in our caucus and all parties in this House share in the responsibility of carrying on the legacy of Stanley Knowles.

• (1520)

We know it is impossible to fill his shoes but we can strive to be like him, fighting for social justice with honour, pursuing righteousness with kindness.

We also know that the best way to carry on his legacy and honour his work is to try to maintain the high standards he set for all of us, the standards of fighting persistently for social justice and always doing it with honesty and integrity. It is our turn to carry on the torch of Stanley Knowles, to carry on his fight for security for seniors, for equality for all people and hope for a better day.

We mourn the loss of a great Canadian, a founding member of the NDP, the conscience of Parliament. But his work, his words, his fighting spirit live on. The best way we could pay tribute to Stanley is to use his own words, words he delivered in 1930 in a valedictory address to Brandon College.

To paraphrase his words, as we stand here in this Chamber our thoughts go back to the pioneering spirit of Stanley Knowles who struggled and sacrificed for this institution here in this place. His memory seems to hallow the very ground on which we stand.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be back here. I will be sharing my time with the member for Shefford. I want to congratulate you on your elevation to the Chair. Most if not all of us would agree that you are a learned student of this House. I would say you have mastered the rules of procedure

The Address

and you are very diplomatic in your skills and in handling numbers. Congratulations.

I want to thank my constituents for sending me here and for placing their trust in me. I want to let them know back home that I will do the very best job I can to represent them in this House.

I want to mention my riding a little before I begin my address to the throne speech. My riding is called Charlotte but it contains seven counties either in whole or in part. The name Charlotte really does not do justice to the description of the riding. One of the things that we will be entertaining is the possible name change for the riding to reflect those folks who live in some of the other counties.

The throne speech was a big disappointment to me. It was filled with vague generalities and all kinds of platitudes with not a whole lot of meat or substance. I do not think many Canadians could find satisfaction in what they heard in that speech the other day, in particular when we note that Canada is going through a high rate of sustained unemployment. We have had 87 months of unemployment at a rate of over 9 percent which is absolutely unacceptable.

It is often said that the essence of life is hope. I do not think there was much hope in the document of the other day. Canadians, in particular Canadians from Atlantic Canada and some of the poorer parts of Canada, would not take a whole lot of comfort in it.

• (1525)

It is interesting that last week when the Leader of the Opposition was interviewed by a newspaper in Atlantic Canada he alluded to some of the poorer parts of his province which sometimes we do not understand.

I think that some of the hurt that is being experienced in the country knows no bounds. I can talk about Atlantic Canada but there are other parts of Canada that are also going through some pretty tough times.

It is often said that a real measure of a government should be how it deals with its poor, its elderly and its sick. After examining this government since 1993, I would add to that list the youth of Canada. The government has failed miserably. It cannot seem to grasp the reality that there are a lot of people hurting.

When we listen to the finance minister I believe he assumes that since everything is well on Wall Street and Bay Street, that everything is well in the rest of Canada. But let me tell the House it is not. That is one of the reasons the House did make some changes which were reflected during the election period.

As members have returned to the House there is a decrease in the size of the majority of the government which it enjoyed in its first mandate. I believe that was for a very particular reason. I believe it is because there are a lot of very disillusioned people.

In the United States over the last 10 years there has been an 11 percent increase in real incomes. In the corresponding period in Canada there has been a 1.3 percent decrease in real incomes. There is something wrong when that happens and the government has yet to figure out what it is.

When we take a look at the unemployment rates in the country we are in the same situation. Our unemployment numbers are exactly double those of the United States. There are many reasons for that obviously. But I think one big reason we have had that sustained unemployment rate in Canada is a lack of vision on the part of the government.

The government has been blessed by many things, some of them completely beyond its control or which it had nothing whatsoever to do with. It has been blessed with a period of economic growth since it took office but that has not actually been translated into real jobs. It has been blessed with very low international interest rates, which has played well for the government in terms of debt reduction, which again has nothing to do with the government itself. It has been blessed with some financial measures which any government could have fared better with than what it has.

Immediately on taking office in 1993 it proceeded on the route it is famous for, downloading its problems on to another level of government. It certainly did that. If we measure the reduction in spending in Ottawa since 1993, over 90 percent of that has been downloaded on to the backs of the provinces. The statistics will tell us that only 2 percent of the cuts came out of downtown Ottawa and its government departments. The rest was downloaded on to the backs of the provinces.

Health care is an example. A 40 percent cut in health care transfers to the provinces. That translates into a figure of approximately \$8 billion. What the government and its finance minister and the prime minister forgot is that there is only one taxpayer. When they download on to the provinces they have to do one of two things, accept the download or download themselves on to the backs of the municipalities, again forgetting there is only one taxpayer. That has hurt us in Atlantic Canada. It has hurt us in a number of ways but particularly in health care.

• (1530)

I do not think there is anyone in any part of this country who could stand up today to say with any degree of confidence that our health care system can sustain those types of cuts. If we measure what we have today versus what we had 10 years ago, there are a lot of Canadians who are very worried.

The answers to some of these problems are not easy. There is no question about that. It requires some ingenuity on the part of the government to recognize that there are problems out there which must be dealt with.

The Address

In Atlantic Canada we are not talking about handouts; we are talking about strategic investment into the area of the country that has the greatest amount of unemployment. In some parts of Atlantic Canada the unemployment rate is over 30 p. cent. The government has to do something about it. Just downloading onto the backs of the provinces, particularly the poorer provinces, is not going to solve the problem.

We have the brain drain of Atlantic Canada. We educate our youth only to find that they have to move out to get a job. The old expression is that Atlantic Canada is a nice place to live, provided you can get a job. There is nothing in the throne speech which would give Atlantic Canadians, particularly young Atlantic Canadians, any degree of hope.

It is incumbent on this government to take the message which was given to it on June 2 and respond to the needs of Atlantic Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the speech of my colleague from the Conservative Party with interest and was unable to detect, in the part I was able to hear, any personal opinion on the matter of the amendment to the amendment by the Bloc Québécois.

I have two questions for my colleague from the Conservative Party. Does the hon. member acknowledge that the Government's legislative program denies the existence of the Quebec people and its culture? In responding to this question, can he tell us whether he will in fact vote in favour of the amendment we are proposing? And even more fundamental than that, does the hon. member acknowledge the existence of the Quebec people as a people? Such recognition would make it possible to reach a solution to the constitutional problem which has been with us for more than 30 years.

[*English*]

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I believe that one of the best things the government could do for Canada—and obviously Canada in my eyes includes Quebec, a healthy Quebec, a Quebec that is as vibrant as we want to see the rest of Canada be—would be to get the economy moving in a way that brings everyone in.

As I mentioned before, the government is taking a lot of pleasure in the growth in the stock market and how well Bay Street and Wall Street are doing, but it has forgotten that consumer confidence in Canada is at an all-time low. The sustained rate of unemployment

is hurting us. Ordinary Canadians have no confidence in the future. That includes the citizens of Quebec.

Anything we can do to help in creating a healthy, vibrant economy and anything that we can do to improve the lot of all citizens in the province of Quebec, English as well as French speaking, I am in favour of it and this party is in favour of it.

• (1535)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that time is short so I will simply move to one of the member's statements and that was that there is only one taxpayer. The member probably will know that in the province of Ontario the Mike Harris government has extended a 15 percent tax decrease to the residents of Ontario.

The member believes there is only one taxpayer. Would he not agree that the impact of so-called downloading has not been as severe as he might suggest simply because the government feels it is important to have given that tax break notwithstanding any changes from federal transfers?

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, if I were a member from Ontario I think I could stand up here and boast about the economy of my home province, but unfortunately I am not from Ontario. Obviously that is one of the reasons why the Liberal Party won every seat, with the exception of one, that of my colleague just in front of me. It is because the people very seldom reject a government if the economy is moving well as evidenced in just about every election in the United States and Canada in the last 100 years.

If I were living in downtown Toronto or Oakville, Ontario I would agree 100 percent with what the member has stated. They are basically satisfied with the government.

This country as a whole is what I am worried about. That wealth and industrial prosperity has not spread across this country in the directions that we would like to see it spread. It has not spread north, east, or west in some areas. As I mentioned earlier in my speech, even places in British Columbia and Alberta have their problems, but in Atlantic Canada we have serious problems.

One of the things that the government does have to take a look at is a reduction in taxes. We are proposing a reduction in payroll taxes, those employment insurance taxes of which the government today is sitting on a bank roll of somewhere between \$5 billion and \$10 billion and using that for goodness sake to reduce the size of the national debt, which is ridiculous. The government is putting the problem right on the backs of the unemployed, the very people it should be helping.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate you on your appointment. I would also like

The Address

to take this opportunity to thank the people of Shefford for the confidence they showed in me in the recent federal election. I want them to know that I will work with all my heart to defend their interests.

To return to Tuesday's speech from the throne, the government has revealed its political intentions. Satisfied with the current state of the country and unable to offer Canadians a national vision with clear objectives for the country as a whole, the Chrétien government has certainly set out its intentions, but without structure or time frame.

Not only does the speech not put forward any creative vision enabling us to move into the 21st century, but it fails to respond to Canadians' real concerns. The speech is a Liberal speech, the same one they have been dishing up for years. It says nothing to me and enables them to improvise, as they always have. They turn whichever way the wind blows, taxing, cutting, taxing, spending.

Tuesday's speech from the throne contained at least one piece of good news. The government will soon have a budget surplus. The bad news is that Canadians will not see a cent of it. The Liberal government now has to repair the damage it did in its first mandate and reinvest in the programs it had previously cut.

You know, we should not be surprised, this is the Liberal style. We are here in the House of Commons to work together to build a better future for our country. The challenge facing Canada is of significant proportions and warrants all our energies and creativity.

• (1540)

We must build for our children a country in which they can grow and develop without going hungry and without lacking quality health care, in a context that will encourage them to excel.

My party, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, has developed a plan providing Canadians with a vision for the future that meets their aspirations and expectations, a simple, down to earth and unifying plan. Time has come to take new approaches and to offer new solutions. The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada has already come up with a plan that will give Canadians a vision, a down to earth plan for the future of our country.

However, a vision and a plan are not enough. Leadership is required to achieve key priorities. Our program for growth has three main thrusts: sound management of taxpayers' money; quality of life for our fellow citizens and, finally, initiatives for a brighter future. Quite simply, what sound management of taxpayers' money stands for is the need for any responsible government to introduce legislation to make fiscal balance mandatory, lower employment insurance premiums and reduce personal income tax. What people want is not rhetoric and empty promises, but action.

The government was in a position to act, but once again it sat back and did nothing. There is also a need to improve the quality of life of all Canadians. Our social safety net, which is the envy of many nations around the world, cannot be expected to withstand much longer the drastic cuts made by the government across the way.

Concerned with putting its financial house in order, the government, during its first mandate, brought all existing support programs and the Canada Assistance Plan together under a single umbrella called the Canada health and social transfer. Once again, concern about saving money took precedence over common sense, and government assistance was cut by \$7 billion over four years with the results that we know.

Instead of federal transfers leaving the provinces at the mercy of the federal government's goodwill, we are proposing a tax point transfer to the provinces and territories to ensure stable funding. This way, provincial and territorial governments would be forever protected against cuts like those imposed by the Liberals. In addition, the public would receive services from governments that are closer to them and their situation.

We applaud the government's desire to end child poverty. Unfortunately, its efforts are directed more at the consequences of the problem than at the problem itself. There are 1.5 million children living in poverty in Canada. These children are poor because their parents are poor. Their parents are poor because the government has focused all its attention on one thing: the deficit. And all the while, Canadian workers, children and the elderly have been paying the price.

The government even admits in the throne speech that it has the means to improve our children's lives and that it intends to invest in their well-being. Let us remember that the money referred to by the government in its speeches has already been committed in the two previous years' budgets. Let us be clear: the government is promising us money it has already invested and it is promising to invest at least that much again.

Is this another of those elusive promises, like the 150,000 day care spaces, or will the federal government actually make a commitment this time? Of all the promises made by the Liberals during the election campaign, let us hope that those concerning children will be kept, and kept a little better than the motion passed in the House of Commons in 1989 to end child poverty by the year 2000. If the current trend continues, the child poverty rate will have doubled by then.

At the present time, over 1,500 food banks and hundreds of soup kitchens are waging the fight against hunger. Under the present government's plan, millions of children will still go to school hungry tomorrow. It is unfortunate that this sad reality is only brought home to us during electoral periods.

The Address

It is not surprising that election-minded politics like this have undermined the credibility of our institutions. When the public has regained faith in its public institutions, we will have the stability and confidence necessary to move forward. The country needs leadership with the courage to renew and revitalize the federation in order to show that it can work to everyone's satisfaction.

• (1545)

The premiers have agreed on a work plan and on the main areas of discussion. I am convinced that it is possible to find a basis for agreement. Canadians from all walks of life will not waste much time in extremist rhetoric, and they will demonstrate their attachment to Canada, I am sure.

It is time again for us to join forces around a common ideal. The polls clearly demonstrate that Quebecers have Canadian values at heart and want to remain within the country they helped build. Let us not get hung up on the words, the reality is clear. Quebecers are Quebecers, and just as proud to be Canadians.

What is less clear is that, in neither the last referendum nor the last electoral campaign, not even in the meeting at Calgary, was there any manifestation of leadership by our Prime Minister. I apologize for not mincing any words, but his leadership is worn out.

Our dynamic team, representing a new generation of politicians, will advance some constructive ideas which will rally the population. Rest assured that the only leader with a vision of the future for Canada is the man you heard yesterday, Jean Charest, and the true opposition which can speak on behalf of all Canadians is the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

[English]

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember in 1967 the Toronto Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup and 90 percent of the team was made up of older players who brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the team. Punch Imlach was able to bring the Stanley Cup to the Toronto Maple Leafs. Similarly, this administration and its leaders with a wealth of knowledge and expertise has done many things.

I congratulate the member on her election. She referred to damage done by the Liberal government's first mandate. I would like to talk about that damage for a minute: damage such as 900,000 jobs created in its first mandate; damage such as inheriting a deficit of \$42 billion which her Conservative Party left us with—and it is now said to be anywhere from zero to \$5 billion; damage such as creating the fastest growing economy in the G-7; damage such as creating opportunities for youth in the programs outlined in the throne speech and before; damage such as, as the national health forum indicated before the election, the need to make the ceiling \$12.5 billion. Immediately the government restored it.

I have a question for the hon. member. She talked about lowering payroll taxes. Is the member aware that when the Liberal government took over in 1993 the Conservative government had it pegged at \$3.30 per \$100? Does she know what the Liberal government did from day one until now?

If she does not know, I will be glad to remind her. If she does know, I would like her to point out what the payroll taxes are today as opposed to what they were under a Conservative government.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane St-Jacques: Mr. Speaker, I will try to respond. I did not understand everything the hon. member said, but I think the deficit he is talking about was created by the Liberals. We too had to deal with that deficit, and, had the Conservative government not introduced free trade, we would not be where we are today.

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of my colleague from Shefford.

She spoke on a number of subjects, including finance, programs, children and the deficit, but the most important point the Prime Minister raised yesterday was Canadian unity. I heard no mention of that, particularly with respect to the people of Quebec.

I would like to ask her a question, because it is all very well to talk of the economy, but I think the most important thing is simply to reach a common understanding. What is the role of each province in the Constitution?

• (1550)

Does the hon. member acknowledge that the government's legislative program denies the existence and the culture of the people of Quebec? Does the member acknowledge the existence of the people of Quebec?

Ms. Diane St-Jacques: Mr. Speaker, my answer to the hon. member is that I am a Quebecer, I am proud to be a Quebecer and a Canadian, and that if we consider the latest polls, many Quebecers still want to be part of Canada. We must keep talking to try and find a solution.

[English]

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate at the beginning that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

*The Address**[Translation]*

It is a great pleasure to speak to this House in reply to the throne speech, which outlines the government's priorities for the first session of the 36th Parliament.

I would like to start by thanking the people of Simcoe North for renewing their vote of confidence by granting me a second term in the federal election last June. I would also like to mention the inestimable support I have received from my wife and family.

There are many positive elements in the throne speech. Thanks to the persistent efforts of the federal government and the support of Canadians, we can at last enjoy the fruits of our collective labours. Optimism is no longer the exception but the rule, since we now have regained the ability to address the priorities of Canadians fairly and equitably.

I would like to expand on three themes we find in the throne speech: social reform, economic reform and national unity. The legislation that will be introduced to implement the proposed changes to the Canada Pension Plan and the non-taxable seniors benefit will, I believe, ensure that our public pension system will remain sustainable for generations to come.

I may point out that when the seniors benefit comes into effect in 2001, benefits for our neediest seniors will increase. In fact, about 75 percent of seniors, which includes nine elderly women out of ten, will have an income that is either equal to or higher than their present income.

I support unconditionally the government's commitment to maintain a comprehensive public health care system that provides universal access to high quality care for all Canadians.

After the National Forum on Health tabled its report this year, the government had to acknowledge its conclusions, and it did so in the throne speech. Canadians, including many of my constituents, were worried about the restructuring of our medicare system.

The announcement that the government, working with its partners, will develop a national plan, time table and fiscal framework for setting up a system that guarantees access to medically necessary drugs, and will also support home and community care, shows that the message sent by Canadians about public health care has been received and understood by this government.

[English]

I am very proud of the government's economic record. The throne speech reflects our commitment to thoughtful economic management. I would like to mention some examples of this commitment, for instance a balanced budget no later than 1998-99.

This will be the first time in almost 30 years that the country has had a balanced budget. With a surplus debt to GDP ratio the current account balance has gone from a deficit of 4.2 percent of GDP to a

surplus of .55 percent in 1996. The government achieved the first annual surplus since 1982.

• (1555)

All the spending contained in the throne speech is funded by budgetary surpluses. I want to be crystal clear on this point. The budgetary surpluses during this mandate will be the source of funding for new programs.

The government will not be relying on borrowing moneys. We will not be spending our children's inheritance. Fifty per cent of budgetary surpluses will go to investments in social and economic priorities and fifty per cent will go to tax reduction and debt repayment. This 50:50 split ensures that the Liberal commitments to sound economic planning and to social responsibility will go hand in hand.

In the second mandate the government will do more on job creation for young Canadians. In February 1997 the government announced the youth employment strategy. This strategy consolidates over \$2 billion in new and existing programs and services for young people.

The government will also work with the business community and the provinces to forecast areas of job growth. This planning ahead is a concrete example of how the government will help young people meet the challenges of the job market.

I recently lead community consultation on job creation in my riding of Simcoe North. The citizens of Simcoe North felt that apprenticeship and training programs would help young people get into fulfilling and well paying jobs. They also felt that the perception of various kinds of jobs needs to improve. For example, the skilled trades should be valued for the contribution they make to a vibrant economy.

The government will be initiating measures similar to those suggested by the people of Simcoe North. Internship programs will be extended and expanded. The government will provide enhanced funding for student summer placements. A Canada-wide mentorship program will be created in partnership with the provincial governments and the private sector.

Once again the government has shown that it is listening to Canadians and working with them to secure a better future for young Canadians.

I am particularly encouraged by the government statement on national unity. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, I have had the opportunity to discuss national unity with Canadians from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia. The government's approach to national unity reflects the concerns I have heard from these Canadians.

First, the government is committed to the recognition of Quebec's unique language, culture and legal system. The government will work closely with provincial and territorial leaders to advance the progress made in the Calgary declaration. Recognition of

The Address

Quebec's unique character, language and legal system will not entail any new powers, privileges or rights. This message must be carried to all Canadians in every province and region.

Second, the government will ensure that the national unity debate is conducted with clarity and frankness. It is critical that Quebecers, especially francophone Quebecers, understand the consequences and the implications of separation. It is equally fundamental that Canadians outside Quebec understand the same consequences and the implications.

In the words of the throne speech:

—the government will bring frankness and clarity to any debate that puts into question the future existence or unity of Canada. It will create a better understanding of the true complexity and difficulty for all of us in severing ties—

I congratulate the government on the commitment to deal assertively to bring clarity to this debate.

[*Translation*]

None of this government's programs could be carried out if our national unity initiatives were not successful. The government therefore views its mandate in that area in a global and encompassing fashion. Any measure that strengthens the country will have a unifying effect on Canada.

That having been said, we pledge to work in partnership with the provinces and territory. Our federation as we know it is flexible. This needs to be repeated over and over in the presence of separatists. Far from being fixed and immovable, our federation is one that keeps evolving.

• (1600)

During this second mandate, we will continue to reflect and meet the demands of every province and region. I am confident that, with such flexibility and the synergy fostered by this government, we will enter the new millennium with a new invigorated Canada.

I realize that Canadians have done a great deal to help the federal government put its financial house in order and strengthen the social and political fabric of Canada. We have come a long, hard way, but the end is in sight.

To conclude, I want to reaffirm my solemn commitment to represent my constituents to the best of my abilities and to co-operate with all members of this House to ensure our government reflects and is sensitive to the needs of all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be here today. I feel privileged to represent the constituents of Kings—Hants.

Kings—Hants includes the Annapolis Valley where we grow the best apples in the world as well as the Hants Shore where the

Minas Basin provides the highest tides in the world. I am sure the members of the government will recognize the strength of tides in the recent election.

The recent electoral tides in Atlantic Canada sent a signal that Atlantic Canadians were not simply frustrated with cuts but instead were frustrated with the lack of vision demonstrated by the government to the needs of Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canadians want a future where they have access to the free enterprise system and can utilize the tools of the free enterprise system to build a stronger, more self-reliant Atlantic Canada.

I am a Conservative, an Atlantic Canadian and a small business person. None of these are mutually exclusive. Earlier today the member for Medicine Hat referred to the member for Saint John as a New Democrat because she expressed compassion for the underprivileged.

Compassion is not partisan in principle. Compassion is something we all should have within the House. While some members in this House prefer to talk about fights for the right, there are some of us who prefer to simply work hard for what is right.

In closing, I look forward to working with the members of this House and to making a difference in the lives of Canadians. I would like to ask this government what, over the next four years, it intends doing to demonstrate vision for Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Paul DeVillers: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to indicate that the hon. member has some tremendous shoes to fill in representing the riding of Kings—Hants. The former member, John Murphy, served that riding extremely well. I visited the riding with John and know it well so I wish the member the best of luck in that endeavour.

His question concerned the vision the government intends to show over the next four years. That is the subject matter of this debate. The Speech from the Throne is the blueprint. There is much that I and others have pointed out in our speeches which addresses that question. For instance, the new commitment of another \$850 million to the child tax credit is something that will address the concerns that were addressed by the member in the prelude to his question. That is but one example of the vision that we need to show.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Acting Speaker.

I wish to draw your attention to the speech made by the hon. member, who is an experienced member of this House, and who speaks in English in a certain way and in French in a different way. I heard him speak in English about being firm. When alluding to the issue of national unity in English he advocated the hard line,

because he was addressing English Canadians, of course, but he used a much more conciliatory tone in French.

• (1605)

The hon. member for Simcoe North speaks good French since he is a francophone, but he is also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. I want to ask the hon. member if, as the assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, he does recognize the people of Quebec. Is he prepared to say, in this House, that there is a Quebec people? Is the hon. member prepared to do that?

Mr. Paul DeVillers: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois' strategy in this debate is clearly to ask all Liberal members the same question. Of course, we use inclusive terms such as "society". The word "people" has several connotations which may give rights in international law, but we use the word "society" because it is more inclusive.

[*English*]

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Congratulations, Mr. Speaker.

Before commenting on the motion before this House I would like to take the opportunity to thank the constituents of Windsor—St. Clair for their support in the June election. I am honoured to be asked to represent them once again and their faith in our government is not misplaced.

I wish also to thank the many volunteers who supported our campaign and whose friendship I cherish very much.

Windsor—St. Clair, which is basically the east end of Windsor, Tecumseh and the village of St. Clair Beach, have once again placed their faith in our government. Throughout the campaign they told us loud and clear what they were concerned about. Those things included health care, education, unemployment and in particular, youth unemployment.

These were local concerns but we would be mistaken to think that the constituents of Windsor—St. Clair have only local concerns. Indeed they were also concerned about national unity, Canada's role as a trading nation and Canada's role as an international broker of peace, her role generally in the global village.

The throne speech and the subsequent address yesterday by the right hon. Prime Minister indicate that the government has listened to Windsor—St. Clair. Not only did we listen but we are putting in place programs to alleviate the concerns that I have outlined. All the while we are maintaining our steady attack on both the deficit and the debt. Canada will never under a Liberal government, in any event, return to the financial crisis that we faced when we came to power in 1993.

The Address

In addition to funds for health and education, we will continue our attack on unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular. Programs like Youth Services Canada are already operating in Windsor—St. Clair to give young people work experience and a wage while they serve our community.

The focus of this government is such that we can be assured that the concerns of the constituents of Windsor—St. Clair will be met.

I would like to urge the government to work with us on more specific areas which will help our community to prosper even more. It is my belief that an economically prosperous community is able to better overcome other social problems. It is my belief that economic prosperity will lead generally to a better quality of life, to lower crime rates, to a lack of other social problems, to lower welfare rates and to a generally better lifestyle.

One way to do that is to offer more support to our local industries. It is no secret that Windsor is Canada's motor city. I like to say that Windsor is effectively the centre of the universe, but that may not be the case for some of my colleagues. I can say however that it is urgent and very important for our community to see support from the government for the automotive industry.

The automotive industry employs directly or indirectly approximately half of working Ontarians. It is the biggest employer in our province and as an industrial group the most important employer in our province. It is of the utmost importance for the Government of Canada to focus on issues like tariffs, apprenticeship training for skilled trades and on other areas that will offer support to our domestic automotive industry.

• (1610)

Canada is a trading nation and in the 1960s under the leadership of Prime Minister Lester Pearson and my predecessor in Windsor—St. Clair or Windsor—Walkerville as it was then, the Hon. Paul Martin, Sr., the auto pact was signed. The auto pact has reached an almost sacred position in our community because the auto pact is the engine that allows those industries to exist, to prosper and employs our citizens.

In my view it is important that the government continue to focus on agreements like the auto pact, to give them support and strength so that we will have more employment, more prosperity and therefore a better quality of life in Windsor, Tecumseh, St. Clair Beach and in the province of Ontario generally.

It is important also that we support other industries. In the last five or six years the tourism industry has become vital to our community. Tourism and particularly the gambling industry fuelled by Casino Windsor have become extremely important. However, there is a fly in the ointment. That fly comes from the Conservative government of the province of Ontario which has consistently refused and neglected to take the steps necessary in order to allow

The Address

the government to legalize some aspects of gambling which would help the casino to prosper. I am talking specifically about games of dice.

In the near future we will be faced with competition from gambling facilities in the city of Detroit. Those gambling casinos will have dice games. It is important that Windsor have the opportunity to compete but the initiative has to come from the attorney general of Ontario. In spite of consistent promises to the mayor and citizens of Windsor who want this to happen, nothing has been done to approach our attorney general in order to start the dice rolling, as we say in Windsor.

Tourism is a very important part of what our community can provide to Canada. It is a very important part of the puzzle that is unemployment. The more tourism there is, the more service jobs and jobs in tourism there will be. It seems to me that it is just a simple matter of a member of the Ontario government picking up a pen and writing a little note and whisking it off to the Attorney General of Canada. Once it gets here I am sure the Essex County lobby and others can make sure that the request gets the significant attention it deserves.

I hope members do not think this is too much about my community, but I would like to talk for a minute about the heavy taxation on distilled spirits. We are a town that provides what I like to think of as one of Canada's basic food groups, Canadian Club whisky. Canadian Club is an agri-food product and is also a great symbol of our country in my view.

The federal government has been trying to initiate discussions with the provinces. However, it is time for all of us to take a look at this commodity which provides hundreds of jobs in my community. The factory is a historic one and it is very important to the community that this serious problem be discussed.

In general foreign trade is very important to Windsor. I would encourage the Prime Minister to continue his trade missions and to continue to invite businessmen and women from Windsor, Tecumseh and St. Clair Beach to join him as he promotes Canada around the world.

As Windsor prospers economically our other problems subside. Our crime rate is lower than it has ever been. When one is downtown in the evening going to a movie or to one of our wonderful restaurants there is a sense of vitality and prosperity there that I challenge any other community in Canada to meet.

• (1615)

I would urge the government to take a look at those things I have outlined that are specifically of importance to Windsor. I would also urge the government to continue on the track it is on, and I would ask all members to support the motion of the hon. member from Parkdale with respect to the throne speech.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member across and I listened with interest to her colleague who spoke before her as they say they will continue to build on the financial successes of this government.

I think she indicated she would continue to attack the employment situation. I come from a region of the country that has suffered unemployment rates of between 15 percent and 20 p. cent for the continual life of the Liberal government.

Will the hon. member recognize that there is nothing in the throne speech to address the urgent needs of Cape Bretonners and Newfoundlanders and people in Atlantic Canada who have persistently suffered under this economic policy?

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen: No, I will not acknowledge that, Mr. Speaker. I think my hon. friend misses the point here. The point is this is a throne speech which leads us down the track of prosperity.

Just as I am disappointed that they did not mention Windsor, Tecumseh and St. Clair Beach, the virtual centre of the universe, I am sure he is disappointed that his towns were not mentioned specifically either.

The fact is this is a good general plan. Within that plan there will be solutions for Sydney, for the Cape Breton Island, for Windsor, for Tecumseh, for St. Clair Beach. The plan is there. The plan is working and the people of Canada have sent us back to continue with it.

[Translation]

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to congratulate you on your appointment as acting speaker of the House.

Since I am a new member, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my constituents in Manicouagan. Manicouagan is one of the loveliest ridings in Quebec.

I listened with great interest to the hon. member's speech and I have two questions for her. Does she admit that the government's legislative program denies the existence of the people of Quebec and of their culture?

Does the member recognize the existence of the people of Quebec, and if so, is she going to support and vote in favour of the amendment presented by the leader of the Bloc Quebecois?

[English]

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen: Mr. Speaker, I see a theme evolving on the Bloc benches. There is a theme on the government benches too. We recognize that there is a Canadian people made up of a great many diverse groups.

I am proud to be a Canadian. I am pretty much satisfied that the majority of Quebecers are proud to be Canadians as well.

The Address

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, sir, on your appointment to the Chair. You look great.

I appreciate the comments that have been made but I wanted to raise a question about the throne speech opening up a pathway to prosperity.

• (1620)

The difficulty I see in my riding is that I talk to elderly people who are having to sell their homes because of clawbacks. They have small incomes and they cannot afford to pay the taxes. Youth cannot get enough money for education. Men and women are losing established jobs from established companies and those jobs are not being replaced.

I see nothing in this throne speech which would offer hope to these people. Is there some mechanism which the Liberal government has in mind to guarantee that taxes will not be raised and to give Canadians relief from the taxation which is killing us economically and destroying the social fabric of the lives of so many families?

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen: Mr. Speaker, that was a long question and, leaving aside the preamble, the nub of it was are we going to cut taxes. The answer is that there is still a deficit and there is still a debt. As well we have some spending to do to assist Canadians with respect to health care, education and youth unemployment.

Let me say that when the deficit is settled, when we are sure that the country is healthy, we will spend time looking at taxation. We will spend time looking at the debt. We will make sure that Canada is on the right track. We will do what the Canadian people elected us to do.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak today in response to the throne speech.

I want to thank the constituents of Prince George—Bulkley Valley who in the June election gave me a huge victory. I want to commit to them, as I have in the past, that my task here is to represent their voices and concerns to this Parliament. My promise to them was to keep the Liberals accountable for every single thing they try to do, and I will do that.

It is predicted that the Liberal government will in 1998-99 achieve a balanced budget, using Liberal numbers. I do not know whether we can trust Liberal numbers, but let us say they are fairly accurate. It must be remembered that this could be the first balanced budget that we have had in some 30 years. It is sort of ironic considering that some members of the government are the same members who sat in previous Liberal governments which helped to run up our massive debt and helped to create our deficits

which occurred year upon year. It is surprising but at the same time I suppose somewhat remarkable.

Before anyone decides to heap any praise on the Liberal Party for this predicted balanced budget it is important to clearly identify the reasons why this balanced budget may be occurring.

I do not think the Liberals should be expecting any praise for the prediction of a balanced budget. I suggest that this Liberal government should be giving thanks to the millions of Canadian taxpayers who have been taking all the hits over the last three and a half years as the Liberals have attempted to dig themselves out of this massive financial pit that they along with the Tories, cheered on by the NDP, have created for Canadians.

I would like to give the House some examples. I am talking about the employers and the employees of the country who have contributed significantly to the reduction of the deficit through employment insurance overpayments. Let us make it clear that the Liberals have been treating the EI surplus as if it were their own money to put toward deficit reduction and to cover their wasteful spending. Everyone who can think clearly has to consider the EI overpayments as being simply another tax. That is what it is, another tax.

• (1625)

Would it not be preferable to let Canadian workers keep the amount of this EI overpayment and let them have the freedom to spend, invest or save? All these things would create jobs in this country and would help to get a more buoyant economy.

Would it not be preferable to let Canadian businesses and employers keep their overpayment to the EI fund as well so they could invest in their businesses and hire more people, which would also lead to the creation of a more buoyant economy?

Talking about people who have taken hits, let us not forget the public servants in this country who have been working since 1990 without a raise. They have also been forced to make a tremendous sacrifice because of previous Liberal-Tory overspending.

I also believe the Liberals should give thanks for their deficit reduction prediction to the people in Canada's poorer provinces who have had to bear the brunt of Liberal offloading because of reduced equalization payments.

This is my favourite one. Let us not forget that during the last three and a half years of Parliament this Liberal government, this very Liberal government that is going around looking for pats on the back for its balanced budget prediction, increased taxes in this country in 36 different areas. There were 36 individual tax increases brought in by this government. It wrenched out of the pockets of ordinary Canadians, Canadian businesses and Canadian investors over \$25 billion in increased tax revenue. Let us not forget that.

The Address

Is the government heading for a balanced budget because it has been prudent in saving money? Mr. Speaker, I know you will agree with me that is not the case. Let us not forget how the Liberals got there. Let us not be too anxious to go over and pat them on the backs as they are expecting. We see the Liberals running around seeking praise for such a great job they say that they have done but, to use the famous phrase of the finance minister, the fact is what they have really been doing is pulling on their magic tax lever to fill their coffers while Canadian businesses and Canadian workers have had less and less to spend, less and less to invest and less and less to save.

In the throne speech they mentioned the word partnership many times, over 10 times. Given the Liberals' performance one can only assume that the Liberal definition of partnership means "you work, send us most of your wages and hey, we're partners". The sad part of this is that despite all the taxes Canadians are paying, by the end of the century we will still only be getting about 68 percent in services for every dollar they send to this place.

Let us also remember that these tax and spend Liberals are not as compassionate as they like to appear. They took little or no notice of the pain they were inflicting on Canadian families, Canadian workers and Canadian businesses over these last three and a half years as they grabbed this tax lever and over and over again pulled it and pulled billions of dollars more into their coffers.

To add insult to injury, at the same time these Liberals were heaping tax upon tax on the Canadian people, they were still pursuing their insatiable appetite for spending money in ridiculous and wasteful ways. Our member for St. Albert has a weekly waste report. I would like to read a few of the ways the Liberals have spent some of the money so that people can get this into perspective.

The Liberals thought it prudent to give the multibillion dollar company American Express \$17,000. One has to ask did they get any flyer points for that. How about Big Bill's furniture and appliance store, \$176,000. I wonder if that is a relative of one of the Liberal ministers. How about Nothing Fancy stores, \$89,000. Here is one that I should not be upset about but I am. A golf tournament for literacy received \$85,000.

• (1630)

Literacy is a good cause. However, I would like to remind the House that I host an annual golf tournament for the special Olympics organization in my riding. I do not get any grant. I raise \$25,000 a year on that one-day golf tournament. I do not ask the government for a grant. I go out and look for sponsors, supporters and people who believe in the cause. I do not look to the Canadian taxpayer for money.

It goes on and on. One hundred and sixteen thousand dollars was given to a committee to study the sexual habits of seniors. One has

to assume that by the time someone gets to be a senior he or she probably has his or her sex life figured out pretty well.

The throne speech is like a shell game. I am glad that we are the official opposition because without the Reform Party here the Liberals would not even be talking about reducing the deficit. I assure the House that we are going to keep the pressure on.

Our approach to ensuring responsible future spending will include asking Canadians what their priorities are. Do they want debt retirement, tax relief, reinvestment in health and education or a combination of all of these?

With the Reform Party as the official opposition, and these Liberals know it, the government is finally going to learn the difference between good spending and bad spending. I know the difference, Reformers know the difference and ordinary Canadians know the difference. By the time this Parliament is through, the Liberals are going to know the difference.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to respond to the question posed by my friend from Prince George. First, let me congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on assuming your position in the chair today. We are sure that you will fulfil the mandate required of all Speakers. All of us on this side of the House wish you well. Someone on the other side who was speaking earlier made some reference to your looks. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, from my advantage point down here you look a lot better than the people to your left.

I am really quite taken aback by my friend who just spoke. Evidently he has not been listening to his leader for the last two or three years. All we have heard from the Reform Party is its interest in making sure that we had a balanced budget and that we reduced a horrendous debt that was left to us. I do not know how to refer to Reform members, but would it be kind to say they were kissing cousins of the previous government that had the administration of this country for nine years? If not kissing cousins, they slept in close proximity to each other.

The debt that we inherited in 1993 was what the Reform Party, when it first came into the House, talked about incessantly.

What we have done as a Liberal government in four short years is simply this. We have eliminated the deficit which is what Reformers have been talking about. Once we have the deficit in this country under control then we can take a good run at working on the debt that was assumed by their kissing cousins or whatever way we want to refer to them.

Before we took government, if they look at the facts of the situation, the debt in this country was \$140 billion. When the Conservative government left power it was about \$530 billion. We have been able to temper that debt over the last four years by something under \$600 million. We are beginning to reduce the debt because we know how to administer the financial affairs of the

The Address

country. That is basically what their leader has been saying and that is what we have done.

I cannot believe that my good from from Prince George is not giving the Liberal Party and ourselves the credit for that. I would like him to respond to that, but just one more minute.

I want to know what my friend from Prince George has against finding out about the sexual habits of seniors? What has the hon. member got against the senior citizens in this country? Could he respond to that please.

• (1635)

Mr. Dick Harris: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member from Thunder Bay that he will never ever find a Reformer kissing a Tory. That is a certain thing.

Second, I have nothing against seniors having fun. My parents are seniors and they are always happy, so obviously they do not need any books.

There is an interesting point about reducing the deficit though. Yes, we have been talking about this Liberal government getting the deficit reduced. The difference is that we wanted the government to reduce it by cutting its insatiable spending appetite, by cutting the grants and handouts that are rampant throughout the waste reports, by cutting the patronage organizations, such as the western economic diversification fund and the economic development funds that are in eastern Canada, all the hundreds of millions of dollars that it gives to Quebec companies to keep the Bloc off its back.

We ask the government to be more prudent and reduce its spending. That is something that is foreign to a Liberal government. Yes, it may get to a balanced budget but it has done it, as I said, by wrenching an additional over \$25 billion out of Canadian taxpayers, Canadian workers and Canadian business. That is why the government is having such a hard time getting the unemployment rate down. It knows, though it will never admit it, that taxes kill jobs.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your appointment. We are very confident that you will be an impartial Speaker. It is a great thing to see you there. It is a great thing for your constituents as well.

I would also like at the beginning of my maiden speech in the House of Commons to thank my constituents for this great privilege. It is a humbling experience to stand in this great Chamber of democratic deliberation for the first time and experience what the veterans are familiar with. I only hope that I can, in whatever modest way, meet the aspirations and expectations of my constituents of Calgary Southeast.

I have been asked to speak in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne is remarkable. It occurred to me that it was simply a more stilted and formal version of the 56 page red book II, the one that we released ahead of the Prime Minister. It was a book filled with congratulations. The government congratulated itself on what it sees somehow as a brilliant record. But let us take a closer look at that fiscal and economic record.

The Liberals talk about job creation and prosperity. What we have today is 1.4 million Canadians out of work. We are now in the 98th straight month of unemployment over 9 percent, the longest string of high unemployment since the great depression. That is the economic record of this government. Youth unemployment is over 17 percent. In some regions it exceeds 25 percent. Young people, people of my generation, are without hope. They have lost economic opportunity because of the policies of this government.

We have seen a 7 percent decline in the after tax family income of the average family since the beginning of this decade because of the tax increases of the Liberal government and its Tory predecessor.

A quarter of Canadians tell us that they go to bed worried about job security, worried about whether the next day they are going to have enough money to put bread on the table and take care of their families. We see anaemic economic growth of under 3 per cent. While we have 9 percent unemployment, our largest trading partner, the United States, has an unemployment rate of almost half that. Our second largest trading partner, Japan, has an unemployment rate at a third of that level. The government calls this an economic record to be proud of.

The Liberals tell us that they have managed nearly to balance the budget which they helped to create over the last 25 years with their Conservative friends. How did they do that? By acting responsibly as so many of the provincial governments did? By acting in the same way a small business or family would by paring back the non-essentials, by cutting? No, it was done by increasing the tax burden on Canadian families, by killing jobs, by increasing payroll taxes. It has income tax hikes riding on top of the de-indexation of the tax system imposed by the Tories in 1986. That grosses \$23 billion in new government revenues through 36 tax increases on top of the 72 tax increases introduced by the Mulroney Tories. That is the shameful fiscal record of this government. And what has it done?

• (1640)

It has added \$100 billion of debt and called it responsible fiscal management. That \$100 billion brings our total indebtedness to just under \$600 billion which, of course, does not include another \$600 billion in the Canada pension plan Ponzi scheme for which my generation is going to have to pay. That is the fiscal record of this government which has led to \$47 billion a year in annual interest

The Address

payments, a sum large enough to be the operating budgets of five of the the smaller provincial governments. That is a shameful record and one it ought not to applaud.

So what is the answer? One would think that here in this last Parliament of this century, in this throne speech which sets the agenda for the new millennium that there would be a great vision, a new departure, a new direction for Canada. It might take the advice of the overwhelming majority of the people in the business communities who know how to create wealth because they do it every day.

Instead, the government has gone back to the traditional, old 1970s Liberal policies of bigger government, chequebook politics, trying to buy the votes of its special interest friends by opening up the treasury yet once more for all its pet projects. The throne speech is filled with page after page of new spending programs. There was only one mention of tax decreases and debt reduction while we are sitting in the midst of an economic crisis in the country. There is no imagination, no vision in this throne speech.

Why can the government not think about the kind of real economic distress that real Canadians are feeling? For instance, what about providing Canadian families with tax fairness? The government's throne speech is filled with talk about children who do not seem to have families, children who seem to be the worthy recipients of government programs designed by the Liberal government's social engineers. It does not talk about traditional families who choose to have a parent stay at home to raise their children receiving tax fairness, even though this House with all party support in the last Parliament passed Motion No. 30 sponsored by the member for Mississauga South, calling for tax fairness in the tax code. The government has done nothing to act on that. It seems to be satisfied with penalizing families who make the sacrifice of giving up a second income to get by. They really believe that Liberal politicians and big government bureaucrats know better how to spend a dollar raised from the taxpayers than does a family or small business person or someone who is struggling to get a foot up in the labour market.

I want the government to listen to the message it got from the last election. It came within a whisker of losing power. We know that the Liberal Party exists to take and maintain power. The government ought to listen to the message that was sent by the voters. The message was, let us not go back to the future. Let us try a different approach.

What about tax fairness for families? Heaven forbid, what about cutting capital gains taxes to increase investment and productivity, to reward people for taking risks in our economy? What about cutting payroll taxes so that we are not penalizing people for creating jobs and small businesses? What about cutting income taxes and doing it now so that people can see the light at the end of the tunnel and not just another big government spending program? Why can it not see that there is a different solution.

In closing I invite my colleagues on the opposite side of the House to take a serious look at the kind of economic record that 30 years of Liberal and Tory big government spending has brought us. Governments around the world are doing that.

The government's ideological friend in Washington, President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, said last year that the era of big government is over. The Labour Prime Minister in the United Kingdom said that the end of the welfare state has come. Yet this government is the only Liberal government in the developed world which seems to think that the old policies of the welfare state are the ones that can sustain a healthy and prosperous economy.

• (1645)

Their allies overseas and outside this country know differently. Governments like the New Democratic one in Saskatchewan know differently. Provincial governments that have made the hard decisions know differently. It is time that this government finally came down on the side of fiscal responsibility, growth, hope and opportunity for Canadians by providing them with real meaningful tax relief.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the member on what I believe is his first speech in the House. I would like to welcome him to the House. I am going to try to be very quick because I know the member for Broadview—Greenwood would also like to ask a question.

We on this side of the House heard the message of the last election. We won a majority government, something that has not happened that often in this country. The people endorsed our programs.

I would like the member, who has been thoughtful on these issues for some time, to step aside from the rhetoric that he has brought into this House from his research department and sit down and itemize for me on the record the cuts that he would make in order to do it differently.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I would hate to point out to the member that they won a majority government but with the smallest percentage of popular vote in Canadian history for a majority government. If that is not chastisement with a divided opposition, I do not know what is. We still see the Liberal arrogance creeping into that member's comments.

We were very clear in our fresh start platform document about precisely which programs we thought were priorities and those that we thought could be cut. Let us talk about some of this. How about eliminating grants and handouts to special interest groups whose sole purpose is to demand more government spending? How about paring back some of the giveaway programs of the hon. Minister of

The Address

Canadian Heritage, like her \$23 million flag giveaway? How about starting with the hon. members pension plan?

Mr. Speaker, 51 of 52 of my colleagues in the last Parliament gave up their pensions as a sign of sacrifice, as have many provincial legislators engaged in the same deficit cutting exercise. Why don't my hon. friends start with the same kind of leadership by example?

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your appointment and I would like to congratulate the member on his election.

It is unfortunate that there are not more members in the House today. It may be due to the fact that we keep hearing all the negativism. Canadians are fed up with negativism. Clearly we point out to the member that his party not that long ago talked about the deficit as the number one issue in this country.

Maybe the member of the opposition went to the school of Orwellian politics, doublespeak. On the one hand, they want the deficit eliminated. Now the deficit is being eliminated and they say "Well gee, we don't like the way this is being done".

My comment is that in order to stimulate the economy, we had to get that deficit down, slay that \$42 billion dragon. Clearly there are more Canadians going back to work. We saw 900,000 Canadians put back to work because of this government and the actions of this government. Want ads are fuller today than they have ever been.

Clearly reducing taxes, yes, I think all Canadians would like to see taxes reduced. The question is the timing of those reductions basically because, if we are taking in more money in order to be able to deal with the deficit and certainly the debt—we have a \$600 billion debt which I hope they would deal with—I would say that the hon. member talks about chequebook politics. Could he explain to me what are the chequebook politics? Helping Canadians I believe is what the government is doing in the throne speech. Maybe he should read that.

Could the member comment on what he defines as chequebook politics?

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, talk about Orwellian rhetoric. My goodness, that is quite a question. I am not sure whether the member is from the Liberal or Tory party seated to my right and I am not sure that it matters.

• (1650)

The simple answer is yes, we did call for the elimination of the deficit and the reduction of the debt, not as an end in itself but as a means to an end. That end is greater prosperity, hope, growth and opportunity for Canadians through tax relief. You cannot provide

Canadians with tax relief if you are spending the money instead of reducing it. It is a simple mathematical thing.

Perhaps you have never balanced a family budget. Heaven knows this Liberal government has never balanced a government budget. But when you cut your spending, you get a surplus and that means that you can reduce people's taxes. That is why we have been pushing successive governments in this country since the Reform Party was founded a decade ago to get our finances under control so we could let Canadians keep more of their own money. It is not money that belongs to this Parliament or this government or the Liberal Party of Canada. It is money that belongs to Canadians and they ought to be able to keep it.

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to inform the large number of members who want to ask questions that the time for questions and comments has expired.

The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood on a point of order.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills: Mr. Speaker, this member of Parliament, who has just arrived here, as we all know, is one of the foremost experts in the country on the whole issue of tax reform. I wonder if we could have the unanimous consent of the House to extend this period of questioning for a few more minutes because we cannot let him off this easy.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to extend the time for questions and comments?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I am happy to be here in the House for the member's maiden speech. I have always had great respect for the member's work in the whole area of tax reform. I sincerely welcome his presence here in the House with the Reform Party because during the last Parliament, with the exception of Mr. Silye, very few of the members of the Reform Party really stuck with the whole issue of tax reform.

One of the reasons why they failed to stick with this issue was because they talk about the tax grants to social organizations, but the real tax grants in this country are the tax expenditures that are buried in the 1,500 pages of the tax act and most of those tax grants go to large multinational organizations. They are in the guise of saying they will give them this tax expenditure or this tax grant so they can stimulate jobs. No accountability.

I want to ask the member of Parliament for Calgary Southeast if he will undertake to make sure in this Parliament that he will champion eliminating all of those hidden unaccountable tax expenditures, especially those that go to the oil and gas industry in western Canada. I want him to make sure that he will stand in this House and champion that part of tax reform.

The Address

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his kind words and extend some of my own.

I have enormous respect for the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood's long and principled crusade for tax reform in this country. He has been against the stream in his party and his government in calling for a single tax that would ultimately give Canadians what I advocate as well.

Would I support the elimination of all the so-called tax expenditures? Of course not because the single largest tax expenditure is the RRSP which most Canadians rely on for their retirement savings.

There are of course tax preferences that some large companies have which I think are unreasonable in terms of creating a hugely complex tax system and which require tens of thousands of tax lawyers, accountants and bureaucrats at Revenue Canada at untold public expense to administer.

However I think the solution is not to eliminate those things while keeping the same tax rates thereby squeezing more revenue out of the economy. If we are going to eliminate exemptions and deductions and credits for individuals and for companies, we need to do it within the context of overall radical tax reform which results in overall lower tax levels for Canadians. On that condition I would support it.

The Deputy Speaker: Are hon. members rising on questions or comments? Is it the wish of the House to continue with questions and comments in this case?

Some hon. members: No.

• (1655)

The Deputy Speaker: In fairness to the other members who are on the list to speak, I think it might be more prudent to continue with the debate.

Ms. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is both an honour and a privilege for me to rise in my place as the new member for the riding of Kitchener Centre to participate in the Speech from the Throne debate. I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington.

I am both honoured and humbled by the support of the people of Kitchener Centre who have brought me here to Ottawa. As well, I would like to acknowledge and send good wishes to my predecessor, Dr. John English, who has moved on to new challenges while he continues his work on the anti-personnel landmine issue.

It is the faith of Kitchener Centre in my ability to represent their best interests which has brought me to this historical seat of democracy to be a part of the historic second consecutive Liberal government, the last Parliament of the 20th century and the one which will lead Canada into the next millennium.

There are a couple of things I would like to share with the House this afternoon.

First I would like everyone to know why I support the Speech from the Throne as presented by the governor general on the opening day of this Parliament.

Second I would like to offer the government an idea. It is an idea which builds on the agenda presented in the Speech from the Throne and one which would effect real change in the perception and effectiveness of government.

It is important to recognize the foundations which were laid for Canada and Canadians by those who have sat in this House throughout the last century, those who have shaped Canada's identity from coast to coast and abroad.

We are known for our Canadian values, generosity of spirit and collective action; values which have set us apart in the areas of health care, foreign affairs and peacekeeping; all those characteristics which lend to our pride in our country and the respect of the maple leaf worldwide.

In addition to Canadian values, much of our success is based on at least four principles of Canadian liberalism as laid out by Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

The first is faith in the individual, which implies freedom of the individual to make his or her own decisions within the constraints of a democratic society.

The second principle is compassion for the underprivileged, a principle which is the underpinning of a social safety net which Canadians of all parties speak of with pride.

Third is the principle of tolerance toward individuals and groups. It is this principle which enabled Laurier and his successors to bridge the ethnic, racial and cultural differences which characterize Canada.

The fourth principle is that of reform, pushing to develop new policies in keeping with changing times.

The Speech from the Throne provided the vision as to how this government, the 36th Parliament, will continue to act on these principles, and to ensure and work to enhance the quality of living we experience as Canadians.

The theme of partnership permeated the Speech from the Throne; partnership between governments, provincial, territorial and federal; partnership between the public and private sector, large corporations, small businesses, communities and individuals; partnerships which will provide a well-rounded, multifaceted approach to program development and delivery.

I am pleased with the government's commitment to this type of collaboration as I believe it is important for the government to address issues on local and regional levels with the assistance of supporting organizations, businesses and government services.

One of the outstanding characteristics of my riding is the high degree of volunteerism from the community and the willingness of the corporate sector to support both with personnel and funds the initiatives which the community values.

It is the government's ability to draw on the strengths of our country's differences which will build a stronger Canada.

Kitchener is fortunate to be a part of Canada's technology triangle comprised of high tech companies located in Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph. The success of partnership in these areas demonstrates that no longer can any one group or sector effectively operate and succeed in isolation. This initiative has created a vehicle with which our area is able to compete in a global economy. As stated in the Speech from the Throne "one in three Canadian jobs depend on trade".

• (1700)

In the last Parliament the government made progress in promoting trade both within our borders and beyond through reducing internal trade barriers and using the team Canada approach to open doors to Canadian businesses in Asia.

A number of Kitchener area businesses which were represented on that mission have benefited from increased international demand. The success of this approach demonstrates what can be accomplished when governments and the private sector work together.

I am pleased with the government's commitment to build on this success with a focused strategy. I am confident that upcoming team Canada missions will be as fruitful for Kitchener area businesses as well as others throughout Canada. By mounting these initiatives the government is providing fitting leadership which facilitates lasting job creation in the private sector.

Tourism plays a significant role in the economic mosaic of Kitchener and surrounding areas. Many visitors, future residents and investors became acquainted with our community through tourism. Kitchener's rich ethnic diversity and cultural wealth have certainly aided the development of various industries including tourism.

Kitchener is the ninth largest destination for new immigrants. The community benefits greatly from the contributions of these citizens. I am sure many are familiar with what has become Kitchener's most famous celebration by far, Ocktoberfest, a wonderful celebration of the largest German population in Canada drawing an average of 700,000 participants each year. It is an excellent example of people taking pride in their heritage and working together for the benefit of the entire community. The associated economic benefits are in the millions of dollars and continue to grow each year.

While Kitchener enjoys steady growth, the health of a community cannot be measured solely in economic terms. We must also

The Address

recognize the areas which require attention: continued quality health care, reduced child poverty, improved community safety, lower unemployment and sustained economic growth. All these areas must be addressed without jeopardizing how far our government has come in getting our fiscal house in order. In the Speech from the Throne the government has offered a positive approach to these issues through strategic investments.

I propose that our government promote the integration of various government services and agencies to target the issues and work together with the business community, faith communities and the volunteer sector to create private and public partnerships. As suggested in the Speech from the Throne, if we tackle the problem together we will gain strength as a country.

I come to the 36th Parliament with one agenda: to be the best representative I can be, to fulfil this role with energy and dignity, and to participate in the development and implementation of legislation that is good for all Canadians.

The Speech from the Throne set the foundation for an exciting and fulfilling term. Together we can bring a stronger, united Canada into the next millennium.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the onset I congratulate you on your well earned appointment. I also congratulate the hon. member on her maiden speech.

The hon. member sang a hymn of praise to team Canada and told us about all the wonderful things that happened as a result of its overseas missions. The figures are in; I am sure she is aware of them. Our exports have dropped substantially to every area where there was a team Canada mission. This is a fact as presented in the government's own figures. If this is indeed the case, why is she so proud of the work of team Canada?

• (1705)

My second question, if she will be so kind as to address two of them, is with respect to internal trade barriers. She said the right things, that we have to bring down internal trade barriers. My question to her is when and how.

The Government of Canada has the constitutional power to do this. We have a constitution that says that interprovincial trade must be free and open. What does the government have in mind? When will it get off its tail and actually do it?

Ms. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, I will reply to the two questions the hon. member has posed.

The city of Kitchener was able to send a mayor on team Canada to the Pacific rim. The message he brought back was the fact that people in other countries needed to have a relationship built up over time. To look for a quick turnaround and have all government

The Address

policy be a bottom line ledger is not quite practical. We are looking for long term gains. It is an investment that will accrue over several years.

As far as the internal trade barriers are concerned, I mentioned in my comments about partnership. One thing that a partnership relies on is a relationship between the two parties. While we may have the federal power to impose, it is much better if we can bring the provinces along with us. We have to acknowledge that when we share a vision we have to let the partner help shape it. I have every confidence the government will get where it needs to be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, I have listened carefully to what the hon. member had to say, and like all her colleagues, she did not mention the people of Quebec's interest.

I think this is important, and I wish to pursue the point, because when I came to Ottawa, to this House, I came with my head held high, because the people of Quebec elected us. We represent 60 per cent of the members from Quebec, and we have a sovereignist government in Quebec City with whom we share the same option and which holds 80 per cent of the seats there.

Those of you who believe the polls, who try to say that we are not legitimate and that the people of Quebec do not want sovereignty, are in for some surprises.

I have two questions for the member who just spoke. I would like to know if she admits that the government's legislative program denies the existence of the people of Quebec and of their culture? Does the member recognize the existence of the people of Quebec? If so, is she prepared to support the amendment presented by the leader of the Bloc Québécois?

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that one of the exciting parts of coming to the House of Parliament and this democratic process steeped in history was to be able to brush elbows with people in all parts of Canada.

My Canada includes Quebec. It is a vibrant, thriving society.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Kitchener Centre not only on her maiden speech but also on her excellent replies.

It is very difficult to come into the House and suddenly face opposition questions. It will be difficult to follow that act, as it were, but I will try to do my very best.

I will begin by commenting on the speech in reply to the Speech from the Throne by the member for Calgary Southwest, the Leader of the Opposition. I draw the attention of the House to two points he made.

• (1710)

He condemned the Speech from the Throne because it did not state anything about the accountability of MPs. I find this rather confusing because MPs are naturally very accountable. We are one of the most accountable people in the land simply because if the people of Canada, the electorate, do not like us or are not satisfied with us they can fire us every four or five years, or whatever the case may be. They can fire us nonetheless. The Reform Party and hopefully some of the new parties might bear that in mind.

The other point is that the member for Calgary Southwest probably meant we should be seeking more accountability from government machinery. We are all here to try to make government run better and more effectively for Canadians. One of the ways of achieving that is to strive for more accountability within government machinery, all government departments. All MPs on all sides of the House share this responsibility. We express this responsibility by the questions we pose in committee.

I spent some time on the government operations committee when we scrutinized a number of departments and found a number of flaws. Many of the flaws were due to a lack of accountability. I am quite happy to say that the search for better government was not exclusively Liberal. It was predominantly Liberal, but I was assisted by my colleagues, members of the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois.

As MPs we are accountable. It is the machinery of government we must scrutinize. Reform Party members certainly have no exclusivity on the desire to bring accountability to government and to reform government. Just because they have the name Reform in their party title does not mean they are the only MPs who seek reform.

The member for Calgary Southwest also criticized the Speech from the Throne because it devolved certain responsibilities that were once federal to the provinces. The member for Calgary Southwest complained this devolution was done purely for administrative means. He said that his party, were it in power, would have passed a bill and made these changes statutory. He is referring to transferring certain responsibilities for forestry, social housing, mining and several other issues to the provinces.

I remind members opposite that Ontario is experiencing the consequences of transferring power, that is the power to control the responsibility for social housing. What happens when it is given to a provincial government that does not have the same spirit of generosity and caring as the federal government?

The Address

In Ontario right now there is a controversy. The Ontario government wants to have no responsibility whatsoever for looking after the poor and the disadvantaged people in society who occupy social housing. Now it is devolving it to the municipalities.

The lesson for us is that we ought to make sure that when we transfer federal powers we transfer them in a way in which we can take them back if we need do so. That is the situation in Ontario.

More unfortunate in the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition was that he suggested transfers of responsibilities should be done by statutes. When he says that, because he is talking about provincial and federal powers, he can only mean changes to the Constitution.

All Canadians from sea to sea were fed up with attempts to change the Constitution by a previous party that I would prefer to leave nameless in the House. Canadians do not want to see tampering with the Constitution. It is the last thing Canadians want. I am absolutely amazed the Leader of the Opposition should propose going into the Constitution again.

All I can say is good luck. Look at what happened to a former Conservative prime minister.

I have to come to the Speech from the Throne.

[*Translation*]

I am sorry, but I found it a bit uninspiring. I think that the throne speech lacked eloquence and inspiration. The ideas are good, they are all good, but the speech did not have what I was looking for.

• (1715)

Fortunately the next day the Prime Minister spoke on the Speech from the Throne, and I found his remarks full of eloquence and ideas. I found him eloquent on the subject of the government's ideas.

[*English*]

I especially like the idea in the prime minister's remarks of supporting young people. I have to tell the House that I wanted to see the Speech from the Throne talk about citizenship, getting rid of the monarchy and a number of other things. Instead I found a Speech from the Throne that was directed to helping Canada's youth. One of the most important points in the prime minister's remarks was the fact that he proposed more exchanges of young people across Canada. He mentioned that when he was young he remembers sitting in kitchens in Saskatchewan, shooting pool in Newfoundland and that kind of thing.

I can relate to that because when I was young I travelled across Canada, the first time out to the Rockies, into Reform country if you will, and saw the Rocky Mountains for the first time. I was inspired. It is beautiful country. Any Reform MP who is from the Rockies or the prairies should be proud of it.

Similarly later I visited Quebec. I visited first Montreal and then Quebec City, actually right at the height of the FLQ crisis.

[*Translation*]

What I found was a unique and vibrant society, whose language I did not understand. A marvellous society. I have become a federalist with my heart in the mountains and in the province of Quebec, because of that.

[*English*]

I think the prime minister is right on when he said that the new Parliament and the Speech from the Throne, even though it did not express it very well, but he expressed it so much better, should be about the future generation, the new generation of Canadians, Canada's young people.

I would like to conclude with a quote. The prime minister said this part of his speech in English and so with a certain amount of pride and perhaps trepidation I will attempt to say the prime minister's words in French. Here is what he said and I do not think I could say it better.

[*Translation*]

He said:

We have built that nation and we continue to shape its elements. Our young will do so in the next century. Their architecture will be new but it will be Canadian. Greatness may have a different meaning, but it will still be Canadian.

That is the essence of the Speech from the Throne.

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the member's comments and his criticisms against the member for Calgary Southeast. He was quite critical of the member when he was referring to accountability in suggesting that he has an exclusive on accountability and suggesting that the Liberal Party can be just as accountable and its members can as well.

• (1720)

I would like to remind the member that it is very easy to speak of accountability but the Reform Party has an absolute exclusivity on actions when it comes to accountability. That is the only way he is going to be able to show the Canadian people accountability, through actions like giving up his pension. The Liberal Party has not come through with actions on accountability, but the Reform Party leads the way.

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, as an individual member I would like to refer the member opposite to some of my efforts with respect to bringing accountability to charitable organizations which, in a sense, are government organizations in the sense that they receive taxpayer dollars.

The Address

Also I think when he gains a bit more experience around here he will discover that there have been many initiatives not just among Liberal colleagues but among Reform colleagues and Bloc Québécois colleagues that have sought better accountability in government, something we all do as MPs and we all should do as MPs or we certainly ought not to be here. I think the member for Calgary Southwest should have recognized that he was criticizing MPs as MPs rather than criticizing the government. He got a little confused there, if you will.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I wish to congratulate you on your appointment. You are one of the Reform Party members with whom I have had the opportunity to work. In fact, when we worked together, it was precisely on a youth initiative program, as our colleague mentioned earlier.

What I want to ask the hon. member is whether he admits that the federal government is about to get fully involved in areas under provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, you will remember that the national conference on youth and the new economy had young participants from everywhere, including eastern and western Canada, Quebec and other regions of the country. These people from every region of the country told us that these youth initiatives, these employment initiatives must be implemented, to the extent possible, where the problems are, namely in the regions. In other words, we must take measures that are appropriate to the specific problems of the regions.

Listening to the hon. member opposite, one gets the impression that the federal government is the saviour of the world and that the municipalities and provincial governments have no jurisdiction and are not accountable to the public. Upon reading the throne speech, one cannot help but conclude that the federal government is trying to get involved in areas under provincial jurisdiction and to enhance its visibility.

I have a question for the hon. member. What does the federal government have to gain from getting involved in areas under provincial jurisdiction?

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it is simple. The federal government's most important responsibility is to help young people everywhere in the country, including those from Ontario and Quebec. This is a great and most important challenge.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start, first of all, by thanking the people of Témiscouata who supported me for three and a half years during my first term. For the information of the hon. member opposite, as a result of electoral reform, Témiscouata is now part of the riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, represented by our colleague, Paul Crête.

I now wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of Rimouski—Mitis for giving me their support. Mr. Speaker, I realize you have already visited our lovely region and enjoyed the beauty of the St. Lawrence and our forests. I happen to live in one of Quebec's many beautiful regions, but this one is particularly attractive, in my opinion.

I will now comment on the Speech from the Throne. The Liberal government could have taken advantage of the initial days of this new Parliament to take some concrete action that would have shown they have a number of answers to the problems besetting Canadian and Quebec society.

• (1725)

Unfortunately, the government is not really working for the people. It would rather perpetuate the doctrine of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who advocated a dominating and centralizing federal government and would not recognize the identity and aspirations of the people of Quebec.

Lester B. Pearson's legacy has completely disappeared. I will remind the House that Mr. Pearson had asked that the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission recommend steps to ensure that the Canadian confederation would develop in accordance with the principle of two equal founding peoples. Those days are really gone now.

Of course, in the eyes of the Liberal government, there is no such thing as a Quebec culture. In fact, the Prime Minister once said there is only one, Canadian culture, which may be of French or English expression. The Speech from the Throne may talk about a "tolerant and highly diverse society", but the government still fails to recognize the basic historical fact that Quebec is one of the founding peoples of this country.

I will use the rest of my time commenting on how empty this Speech from the Throne, the third one of the Chrétien years, is. It only gets worse. The vacuum is particularly noticeable in the area of cultural development. This lack of vision and commitment is sad for Quebec as well as for Canada. Quebec however has a way out: reclaim all its powers and achieve sovereignty in a hurry.

During the 35th Parliament, the government demonstrated that culture was not one of its major concerns. It contented itself with micro-managing seriously reduced budgets. In addition to cutting back funding, it did nothing to encourage culture. It has taken the relentless efforts of the Bloc Québécois to persuade the Liberals finally to bring in copyright reform.

In its speech, the government says it wants to make it possible for Canadian culture to reach audiences abroad. We can only hope that this intention will take the form of support for creators and cultural industries. We do not want to see a repeat of last year's attempts to force artists to promote Canadian unity, or to judge projects on the basis of political rather than artistic criteria, or to

require artists to pay a visit to the member for Verdun, whom they did not know and had never met, in order to collect their cheque.

The government speaks proudly of our films. What it should do is conduct an in-depth review of Telefilm Canada's film policy, which was seriously criticized in an internal report. One of the things this report mentions is an overall lack of funding—cuts of \$84 million do not go unnoticed in a budget—as well as shortcomings in marketing, and distribution problems. Telefilm Canada has its work cut out for it.

If the government truly wants to reflect social and linguistic diversity, it should stop censoring artistic projects that deal with the history or culture of Quebec, as it did with Pierre Falardeau's plans for a film about the life of the Patriot Delorimier, entitled *Le 15 février 1839*.

The most vital criterion should be script quality. The decision making process ought to be free of any conflict of interest or political partisanship, which was not the case with Mr. Falardeau's production, as we now have all the evidence we need to prove.

The government is boasting about the quality of our books, yet it refused to listen to our suggestions when the Bloc Québécois came to the defence of the publishing industry. If the government still does nothing in this area, fewer and fewer books with Canadian content will be published, because our entire industry will have been sold out to the Americans. In this area, the anglophone culture is more vulnerable than the francophone.

• (1730)

The government must react to the World Trade Organization decision on split runs of American periodicals. The Minister of Heritage had, moreover, made a commitment to present a plan in support of the magazine publishing industry as soon as Parliament reconvened. Is she going to stick to that campaign promise, or will she be forced to resign a second time? Watch for the next instalment.

The Minister of Heritage will need to find ways of supporting the periodicals and scientific and cultural periodicals which are being seriously threatened by the reduced postal subsidy and the changes in its rules. I must point out that, in this area, there is a particular threat to specialized French language periodicals, given their limited market.

In the Speech from the Throne, there is also a reference to videos. If the government really wants to develop this industry and encourage creativity, it must immediately review the Copyright Act, for the audiovisual sector was excluded from the recent revision of that legislation. A guarantee of receiving the revenues generated by their work would be the best way to stimulate creators and craftspeople in this area of cultural activity.

The Address

In the same vein, the \$45 million in cuts made by the Liberal government have resulted in the National Film Board's virtually abandoning its assistance to independent film making, and this particularly jeopardizes the careers of the young film and video makers who represent the future of their industry.

We read in the Speech from the Throne that the government, and I quote "will provide increased support to the Canada Council". Now that is really playing with words to mislead us in this area too. Here as elsewhere, the government will probably be content to give back some of the funding it cut in the past. There will have to be a number of years of Liberal generosity before the Canada Council returns to the level of funding it enjoyed before the Liberals came to power. As Liberal spending power is legendary, the government will announce straight faced and glowing with pride the ever increasing budget of the Canada Council.

Regarding the information highway, the government talks of the urgency of making Canada "the most connected nation in the world". We have seen how that could help in consultations on certain declarations, because a number of provinces are contemplating using the connection from Industry Canada. Being "connected" is a praiseworthy objective. However, the Speech from the Throne makes no mention of the promise of the second red book to create a \$15 million multimedia fund and fails to act on the recommendation of the advisory committee on the information highway that a \$50 million, and not \$15 million, fund be set up. Will the Minister of Industry be the only one overseeing Canada's information highway, disregarding its cultural and education sides? This is another subject to follow.

We read in the speech that "A connected nation is more than wires, cables and computers". What a discovery. "It is a nation in which citizens have access to the skills and knowledge they need". We agree. This is why the Bloc Québécois has insisted for nearly four years now on the need to develop francophone content for the information highway.

• (1735)

There are gaping holes in this speech. In their first red book, the Liberals were committed to stable multi-year financing for the CBC. Every budget in the past four years has broken this promise, and the corporation has had to absorb \$350 million in cuts. Should we be alarmed by the fact that the speech does not mention the CBC? When it was promised stable financing, it actually got cuts. This time, it is not even mentioned. Does this mean that its financing will be maintained, cut, or that it will again benefit from the government's largesse? On this, we will have to wait and see.

Is the government finally going to give equal treatment to the French and the English networks? At present, one hour of programming costs on average \$37,500 on the English network and \$18,390 on the French network. The government should stop treating

The Address

francophones as second class citizens, and set up two autonomous corporations with equivalent budgets based on the same cost per hour of programming.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew: Per hour of programming?

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Yes, sir.

Before the last federal election, the health minister promised amendments to the tobacco control bill to allow sponsorship of sporting events. Since there is no mention of this in the throne speech, are we to understand that the government has already forgotten its promise? What will happen to cultural events in danger of losing their sponsors as a result of this bill? At issue is the potential loss of some \$30 million in economic benefits these major cultural and sporting events generate in Quebec, mainly in Montreal. Is the Liberal government once again going to abandon the cultural sector?

One of the few promising aspects of this speech is the federalist propaganda campaign. We are told they are going to rev it up as we approach the new millennium.

After announcing that it will cut health, education and social assistance programs by another \$42 billion by the year 2001, the government introduces new programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction so that it can mail directly to Canadians cheques emblazoned with a nice red maple leaf. The government is not interested in how useful or effective these programs will be. What matters to the government is to be visible with its flag.

It must be noted that on July 1, the government did not hesitate to take down our flag from our Parliament to replace it with the Queen's standard to show how dominated we are.

Where does this idea of visibility over effectiveness come from? Again it comes from Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who wrote in a 1967 book entitled *Federalism and the French Canadians*, and I quote: "One way of offsetting the appeal of separatism is by investing tremendous amounts of time, energy and money in nationalism, at the federal level. A national image must be created that will have such an appeal as to make any image of a separatist group unattractive".

The Liberals are obviously inspired by this ideology. Contrary to what we heard in previous throne speeches, there is no question of working with the provinces to improve the federation. Now the only thing that matters to the government is to create an image, an illusion. While people are getting poorer and poorer and while the government refuses to recognize Quebec's identity, it will create the illusion of wealth and the illusion of the acceptance of Quebec by the outstretched hand that actually just wants to crush us and bring us down to our knees.

• (1740)

We must remember that the money we receive is our own money. It comes from our taxes. The federal government does not have a penny. It gets its money from the Canadian taxpayers and does not own it, although it may think it does. The federal government can start spending once again only because it keeps on cutting social programs and transfers to provinces and because it diverts the unemployment insurance fund from its intended purpose. The money belongs to us and not to the government. It wants to use it to serve its own interests and improve its visibility, not to ensure our development.

The Bloc Quebecois will never stop calling for the federal government to stop useless and unwarranted spending for propaganda purposes. You will be surprised when we reveal these figures. The sums are really huge. The amounts recovered in these ways should be spent on cultural activities and on promoting freedom of artistic expression.

I can tell you right away that the Canadian heritage minister will soon cheer when she learns that her government has raised her budget by 3 percent. Beware. Take a good look at Statistics Canada's figures. You will see, in black and white, that the increase went to operating expenditures and capital expenditures and that it was used for severance packages given to employees laid off by the department and its agencies and not for the promotion of cultural endeavour.

In fact, transfers to artists and cultural organizations have dropped by more than 5 percent. The only new expenditures will be similar to those made by Heritage Canada over the past 15 months for billboards and flags.

In concluding, the strategies contained in the Speech from the Throne are basically aimed at restoring the tarnished reputation of this federal government and giving it a semblance of relevance. This the government intends to do by using money cut from transfers to the provinces for health, education and welfare and money saved at the expense of ordinary citizens: the unemployed, workers, seasonal workers, the sick, students and welfare recipients.

Instead of concentrating on rebuilding what it had destroyed, the federal government has embarked on new intrusions in areas under provincial jurisdiction. It is triumphant, carefully disguising the fact that we can expect at least \$42 billion more in cuts between now and the year 2001.

Concealment is definitely the name of the game for this government. However, Quebecers are nobody's fool. When the time comes for them to determine their future, they will realize there is no risk involved in having one own's country and being sovereign, in exchanging the maple leaf for a fleur de lys, since all the money will stay in Quebec and be used to meet their own needs.

The Address

[English]

Mr. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I am pleased to have a new riding. I want also to begin by complimenting you on your elevation to that very wonderful post. I hope that we are able to see many more of these emotional discussions.

[Translation]

Especially from the hon. member for the new riding of Rimouski—Mitis.

Instead of ranting and raving for the benefit of the cameras, instead of turning this into a public circus and saying things like the federal government is destroying something it has built, perhaps the hon. member would entertain a constructive suggestion. How about starting on a policy, a movement for the purpose of building a good country, a country like Canada, the best country in the world to live in.

I was interested in the hon. member's comments to the effect that she was very worried about cultural problems. We all know that people who work in the cultural industries, especially in certain provinces, have a political agenda. I am not particularly interested in all that. My interest extends to the work I did in committee last year. The hon. member was on the same committee.

• (1745)

There was \$600 million from the cable operators' production fund. We were able to discuss how to use that money, and distribute it to people working in cultural industries.

I find it quite depressing, today, when some talk of not supporting francophones while others speak of preserving their culture in other provinces, to hear the position taken by members of the Bloc Québécois, including the member who has just spoken. Such a position goes totally against the interests of francophones in Ontario, it is totally divisive, it divides the country and makes things even more difficult for people like me who fight for the preservation of their language outside Quebec.

You are not the only ones who speak French. I find your position interesting, though it does constitute a shift. I find not only depressing but sad that they do not realize the harm they are doing to others, outside Quebec, who do not share their interests.

I would like the member to respond to that, if she can.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: The hon. member opposite has some nerve, Mr. Speaker.

First, I suggest he reread my speech over at leisure. He will realize, after reading his own remarks, that he did not understand what I said. I have never said that we were the only francophones—

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew: Don't be arrogant.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, would you ask the minister to be quiet? He is carrying on.

I think this is an important point. We never claimed to be the only ones who speak French in Canada. I never said such a thing.

We have followed with interest the situation in Ontario. We have seen what happened with Montfort Hospital. We have seen Mrs. Lalonde resign from her position as chair of S.O.S. Montfort. Why? Because the City of Vanier voted in favour of partition. Realizing what they had done after Mrs. Lalonde's resignation, they said: "Oops, this might have been a mistake after all; we will reconsider".

So they reconsidered their position and decided it was such a mistake to support partition that now Vanier would almost go as far as to support Quebec's sovereignty. You know, the hon. member opposite is in no position to criticize us. He used to be the member for Ontario; that was easy enough to remember, but I forget what his new riding is called.

An hon. member: Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: There is "Ajax" in there and, to me, that is stuff used to clean the sink.

Some hon. members: Ha, ha.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: That is the kind of trick I will use to remember the name of his riding in future.

Naturally, we all have our own personality. I for one am a passionate person. He should watch the program on the French network of the CBC this evening, at 7.30 p.m. He would get to know me better because tonight is about who I am really, behind the image. This is an invitation. However, he will realize that I am a passionate person, and I am not about to set this aspect of my personality aside just because it does not please the Liberals. If there is something I intend to do, it is to show passion in this House.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the speech by the hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis. First, I must congratulate her for a very passionate and good speech, in which she defends culture.

The hon. member has always been known to defend culture and I congratulate her for doing so. However, in her enthusiasm, she is wearing blinkers and is too focused on herself, on what she calls the people of Quebec. When she talks about the two founding nations, she talks about Quebec. She forgets the francophones from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and even Yukon.

• (1750)

When the hon. member refers to us, francophones from outside Quebec, it is always in a negative way and I deplore that. I do not

The Address

think she does it out of malice but, rather, out of separatist idealism to try to make a point. She should instead encourage francophones outside Quebec and show what is happening among French Canadians.

The hon. member talked about Quebec's culture. There is a French Canadian culture. There are many cultivated people in Quebec. There is a thriving culture, but francophones living outside Quebec also contribute to that culture.

When she talks about the francophonie, I wish the member for Rimouski—Mitis would include francophones outside Quebec as well as those in Quebec in Canada's French-speaking community. Together, we can make Canada an even better place, with a strong, thriving Quebec in an even greater country and in a world in which we can be proud of our dynamic culture, since the hon. member is always raising the issue of culture. Perhaps I should commend her for her interest in this matter.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words, of course. I am flattered.

First of all, in my speech, which I also invite this member to read, I never excluded francophones outside Quebec. I asked whether there would be an information highway for francophones. I did not specify that it would be for Quebec alone and that it would not go outside our province. The information highway covers quite a distance. I would have a lot of trouble stopping it at the Quebec border. I spoke about an information highway for francophones, meaning all francophones in Canada.

I have no objection to there being a French Canadian people. But I am no longer part of that group. When I was growing up, I was taught in school that I was a French Canadian. Later on, I was told that I was a Quebecer and I like that better. But I will not be faulted for preferring to be a Quebecer to being a French Canadian. As a French Canadian, I am a second class citizen. As a Quebecer, I am a first class citizen. That is the difference. I have no objection to their being French Canadians, but why are we given less money to produce television programs?

Mr. Eugène Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, I am referring to the Canadian Constitution. French Canadians are not second class citizens, as the member has just said.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): With the greatest of respect, as the hon. member knows that is most likely a point of debate.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first let me offer my congratulations to you on your new office. We are all confident you will do a great job.

Let me also say that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for St. Catharines.

I am very pleased to participate in this debate. There is no question the Speech from the Throne we heard this past Tuesday speaks for itself. Nonetheless we are here, opposition members from one point of view and government members from another, to debate the merits or demerits of the throne speech.

The fact I am here as the member for Algoma—Manitoulin is due to the voters of my riding who expressed their support in me. I appreciate that. We all had supporters among our volunteers and our loved ones. On behalf of all of us may I thank many people across the country who participated in the political process, in the democratic process. They are helping to make this country the greatest country in the world with a parliament that at times seems to be raucous and noisy but a parliament that works, a parliament in which we can all have confidence.

• (1755)

I never cease to be in awe of this place even though this is my second term. I say to first time members of the House that they can make of this job what their efforts produce. If they serve their constituents and their country well, they will feel the reward of knowing that the country is bit by bit moving positively into the next millennium.

It is appropriate that a Liberal government will lead the country into the next millennium. Our Prime Minister is the right person to lead the government into the next thousand years.

The throne speech has shown in many ways the caring and nurturing side of government. Too often our citizens are cynical about government at all levels and the processes which seem to take place behind closed doors and in faraway places. We demonstrated in the last Parliament—and we will show it again—that this is an open, transparent government, a government that will listen to the people and will make decisions, often tough decisions, that are needed to continue keeping the country the best country in the world.

I will quote one sentence from the Prime Minister's speech of yesterday which sums up for me the theme of my remarks. He said "Canada will remain the best country to live in because it cares about people".

In my time around here as the member of Parliament for Algoma—Manitoulin I have learned that ultimately voters want to know their governments and representatives care about them and their communities. The less we express and show that, the more distant they feel.

My riding in northern Ontario stretches from Manitowadge in the northwest to Chapleau in the northeast and south to the north shore of Lake Huron including Manitoulin Island. Whether we

The Address

represent a downtown city core or urban riding or a large rural riding, we are representing Canadians. They are Canadians who all feel the same way about their country.

The throne speech expresses the caring nature of the government. We can find no greater evidence than in the words of the throne speech.

Let us start with the issue of the economy. In the last Parliament a tremendous challenge was facing us with the deficit at record levels. Let us imagine newspaper headlines screaming aloud that the government has brought our country into the black. Over the next year and a half, if not sooner, we will be in a surplus position. What greater thing can we do for preserving our health care programs, our pension programs, programs for youth and so on, than by ensuring our economy is strong and vibrant based on a set of books we can all be proud of whether a member of the opposition or not.

That essence of caring has given Canadians for the first time in a long time a real sense of hope, optimism and confidence about the future. We are certainly not there yet when it comes to solving all the problems of the country. There will always be challenges and problems to face. It has been a long time since this country has been at such a tremendous juncture in its history. In fact there is so much confidence as we approach the next millennium that the Prime Minister in the throne speech announced that we are going to have a tremendous millennium party in two and a half years, a party which I believe the world will come to because people around the world know that we have a country that cares about people.

• (1800)

Even though we hear complaints from different parts of the country it is only because people know that the government will listen when they speak and cry out for help. They know we will respond.

A caring government must look at the first and most important group in our society, our children. We have recognized that children must get a good start in life, be it through proper nutrition or through proper education. We have made tremendous strides, in co-operation with all the provinces, in developing a national child benefit system. It is not completed yet but I believe it will evolve into a model for the world.

When it comes to the young people of our society, people who we worry a lot about because of their concerns of future employment, this government in the last Parliament, and even more this Parliament, stands ready to make sure that in co-operation with the provinces through an enhanced scholarship program, through initiatives with industry it can make sure that they have a chance at that first job, at starting life on the right foot.

If, for some reason, they get off on the wrong foot we are there to make sure they have a second and a third chance if necessary.

We are also looking out for those in our society who find themselves in the middle ages, sometimes victims of structural change. With changing societies and economies, we will see jobs lost here and jobs created somewhere else. That is the nature of our modern society. We have the sadness which comes with losing a job maybe at the age of 40 or 50 years of age. Many of my constituents have faced that challenge, particularly in Elliot Lake. It is incumbent on us to continue to assist people caught in this way with retraining or appropriate early retirement programs.

For the final age category, that being our elderly, what more can a government do but to make sure that the pension systems are secure and that seniors do not have to worry about the future.

I heard from the seniors. They were worried about the future. When they understood through our campaign that we were committed to securing the Canada pension plan for the future and that we were developing the seniors benefit plan, they knew that the government would be watching out for them.

This does not say that some people don't get lost in the cracks. It is incumbent on the government to close those cracks, to make sure that nobody is left behind. It is an absolute feature of a caring government that no one gets left behind.

Mr. Speaker, again I wish you the very best in your new office over this next Parliament. I wish the best for all my colleagues as we look forward to an exciting and vigorous Parliament over this next few years.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Algoma referred to the strong voice of the government that is there for the people. That strong voice just was not there. It was a silent voice for the people in Atlantic Canada in the last Parliament.

Atlantic Canada has 8 percent of the population and it was taking 27 percent of all the cuts.

• (1805)

I have a shipyard, the most modern shipyard there is in Canada, in Saint John, New Brunswick. Four thousand men used to work there. None are working there now. I used to have all of my electricians working in the province of New Brunswick. Seventy-six percent of them are now gone. Seventy-six percent of them are not working. They have gone illegally to the U.S.A. to work so they can feed their families.

The government is selling off all the housing of CMHC. Do you know who lives in CMHC housing? All the low and middle income people live in those houses. When you privatize it, the rent doubles and triples and the people are out on the street.

The Address

I do not believe that the government understands what it has done. It is time for it to stop and take a look. The member talks about a crack. What is in the throne speech is a crack the size of the Grand Canyon. I appeal to the government to please tell us what it is going to do for the people who are hurting like never before. I do not want to hear about governments in the past who did this or that.

All I know is that when I was mayor our people worked and we had a low unemployment rate. I had 4,000 people working at my shipyard, some as plumbers, some as electricians. It was beautiful. However, right now it is a total disaster.

Please tell me what you are going to do for our people?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I would remind hon. members to please address each other through the Chair.

Mr. Brent St. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Saint John.

I admire the member for Saint John. She was very effective in the last Parliament and I expect that she will be in this Parliament. However, I believe she is missing the point.

In the last Parliament the government had to make some tough decisions. You can care about the people and still make tough decisions knowing that what you are doing will be better for all the regions of the country.

In my home town of Elliot Lake, starting in 1990 we experienced a job loss of some 5,000 in the uranium mining industry. There was a lot of adjustment, but in the long run the changes which took place have shown that Elliot Lake and that region will survive and do very well.

I know that the spirit of the citizens of the Atlantic provinces is very much the same. They will respond to change and they will deal with the challenges that face them in a very creative way. I have every confidence in the citizens of Saint John and the other ridings of the Atlantic provinces. They will take up the flag and march into the next millennium with all of us. All of our regions will be better off with the changes and improvements that we have made in the governance of this country.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you. You occupy the chair so well. Not only do you look well, you act well, you speak well and you have such a passion for the House.

• (1810)

I would like to refer to the speech we have just heard from the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin. He used little phrases in his comment that really caught my attention. He said “and no one

shall be left behind”. Now that was very interesting. In fact I think “no one is left behind” were the exact words he used. That is very interesting because the moment he finished his speech, the hon. member for Saint John had to point out to him that there are people who are already being left behind.

I would like to ask the member for Algoma—Manitoulin what he considers to be accountability and what he considers being left behind. I draw his attention to the allocation or awarding by the Minister of Industry of TPC grants. It is clearly the spoken intention of the Minister of Industry to say very clearly that these grants are to be in support of and to develop small industry in Canada. What do we discover? Until this point as of August 31, 1997, 75 percent of all of those moneys were not given to small industry but to large industries in aerospace and defence; 75 percent on industries that are wealthy, industries with a profit, yet the small businessman could not get in. Does he call that accountability? Does he call that being left behind? What is he talking about?

Mr. Brent St. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what I think was a question from the member for Kelowna.

If he can check the blues, I believe he will appreciate my clarification on the people in our society who are being left behind. None of us in the House wants anyone to be left behind.

I believe I said that this government in the last Parliament and again in this Parliament will take steps to ensure that as much as possible no one is left behind. It is a sad fact in the real world of life that some people for one reason or another find themselves lagging behind the bulk of society and it is necessary for society at large to reach back and make sure that no one is left behind. But sadly we do not live in a perfect world. I doubt that we will ever live in a perfect world, but we can all work together to make it a better world and a better country.

I know that opposition members of all parties will work with us to make Canada a better and better place in which to live where no one will be left behind. That is not a fantasy nor is it a dream. It is a very high goal that will take a lot of effort and time to achieve.

I believe the programs that we have and will put in place will provide our citizens with the very best possibility to achieve their own individual successes in life. Take for example the scholarship fund that the Prime Minister referred to yesterday in his speech, the details of which will no doubt come out over the days and weeks ahead. It is a scholarship fund designed specifically for post-secondary aspirants who find themselves in low and modest income family situations. That among many initiatives is an indication of the government's commitment to those who might otherwise be left behind. While he might want to say that I said we were there, he knows full well it is an objective that will be best achieved through the efforts of this government no doubt with the co-operation of the opposition parties.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It is now 6.15 p.m. and we are out of time. Perhaps we can come back to this next time.

It being 6.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the subamendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the subamendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the subamendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1845)

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1*)

YEAS

Members

Alarie
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bergeron
Gaspé—(Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Brien
Crête
Desrochers
Duceppe
Fournier
Gauthier
Godin (Châteauguay)
Loubier
Ménard
Perron
Plamondon
St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

Asselin
Bellehumeur
Bernier (Bonaventure—
Bigras
Canuel
de Savoye
Dubé (Lévis)
Dumas
Gagnon
Girard-Bujold
Guay
Marceau
Mercier
Picard (Drummond)
Sauvageau
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp—33

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Alcock
Anderson
Assadourian
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Baker
Barnes
Bélair
Bellemare

Adams
Anders
Assad
Augustine
Bailey
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett

The Address

Benoit
Bertrand
Blaikie
Bonin
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Brison
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Coderre
Collenette
Copps
Cummins
DeVillers
Dion
Dockrill
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duncan
Easter
Elley
Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Galloway
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvard
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hubbard
Iftody
Jaffer
Johnston
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Konrad
Laliberte
Lavigne
Leung
Lincoln
Lowther
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Manley
Marchi
Marleau
Massé
Mayfield
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison
Murray
Nault
Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pankiw
Parrish
Penson
Peterson
Pickard (Kent—Essex)

Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown
Bulte
Cadman
Cannis
Carroll
Casson
Cauchon
Chan
Charest
Clouthier
Cohen
Comuzzi
Cullen
Desjarlais
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Drouin
Duhamel
Earle
Eggleton
Epp
Folco
Forseth
Gagliano
Godfrey
Goldring
Graham
Grewal
Grose
Hanger
Hart
Harvey
Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner
Ianno
Jackson
Jennings
Jones
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kerpan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Longfield
Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Malhi
Mancini
Manning
Mark
Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
Matthews
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
Meredith
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Muise
Myers
Normand
Obhrai
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri

The Address

Pratt	Price
Proctor	Proud
Provenzano	Ramsay
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton)
Serré	Shepherd
Solberg	Solomon
St. Denis	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stinson
St-Jacques	St-Julien
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Thompson (Charlotte)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vautour	Wappel
Wasylcyia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Wilfert	Wood —222

PAIRED MEMBERS

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Caccia
Dalpond-Guiral	Debien
Dromisky	Finestone
Lalonde	Laurin
Lebel	Lefebvre
Minna	Phinney
Rocheleau	Speller
Steckle	Venne

The Speaker: I declare the subamendment defeated.

It being 6.47 p.m. this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.47 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, September 25, 1997

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Order in Council Appointments	
Mr. Adams	57
Canada Elections Act	
Mr. Adams	57
Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act	
Bill C-2. Introduction and first reading	57
Mr. Peterson	57
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	57
DNA Identification Act	
Bill C-3. Introduction and first reading	57
Mr. Scott (Fredericton)	57
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	57
Mr. Scott (Fredericton)	57
Canadian Wheat Board Act	
Bill C-4. Introduction and first reading	57
Mr. Manley	57
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	57
Canada Cooperatives Act	
Bill C-5. Introduction and first reading	57
Mr. Manley	57
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	57
Parliament of Canada Act	
Bill C-201. Introduction and first reading	57
Mr. Bellemare	57
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)	58
Canada Health Act	
Bill C-202. Introduction and first reading	58
Mr. Patry	58
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)	58
Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act	
Bill C-203. Introduction and first reading	58
Mr. Benoit	58
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	58
Cultural Grants Acknowledgement Act	
Bill C-204. Introduction and first reading	58
Mr. Abbott	58
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	58
User Fee Act	
Bill C-205. Introduction and first reading	59
Mr. Solberg	59
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	59
Petitions	
The Senate	
Mr. Mayfield	59

Indian Point	
Mr. Stinson	59
Criminal Code	
Mr. Jackson	59
Gasoline Tax	
Mr. Bellemare	59
Impaired Driving	
Mr. Bellemare	59
The Family	
Mr. Morrison	59
Mr. Morrison	60
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Adams	60
Request for Emergency Debate	
Multilateral Agreement on Investment	
Mr. Blaikie	60
Speaker's Ruling	
The Deputy Speaker	60

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Speech from the Throne	
Resumption of debate on Address in Reply	
Mr. Marchi	60
Mr. Penson	63
Mr. Marchi	63
Mr. Blaikie	64
Mr. Solberg	64
Mr. DeVillers	67
Mr. Solberg	68
Mr. Riis	68
Mr. Solberg	68
Mrs. Wayne	69
Mr. Solberg	69
Mr. Clouthier	69
Mr. Lebel	70
Mr. Clouthier	71
Mr. Jordan	71
Mr. Stoffer	73
Mr. Jordan	73
Ms. Caplan	73
Mr. Mercier	73
Mr. Jordan	73
Mr. Loubier	74
Mr. Bonwick	77
Mr. Loubier	77
Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	77
Mr. Loubier	77
Mr. Riis	78
Mr. Loubier	78
Mrs. Karetak—Lindell	78
Mrs. Wayne	80
Mr. St-Julien	80
Mr. Harris	80
Mrs. Karetak—Lindell	81
Mr. Penson	81
Mrs. Karetak—Lindell	81
Mr. Bonwick	81
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	82

Mr. Bonwick	83
Mr. Riis	83
Mr. Cannis	85
Mr. Riis	85
Mr. Harris	85
Mr. Thompson (Charlotte)	86
Mr. Riis	86
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	86
Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	87
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	87
Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	88
Mr. Mahoney	88
Mr. de Savoye	89
Mr. Harris	89
Mr. de Savoye	89
Mr. Mahoney	90
Mr. Myers	90
Mr. Harris	91
Mr. Myers	91
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	92
Mr. Myers	92
Mr. Thompson (Charlotte)	92

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Royal Canadian Legion

Mr. Pickard	92
-------------------	----

Fisheries

Mr. Duncan	92
------------------	----

Arts and Culture

Mr. Myers	92
-----------------	----

Centre des femmes de Laval

Mrs. Debien	93
-------------------	----

Royal Victoria Hospital

Ms. Carroll	93
-------------------	----

Dr. Tom Bolton

Mr. Wilfert	93
-------------------	----

Prostate Cancer

Mr. White (North Vancouver)	93
-----------------------------------	----

Cape Project

Mr. Charbonneau	94
-----------------------	----

World Maritime Week

Mr. Dubé (Lévis)	94
------------------------	----

Throne Speech

Ms. Folco	94
-----------------	----

Vancouver Kingsway

Ms. Leung	94
-----------------	----

British Columbia

Mr. Strahl	94
------------------	----

The Late Dudley George

Mr. Earle	95
-----------------	----

Osteoporosis

Mr. Assadourian	95
-----------------------	----

Income Taxes

Mr. Jones	95
-----------------	----

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

The Debt

Mr. Manning	95
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	96
Mr. Manning	96
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	96
Mr. Manning	96
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	96
Mr. Solberg	96
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	96
Mr. Solberg	96
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	96

Calgary Declaration

Mr. Duceppe	97
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	97
Mr. Duceppe	97
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	97
Mr. Brien	97
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	97
Mr. Brien	97
Mr. Brien	97
Mr. Dion	98

Fisheries

Ms. McDonough	98
Mr. Anderson	98
Ms. McDonough	98
Mr. Anderson	98

Trade

Mr. Charest	98
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	98
Mr. Charest	99
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	99

Canada Post

Mr. Gouk	99
Mr. MacAulay	99
Mr. Gouk	99
Mr. MacAulay	99

Calgary Declaration

Mr. Gauthier	99
Mr. Dion	99
Mr. Gauthier	99
Mr. Dion	99

Canada Pension Plan

Mrs. Ablonczy	99
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	99
Mrs. Ablonczy	100
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	100

Calgary Declaration

Mrs. Tremblay	100
Mr. Dion	100
Mr. Duceppe	100
Mr. Bellehumeur	100
Mr. Dion	100
Mr. Dion	100
Mrs. Tremblay	100
Mr. Dion	100
Mr. Dion	100

Immigration

Mr. Reynolds	100
Mrs. Robillard	101

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