



# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 133

NUMBER 005

1st SESSION

35th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, January 21, 1994**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, January 21, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from January 20 consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and the amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before giving the floor to the President of the Treasury Board, I would like to read a very brief statement.

Members will be aware that Telesat Canada has encountered major technical difficulties with the Anik E2 satellite. That is the satellite that is used by the cable parliamentary channel, as members will know, to distribute our proceedings across the country. I would therefore advise hon. members that until further notice there will be no national distribution of these proceedings. Members will be advised when this is rectified which hopefully will be soon.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure):** Mr. Speaker, now I guess we can relax a little more.

I want to begin by congratulating the Speaker on his election. May I also, in addition to congratulating him, congratulate you and your colleagues who will assist him in that capacity.

I want to go beyond that. For my part I want to pledge that I will do all I can to assist you, Mr. Speaker, in ensuring that this House provides the forum for civilized and informative debate that Canadians I think are really expecting from their elected representatives.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, I cannot make my speech in French, because my fluency in that language is far from adequate. However, I can assure you one of my personal goals is to improve my French,

not only because it is the other official language but because it is a beautiful language and the expression of a rich and important culture, both in Canada and internationally.

[*English*]

This is my inaugural address to the House. Therefore while preparing for today's debate I spent some time thinking about the men and women who preceded me in this place. For new members like myself there are many excellent role models to choose from. In fact there are people who now serve and who used to serve in this House whose compassion, persuasiveness and original thinking I admire a great deal. One such person is my predecessor the former member of Parliament for York Centre and a former Solicitor General for Canada, the Hon. Bob Kaplan. Bob Kaplan was an outstanding parliamentarian, a respected community leader and a man who is still highly regarded by his constituents. During the course of the election campaign I was struck by the degree of attachment and devotion people felt for him. Bob set a very high standard of service to his constituents and one that I will try to emulate.

(1005)

While I am new to this House and to politics at the national level, I arrive here with the perspective of 22 years experience in municipal government, including 11 years as the mayor of Toronto. It was an honour to be mayor of my city and now I have the honour to use that experience for the benefit of the people of York Centre and the people of Canada. It was also that experience that persuaded me of the need for Canada's three levels of government to address the need to enhance the quantity and the quality of infrastructure in our cities, towns and villages.

I was a member of the board of directors of the umbrella organization known as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities during the period when it undertook a major survey of the state of our municipal infrastructure, a survey which demonstrated the extent of our need for new investment.

I was one of those who helped the federation shape its proposal for a new three way program of co-operation between the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government to renew Canada's municipal infrastructure.

The work of the federation did not take place in a vacuum. Throughout the industrialized world the last few years have seen a very active, renewed interest in the role and the importance of infrastructure, whether it is for economic competitiveness to attract investment, environmental protection and improvement, the quality of public amenities and the quality of life in general.

*The Address*

For these reasons and despite extremely difficult fiscal constraints which we are well aware of, the Liberal Party chose to undertake a major co-operative program of infrastructure renewal as one of the central planks of its election platform.

In my riding many people earn their living in construction related industries. During the recent election campaign our leader and current Prime Minister travelled to York Centre to outline our new program on infrastructure to an audience of skilled trades people from our local unions. These union officials report that their membership suffers greatly from high unemployment. In fact, levels get as high as 50 per cent at times in this industry in the Toronto area they told me. Our proposal, therefore, struck a deep responsive chord with these workers and with the Canadian public.

Given the importance which the Prime Minister attaches to the infrastructure program I was honoured when he asked me to become the Minister responsible for Infrastructure in the new government. The Prime Minister underlined to me the importance of moving quickly to develop agreements with the provinces and to get the program up and operating. An early start to this program will provide new hope to Canadians and help to rebuild the confidence that is such an important part of our healthy economy.

Some Canadians are asking why we have chosen infrastructure as a major priority and why are we doing this now. The answer is that the infrastructure program has become a cornerstone of the government's programs because it will create jobs while refurbishing at the same time Canada's infrastructure and promoting our long term economic growth.

(1010)

There is also strong evidence that much of our infrastructure has deteriorated and deteriorating infrastructure, as they found out in the country to the south of us, can be a serious detriment to not only the quality of life but, of course, to attracting investment dollars into their communities.

Beyond that, the current tough economic climate has brought more competitive pricing and it provides, therefore, government with a chance to stretch the construction dollars to the maximum. This promises real value for the taxpayers.

The infrastructure program has not been designed as the government's only job creation project, I hasten to add, but rather as an important stimulus to the economy as a whole. The exact number of jobs it will create depends on the construction projects which will be approved. Some projects such as repairs and renovations will be extremely labour-intensive while those such as cultural facilities are also going to create long-term jobs.

One thing, however, is clear: The program will have substantial impact on unemployment. In fact, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has estimated that for every billion dollars invested, some 20,000 jobs are created. The infrastructure program is more than simply the building of roads, the building of bridges or sewers. It is more than repairing buildings, more than restoring water supply systems. The infrastructure program is an integral part of the vision of the new Liberal government to lay the foundation for economic recovery, to kick-start a sluggish economy and provide a future for Canadians, particularly for young Canadians who are currently without hope or prospects.

We will give these young Canadians new hope and confidence in the future. That is what we said we would do in the red book and that is still our commitment now that we are here as the government.

This is an ideal time for accelerated investment in public infrastructure, as I have already said. Also, let me say that national unemployment, which stands at an unacceptable level of over 11 per cent and in the construction industry over 20 per cent, and as I said a few moments ago over 50 per cent, are very key reasons why we need to move into this program at this time.

There is a terrible waste of human talent and a tremendous distress on the part of hundreds of thousands of people and their families right across this country. I met many of these people in the course of the election campaign. I understand their pain and I understand their frustration at what has been called a jobless recovery. That is why the speech from the throne earlier this week stated: "the government attaches the highest priority to job creation and economic growth in the short and long term".

I am pleased to say that in the brief few weeks since the new government was sworn in we have made very tangible progress to put this new infrastructure program into place. After discussions between federal and provincial ministers and various officials, the Prime Minister and the provincial premiers endorsed the program when they came here to Ottawa for their meeting on December 21. Last Friday, January 14, less than 10 weeks after the new government was formed, we signed our first four federal-provincial framework agreements establishing the Canada Infrastructure Works Program for the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

My colleagues, the Minister responsible for Atlantic Development and the Secretary of State for Veterans Affairs, are signing an agreement today with Prince Edward Island and we will continue this momentum on Monday when the Minister of Industry and I will be in my city of Toronto to sign a similar agreement with the province of Ontario. I expect to sign agreements with the other four provinces and the territories in a matter of days.

*The Address*

The conclusion of this number of federal-provincial agreements in so short a time demonstrates that the federal government is honouring its commitment to Canadians to create jobs and to create jobs now.

Our success owes a good deal to the very co-operative attitude taken by all of the provincial governments. They have recognized the intrinsic merit of the program, they have responded to the public's desire for early action, and have shown a determination to demonstrate that federal and provincial governments can work quickly and co-operatively. I wish to express publicly my gratitude for the exceptional co-operation of the provinces on this program.

I also wish to underline the importance of the support this program has received from mayors and other elected representatives at the local level across Canada. They have been supportive, they have been enthusiastic, they are very much equal partners. I am delighted that the federal government will be able to contribute so significantly to a program that our local governments have created and have advocated for a number of years.

(1015)

The federal contribution will be very tangible and very significant. We are providing the provinces and municipalities with a total of \$2 billion over the next two years. For the most part the federal contribution will be matched equally by the provinces and municipalities. This will provide for a total joint program of \$6 billion.

In some projects however the provinces themselves will provide two-thirds of the funding, while the federal government will contribute its normal one-third share.

Similarly the program will have flexibility to accommodate private financing. In fact the subject of my address in November 1993 to the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships opened the door for possible private financing of infrastructure projects.

The focus of our program is on local infrastructure and we believe that it should be the local and provincial governments themselves which take the lead in proposing projects. There will be, as is natural, differences in the precise form that the program will take in each province. In some cases only municipal projects will be considered; in others, other local government institutions such as education boards may be eligible, or there might be projects carried out by the province itself. Indian reserves are also included in the program.

As well the emphasis on types of infrastructure may vary by province. Some will put more emphasis on the traditional water treatment or sewage. Others may be more inclined to support roads or construction or repair of existing facilities. These variations should reflect local needs and priorities. That is what

we clearly said in the election campaign and that is what we want to see carried out.

We should also point out that this is a national program and we expect some elements of consistency across the country. In all provinces the federal government will review projects in relation to broad program criteria such as long and short-term job creation.

We will be looking at the environmental benefits, wanting to ensure that environmental practices and environmental assessments are adhered to. We will be looking at the incremental or accelerated nature of the project. We are not looking to just fund projects that were going to go ahead anyway. We want to fund projects that create additional jobs.

We will be looking at the distribution of benefits within a province. We want to make sure there is a wide distribution in benefit across each province. We will be looking at the use of advanced technology. The term as to what infrastructure includes is changing because the economy of this country and of this world is changing. Here is an opportunity in fact to develop infrastructure, invest in infrastructure that has to do with the future kinds of jobs that will be taken by our young people in this country.

We will look at the use of innovative financing and the contributions to skills development. As people learn new skills the opportunities for them beyond this program expand. The bringing of infrastructure up to community standards, up to community codes will be considered. We will want cost-benefit information about these projects. We are also going to want to have cost control measures.

Our basic approach is to provide enough guidance to ensure the high quality of the projects approved, but at the same time to leave ample room for local or provincial priorities. We are offering federal money for infrastructure programs as you know at a time of very severe fiscal constraints. We all are very conscious of the financial constraints upon all governments in this country.

This government believes so much in the value of this investment that it is prepared to take the tough decisions to find the necessary funds through reallocations in the federal budget and by cutting spending proposed by the previous government.

The federal government, I should add, may well recoup much of its \$2 billion investment from additional tax revenues which will fall into the federal treasury as a result of increased construction activity. For every dollar spent on the proposed construction projects, federal government revenues in the form of taxes, unemployment insurance premiums and Canada pension plan contributions will increase. The federal government of course will also benefit from reductions in payments that it makes for the unemployed because they will be getting back to work. They will be able to restore their dignity and their desire to contribute to this nation.

*The Address*

We moved quickly to sign framework agreements with the provinces and we shall move quickly to approve projects after we have appropriately evaluated them. Already federal and provincial officials in each province are working to refine the criteria and the guidelines which apply in each province. Local governments are being consulted. I expect to receive recommendations for the first proposals in the coming weeks and to see some projects approved in time for work to start in the spring of this year.

(1020)

I know members of this House will take a close interest in the projects in their constituencies. For this reason we shall invite comments from each member of Parliament on projects recommended for his or her riding so that we can ensure that any information a member wishes to bring to our attention is available before a decision is taken.

I look forward to members honouring the spirit of this consultation which will need to be done quickly and with full respect of our local and provincial partners if it is to be effective. For my part I shall listen to the views of all members with great interest. I look forward to the chance to discuss the program with individual members as well.

The infrastructure program has received wide support across Canada not only from local governments but also from provincial governments, of very different political persuasions I might add. I hope members of this House will be responsive to this wide support and work as co-operatively as they can to ensure the success of the program.

The Prime Minister in his remarks in the debate on the speech from the throne emphasized that the long-term future of our country lies in forming a new partnership, a partnership where the municipalities and the provinces work in genuine co-operation with a national government which has the vision of what can be, not what used to be.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the minister on his infrastructure program which is to be launched very soon, witness the announcement concerning construction of the convention centre in Quebec City.

I represent the riding of Chicoutimi, which includes the municipalities of Rivière-Éternité, Petit-Saguenay, L'Anse-Saint-Jean, Saint-Félix-d'Otis, Ferland-et-Boileau, Ville La Baie and Chicoutimi. The unemployment situation in all these municipalities is very bad. In the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area, the unemployment rate is an unacceptable 16 per cent, and there is nothing in the throne speech to indicate that this percentage will go down.

This government's infrastructures program will certainly not be enough to turn around the economy, either in the riding, Quebec or Canada. We must break the vicious circle of unemployment insurance which means that people work four months a year on a government project and then are unemployed for the rest of the year. If they are lucky, after using up their unemployment insurance benefits they might qualify for another government project, but that is it, and then they end up on welfare, which makes it even harder to get back to work.

Economic recovery must be achieved through regional development by giving the regions all the infrastructures they need, not just the road networks covered by your program but infrastructures for water and air transportation which provide links between the regions and give them access to major urban centres.

(1025)

**Mr. Speaker,** in addition to the infrastructures program, could the minister confirm there have been cabinet-level discussions on other programs aimed at a sustainable reduction of the unemployment rate, which the government will be tabling very shortly?

*[English]*

**Mr. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and also for enlightening me with respect to the conditions in his constituency of Chicoutimi and other municipalities.

I hope this infrastructure program will be of benefit to them. I hope certainly that the municipal leaders are encouraged by the member to put forward projects that can be of benefit to the communities and economy of the region.

As I indicated in my remarks, the government has put this forward as one of its programs and projects that it wants to use to help rebuild the economy and get Canadians back to work.

There are discussions going on on many other types of programs. One has to only look in the red book to see the many different things for young people, for people right across this country, for small business.

We want to promote and help ensure that Canadians can get back to work. What we need badly in this country is a more balanced approach to economic planning. That is what the Liberal government has committed itself to do. It committed itself in the throne speech to give the highest priority to getting Canadians back to work.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, clearly this infrastructure project has created tremendous expectations and this was obvious from the general reaction of the municipalities. In his speech, the minister outlined ten or so conditions that will have to be met by all provinces in order for the program to be successful. He spoke of the need for cost

*The Address*

control mechanisms, while allowing some room to manoeuvre. Could the Minister explain what kind of national criteria he has in mind for controlling costs while still allowing third parties some room to manoeuvre?

[English]

**Mr. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, this program is a co-operative program with three levels of government. Each project will require each level of government to sign off on it.

Each level of government has a responsibility also to ensure that the taxpayer's dollar is well spent. I do not think any level of government wants to get into a situation of cost overruns. We want to make sure that there are cost control mechanisms in place. Each level of government has internal auditing procedures and controllership procedures that help to ensure that the best cost estimates are being put forward.

We will have a still further look at it even though the provincial and municipal governments with their very restrained budgets are going to want to make sure that those costs are as accurate as they can be. We are going to want to make sure as well because I want this program to be carried out in an efficient and effective manner. I want it to produce good results. I do not want people to have to face a situation where there are going to be cost overruns.

We will look at cost controls and cost benefits, understanding the benefits that come out at the end of the day. One of the things we said in the red book was that we want to know what these programs produce. What are the results? What are they really going to do for Canadians in the short and long term? Those kinds of evaluations are also part and parcel of what we will be looking at.

Three orders of government will be working together, giving consideration to the fiscal constraints we find ourselves in and the very serious nature of how the taxpayer's dollar is used.

(1030)

[Translation]

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, as this is my maiden speech, I would like to begin by saying a few words about my riding of Louis-Hébert. It includes three lovely suburban municipalities in the Quebec City area, namely Cap-Rouge, Sainte-Foy and Sillery, located on the shores of the St. Lawrence.

I listened closely to the remarks of the hon. member for York Centre concerning the infrastructure program and I would like to make a few comments. My first concerns the spirit of co-operation to which the Minister referred. I am very happy that the federal, provincial and municipal governments are co-operating.

This is good to see, except that given the current situation, it illustrates the weak position of the federal government, in view of the size of the debt and runaway government expenses. When the federal government wants to carry out a project, it must work side by side with the municipalities—which in itself is a good thing—and with the provinces. This only reflects the serious state of the government's finances.

The hon. member for York Centre indicated—and I am happy to hear it—that this is not the only job creation program. We will, however, be paying close attention to concrete programs announced later.

The Minister said that the infrastructure program will kick-start the economy. Economic recovery will be difficult, if not impossible, until such time as the government takes serious, radical steps to slash government spending. And there is nothing in the throne speech to indicate that the government intends to take this kind of action.

[English]

**Mr. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I would quickly point out that this is a great example of bringing three levels of government to work together. Is it not about time that we did that rather than have the duplications? We may have three levels of government but we have one taxpayer and that taxpayer wants to make sure we are spending his or her money efficiently and effectively.

That taxpayer is also concerned about government expenditure. Indeed, that is an issue that is also being addressed by the Minister of Finance, by me and by my colleagues in the cabinet and will of course be addressed in the federal budget when it is brought forward.

However, at this point in time we are entering into a program that is unprecedented in terms of the co-operation. It is also a program that is based on local priorities and the need to keep our communities safe and liveable, have the kind of infrastructure to enjoy a quality of life that has been traditionally held dear and which will attract additional investment to improve their economic growth.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by taking this opportunity to congratulate all my colleagues who were elected to the House of Commons on October 25, in an election which must be seen as crucial for the future of Quebec and that of Canada without Quebec.

I also take this opportunity to thank the constituents of the great riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, the Quebec agri-food technicity, for the trust they have shown in me by giving me a clear dual mandate: first, to fight most vigorously to protect their interests and those of Quebec as a whole and, second, to pave the way for Quebec to attain full sovereignty to put to rest once and for all the constitutional issue.

*The Address*

Quebec sovereignty is no longer a mere matter of the heart or patriotism. It has become a matter of practicality.

(1035)

Following the constitutional negotiations of recent years, sovereignty has emerged as the only way to allow our two nations to stop arguing endlessly about the Constitution and start dealing with the real issues.

What are those real issues? First, to undo the harm done by overly liberal budgeting in recent years, especially at the federal level. Second, to promote economic development and competitiveness. Third, to create lasting employment. And fourth, to really tackle the problem of growing poverty in Quebec and Canada.

Let us say, for the sake of argument, that a beneficial restructuring of the relations between Quebec and Canada did occur, such that we would end up with two sovereign countries. Their relations would then be free of any constitutional dispute and a common economic space would be maintained out of mutual interest, not as a favour, as the other side usually says.

That is what the sovereignty plan is all about. It is directed against no one, especially not our Canadians friends. Our plan has a resolutely global reach. It is legitimate, progressive, open and totally in tune with the times.

Until the people of Quebec decide democratically to take their destiny into their own hands, the Bloc Québécois has received from them the mandate to protect their interests. And whether you like it or not, the Canadian democratic process has given us the role of official opposition in this chamber of Parliament.

As my leader has repeatedly said, the Bloc Québécois will assume the role of Official Opposition with all the fervour we have come to expect from it, especially in the last four days, because the fight against poverty and unemployment, for example, is universal. Whether you are a federalist or a sovereignist, you must fight these evils.

Equity also has a universal definition and the Bloc Québécois will act on the basis of this concern for fairness. For Quebec first of all, because the inequity in federal spending is most flagrant in its case, and elsewhere if required.

Mr. Speaker, you will understand that, as the Official Opposition, we will often be working towards the Bloc Québécois's ultimate goal, which is to pave the way for sovereignty for Quebec.

Where public finances are concerned, no one in Quebec or Canada has any interest in seeing the already catastrophic state of the federal government's finances deteriorate further. Canada and a sovereign Quebec will have to assume their share of the federal debt.

The same goes for international trade. It is definitely in Quebec's interest, beginning with Quebec's duly elected representatives in the Bloc Québécois, to ensure that the international agreements recently concluded in its name are beneficial. Under the rule for successor states, a sovereign Quebec would inherit the commitments already made by Canada.

So in these two specific areas, public finances and international trade, we have seen recently that both Quebecers and Canadians really need a vigorous official opposition.

Quebecers and Canadians need a strong opposition because the federal government, the present Liberal government, intends to solve the Canadian government's financial problem using the same approach that it criticized the previous government for, namely putting the burden of fiscal reform on the poorest members of our society. As my leader said, that is unacceptable.

Modernizing and restructuring the social security system as suggested in the speech from the throne, knowing that this reform comes from the same senior civil servants, these great mandarins, one of whom has now become the new member for Hull—Aylmer, these great mandarins praised to the skies by this government, such a reform simply means cutting social programs.

We see the same sinister intent in a publication on Canada's economic challenges issued last week by the Minister of Finance. What do we find in this new bible of the federal mandarins? We read that Canada spends more on social assistance than its major trading partners. It says that our unemployment insurance system is more generous than average and creates major disincentives to work. Major disincentives to work—I find that downright odious.

(1040)

This is despicable because, as the Leader of the Official Opposition said two days ago, nobody goes to the unemployment office for the fun of it. Nobody in Quebec, as in the rest of Canada, is proud to be unemployed or on welfare. And everybody wants to enjoy the fundamental right to work. When I read this document and the recent statements made by our friends across the floor, I get the impression that I am reading old stuff written a century ago by ultraconservative economists.

This document from the Department of Finance also mentions that our public expenditures related to health care are higher than others, without noticeable results. I was flabbergasted to see this kind of statement in the Department of Finance's document, because those are precisely the people who, not long ago, were saying that our health care system was the best and the cheapest in the world. Now they are contradicting themselves and, because they want to please some ultraconservative economists met recently at a seminar, they are prepared to make cuts to health care programs.

*The Address*

We can now better understand the meaning of the comments made last December by the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer, who is himself a former mandarin, and who alluded to the possibility of a 20 per cent cut in the health care budget. We can also better understand the meaning of the throne speech.

I am absolutely flabbergasted to see that, in less than three months, this government has violated the basic principles underlying its electoral platform. This government was elected on the basis of false premises regarding, among others things, social programs. It has also reneged on its monetary policy. We now know only too well what has become of the promises made by the Liberals. Shortly before the Christmas holidays, the Minister of Finance appointed Mr. John Crow's successor, namely his assistant and advisor regarding monetary policy who is also obsessed with fighting inflation.

It must be remembered that, among the G-7 countries, Canada was the most adversely affected by the recession of the early nineties. Canada was also the first one affected among the industrialized nations of the world. Why is that? It is precisely because of this obsession with fighting inflation regardless of the consequences on employment and on jobs in general.

Today, even though inflation pressures are still weak, and while Quebec has only gained back a quarter of the jobs it lost and the economy has not reached its full potential, the Liberal government is refocusing its monetary policy to fight inflation instead of aiming for a fair balance between price stability in the long run and employment growth in the short run. These same people are now telling us that with their infrastructure program, they will be able to create thousands and thousands of jobs. Contradictory measures like this infrastructure program only go to show the inconsistencies in the Liberals' policies.

Such policies are contrary to what the Liberals talked about during the election campaign and even before that, when they were the official opposition in this House.

Let me remind you that on November 26, 1992, both *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* quoted the present prime minister as saying: "For several months now, we have clearly indicated that we are proposing a growth policy based on low interest rates. And if the Canadian dollar should weaken, we can live with that". That is what the present Prime Minister had to say only two years ago. Today, he is doing exactly what he was blaming the Conservatives for. The present prime minister also said: "People are becoming obsessed with the anti-inflationary policy". Can you believe that. The Liberals themselves have developed an obsession for the same monetary policies they used to criticize.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Finance even said about the throne speech: "We will be worthy of the trust Canadians put in us". He mentioned that the speech from the throne would break

the vicious cycle of "cynicism and deception Canadians felt about politics".

This kind of approach, this kind of backtracking will not do anything to break the cynicism that exists towards the old federalist parties; it is there to stay.

And there will still be cynicism about the tax equity issue since nothing leads us to believe that the Liberals will do something about that despite having complained loudly about the unfairness of our tax system during all these years. The government does not have the political will to eliminate all the tax loopholes and all the tax breaks that some people benefit from. We always point to the same problem, and with good reason. Just as the Conservatives before them, the Liberals probably have their hands tied by Canada's richest families who contribute to their election fund.

(1045)

There are plenty of examples of unfairness and inequity in our tax system, Mr. Speaker. Here are some of them. In 1987, the most recent year for which this kind of data is available, 90,000 Canadian companies made profits totalling \$27 billion and paid no taxes at all. There is no in-depth study on this but in 1991, according to the Auditor General, a minimum of \$16.1 billion in revenues found their way to various tax havens. Hundreds of millions of dollars in federal tax revenues are lost through the family trusts which we talked about earlier this week.

Here is another example of unfairness and inequity in our tax system. In 1991, 368,000 taxpayers with a total declared income of \$60 billion, that is an average income of \$163,000 each, paid a federal income tax of only 18 per cent. That was their real tax rate because of all the tax loopholes. But isn't the basic rate 29 per cent, Mr. Speaker? This is shameful.

On the other hand, a certain Ms. Pauline came to my riding office last week. She is on welfare and her income is about half the poverty threshold in Quebec as well as Canada, and she received a letter from Revenue Canada asking her to pay her income tax like any other taxpayer. Mr. Speaker, that is nothing short of outrageous.

Two days ago, the Auditor General reported a number of cases of profligate spending and misuse of public money. I noticed two cases which are striking enough to demonstrate the urgent need for tax reform to achieve greater equity instead of wasting money.

Investment Canada spent \$132,000 to set up a new office, kitchen and bathroom for its new president, while her predecessor had an office in the same building with the same conveniences. Mr. Speaker, \$132,000 is the equivalent of the annual income of four households. It is utterly disgraceful. The Auditor General also pointed out that because of a loophole in a deduction concerning natural resources, the government lost \$1.2 billion in revenue, mainly in the oil and mining industries.



*The Address*

What is this government waiting for before they settle once and for all these problem that plague Quebec and Canada alike?

That is where we can find money to get the public finances in order. That is where we should go to reduce the revenue shortfall of the federal government, which over the years has generated an accumulated debt of over \$500 billion. These are the persons we should be after, not the less fortunate like Ms. Pauline in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

We should not cut transfer payments to the provinces either. When will those opposite realize that, in the end, it falls on the backs of the same taxpayers. I will give you just one example taken from the Quebec public accounts. All the measures taken since 1980 either to reduce or freeze transfer payments to the provinces have cost the government of Quebec over two billion dollars. Who had to provide for this shortfall in federal transfer payments to Quebec? The women and men of Quebec, of course, because they are the same taxpayers. All this to say that shifting the burden onto the provinces is not a way to improve the fiscal situation.

Given these shameful and odious fiscal inequities and the disastrous state of federal public finances, the Bloc Québécois reaffirms the need to proceed with a public examination by Parliament of all federal budgetary and tax expenditures. We do not want a media circus of unending consultations which would only postpone a necessary reform. We do not want piecemeal reform. We do not want a little something here and a little something there. We want an in-depth examination by Parliamentarians of federal fiscal policies and expenditures.

One last point before I conclude. There is another thing barely mentioned in the speech from the throne, and that is the GATT agreement. Instead of wasting his time arguing about impossible changes to the North American Free Trade Agreement, the way he did after the House of Representatives passed the NAFTA, the Prime Minister of Canada should have focused on the final sprint toward a GATT agreement. The Bloc Québécois welcomes the conclusion of the eighth GATT round, and I say this without reservations. The Bloc, like Quebecers generally, takes a global perspective, an attitude that is entirely compatible with nationalism and sovereignty, as I indicated at the beginning of my speech.

(1050)

However, although we welcome the conclusion of the Uruguay round, we are not satisfied with Canada's performance in this area, especially in the negotiations on agriculture, in the course of which article XI-2(c)(i) of the GATT rules, an article that was vital to agriculture in Quebec and Canada, was dropped.

This article was vital because it ensured the survival and effectiveness of the supply management system in Canada's dairy and poultry sectors. The Canadian government gave up this article without obtaining anything in return. That was the worst part, like the government's financial situation. Nothing was obtained in return, while countries like South Korea, Japan, the United States, France and Belgium privately obtained exemptions that were included in the eighth GATT Round.

Why did Canada not obtain an exemption? Because it failed to take a firm stand and because the Prime Minister, unlike Mr. Clinton in the United States, Mr. Mitterrand and the Japanese and South Korean prime ministers, did not get involved in the final sprint to protect article XI-2(c)(i) and the interests of Quebec and Canada in this area.

The Bloc Québécois does not blame the Canadian government for losing. These negotiations involve more than 110 countries, and it stands to reason that we cannot win on all fronts and might have to give up some of the items on our list. However, the Canadian government and the Prime Minister failed to do everything they could have done, which makes matters worse.

It is public knowledge that the Government of Canada is about to cave in once more and renege on its commitments in negotiations on the GATT rules with the United States. For instance, in negotiations with the United States on border tariffs that will replace article XI, the government is poised to make concessions on tariff levels that are supposed to protect the dairy and poultry sectors.

Unfortunately, the Canadian government has also caved in to unfounded rumours that U.S. borders would be closed to exports of durum wheat from the Canadian prairies.

In concluding, the Official Opposition deplores the lack of vigour shown by the government in defending the interests of Quebec and Canada and the lack of any concern in this respect in the throne speech at the opening of the 35th Parliament.

As the Official Opposition, the Bloc Québécois intends to keep a close watch on further developments.

[English]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his maiden speech in the House of Commons. There were moments as I listened to him speak when I was reminded of some of the things that we said in opposition just a few months ago. I would like to be very specific about that part of his speech that dealt with the issue of tax reform.

*The Address*

I want to say to the hon. member that the Prime Minister stated repeatedly before the campaign, during the campaign and during the speech from the throne that this government is dedicated to comprehensive tax reform. We are dedicated to working with all members of this House in finding a more simple, fair and efficient way of dealing with the tax issue in this country. We agree that the current tax act has tax preferences and privileges that need to be reviewed because the current system is not working.

(1055)

He should not think that because we have come from one side of the floor to the other we will run away from the issue. Many members know I have a particular bias in that area called the single tax, l'impôt unique, and I will be sending copies to him and his colleagues for review.

The second point I want to make to the member has to do with his statement where he said "we want to have a situation in Quebec where our financial condition does not deteriorate". I support the position the member has taken, but I think it is important to point out to all Canadians and all Quebecers that we have a system in this country, managed by the Government of Canada, called the equalization entitlement program.

As the member knows, the province of Quebec is at this moment in time a have not province, as are many other provinces. We do have three provinces that we define as have provinces; British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Since 1969 the equalization entitlement, and I stress the word entitlement here, by this federation, which is the total amount of that transfer to the province of Quebec, has been approximately \$52 billion. I support this approach and that is why I think it is important to have a strong national government. I will make sure that the member has time to respond.

What I am having a very difficult time understanding is how one can maintain the same standards in education, health care and all other national standards that all of us want to achieve when one gives up a situation called equalization.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, during the next few minutes, I will try to reply to two statements that struck me in the speech of my Liberal colleague. First, Mr. Speaker, he compared the Bloc Québécois, as the Official Opposition, to the Liberal Party when they were the Official Opposition. Let me remind him that he should not mix apples with oranges.

As the Official Opposition we have been saying right from the beginning that in the area of public finances we were reaching out to the government to make a democratic effort to launch a thorough review of all Canadian finances, not only budgetary expenditures, but also tax expenditures.

Instead, since the beginning of November, the Minister of Finance has gone through an endless round of consultations with economists and institutions here and there. In Quebec, we call that an acute case of consultationitis. It looks like a strange rerun of what we have known since the Meech failure with all the other constitutional conferences, forums and discussions. Remember the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, chaired by Mr. Keith Spicer, and the Beaudoin-Dobbie and Beaudoin-Edwards commissions. I feel the Minister of Finance wants to repeat the same scenario with budgetary and tax expenditures instead of implementing a real measure of—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Brant would also like to ask a question if the member agrees.

**Mr. Loubier:** Very well.

**The Deputy Speaker:** As we have but 90 seconds left, I would ask the hon. member for Brant to be very brief, please.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant):** Mr. Speaker, I felt compelled to respond to a couple of things that the hon. member mentioned in his speech.

First, I believe he said that we as Liberals talked about our health care system as being the best and the least costly. Yes, we did talk about it as being the best but certainly not the least costly. Our position was that we spend a tremendous amount of money on our health care system and our challenge is to make sure that we spend it effectively and wisely.

(1100)

Second, I would like to ask both the member and his leader a question. They have identified or they seem to believe that just because we wish to change, improve and make more relevant the social safety net we have here in Canada that we will necessarily make it more difficult for those less advantaged. I ask the hon. member why he assumes that is in fact so.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is not opposed to improvements to the health system. That is not the point. The point is that every time fiscal restraint is being considered, health care and social services are prime targets. That is absolutely disgusting, totally unacceptable. The Canadian system is among the least expensive in the world. Just remember how it stood the comparison with the American system. You too made that comparison, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals did it also in the past, comparing it to the health coverage provided by the private system in the States where there is no public health care. I do not remember the exact numbers but it was very clear that the Canadian system was among the most efficient and the least expensive in the world.

*S. O. 31*

Every time there is talk of fiscal reform, of tackling the debt or the annual deficit, the main targets, the first ones to be singled out are health care and social services. Let us not forget that since 1990, the most vulnerable members of society have grown in number. Unemployment is on the rise. Job creation is not picking up; unemployed workers are losing hope and joining the ranks of the non-working population on welfare; their number is increasing in Quebec and throughout Canada. Let us not forget that. There is a way to get the public finances in order—

[English]

**The Speaker:** Order. It being eleven o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### NATIONAL DEBT

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's national debt surpassed one-half trillion dollars earlier this week. This milestone will be a millstone around our necks if we do not change our attitude now. Our children's quality of life depends on it. How can any of us, with clear conscience, expect future generations to pay for the mistakes of the past?

This new government fully intends to slay the beast of debt. Only then can our children make up their own minds as to where their money will be spent.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, in the report he tabled on Wednesday, the Auditor General regrets that the government denies access to information on ministers' travel expenses. Because of this, the public accounts committee is not adequately assured that such information is accurately disclosed to Parliament. And we are not talking about small amounts. For fiscal year 1990-91, the Auditor General estimates the cost of using the administrative flight service to \$54 million, including some \$25 million for ministers' travel expenses.

And as the Auditor General puts it, and I quote: "The government should conduct a review of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of providing government aircraft to transport such users."

This is a clear example of the need to create a parliamentary committee to examine spending programs, item by item.

Thus, I demand that the Liberal government stop dithering and show openness and put such a program in place.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PEACEKEEPING

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform caucus wishes to acknowledge the help it has received in its preparation for the very necessary and welcome debate on peacekeeping next Tuesday in this Chamber.

The hon. ministers of foreign affairs and defence and their departmental personnel were very forthcoming with briefing assistance, as was the Library of Parliament.

Yesterday we were briefed by Major General Lewis MacKenzie, retired, through his own generosity. While General MacKenzie does not have any magic solutions to this very convoluted problem in the troubled area of the former Yugoslavia, he nevertheless provided us with many helpful insights.

(1105)

We would like to go on record as saying that Canada is fortunate to have peacekeepers of General MacKenzie's stature.

\* \* \*

### CARBON DIOXIDE REDUCTION

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, on page 70 of the red book you will find: "A Liberal government will work with provincial and urban governments to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energies with the aim of cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent from 1988 levels by the year 2005".

We made this firm commitment in the last election. If we are to reduce carbon dioxide emissions we will have to marshal all available technology, the goodwill of all levels of government and the co-operation of industry, business and Canadians at large.

Canada has to pull its weight in the international community. The reduction of carbon dioxide is a concern of the international community. The Government of Canada has a big task to perform. Time is of the essence.

S. O. 31

**GEORGINA ICE FISHING DERBY**

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, the annual Georgina ice fishing derby opened last week in the town of Georgina. I invite everyone in the House to visit the fishing huts on Lake Simcoe.

The Georgina ice fishing derby is a wonderful example of how community groups, local businesses and town council can all work together for the benefit of their community. Last year people from all over Ontario, Canada, the United States and as far away as Europe participated in this annual event, generating valuable tourist dollars.

This event increases awareness and appreciation of the environmental and commercial value of this beautiful lake. Lake Simcoe is worth more than \$500 million annually to the economy. This translates into thousands of jobs that could be at risk if we fail to save this lake.

I urge all levels of government to work together to ensure the health and future viability of Lake Simcoe.

\* \* \*

**GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers have reluctantly accepted that it was impossible for the government to save article XI at the recent GATT negotiations. They are aware that Canada stood virtually alone on this issue. Also they realize that we inherited an untenable position from the previous government and they know that we fought as hard as we possibly could to save article XI.

Given that reality, they now expect this new government will be firm on tariff levels and that it will not cave in to bullying tactics by the United States or any other country. They look to us to champion their cause and not to cave in to these countries.

As the member of Parliament for London—Middlesex I intend to fight for my constituents today and every day. I am confident that this government will not let Canadian farmers down.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CIGARETTE SMUGGLING**

**M. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my astonishment at the persisting inaction of the government with regard to cigarette smuggling. Obviously the adverse effects of this situation are serious.

First of all, the government is losing hundreds of billions of dollars in taxes.

Second, Canadians feel more and more that a segment of the population is above the law. Respect for public authority is being threatened.

Third, tobacco smoking is not being curtailed since smokers can easily get cigarettes at a lower price than if they were reasonably taxed.

Fourth, business people are getting outraged by this. In fact, we are facing a tax revolt.

The demonstration planned for next Monday by the MATRAQUE movement in Saint-Eustache in my riding could be repeated if Ottawa does not take any action.

The premier of Quebec has already made it clear that he intended to lower taxes on cigarettes and asked the federal government and the government of Ontario to do the same. Ontario has indicated an openness to that proposal.

Reduction of taxes on cigarettes is the most effective way of rapidly eliminating this problem.

\* \* \*

[English]

**LITERACY**

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in this place to imagine life without the ability to read. Books, magazines and newspapers become mysterious puzzles rather than open doors to the world. Try to imagine the frustration and sense of hopelessness.

In the speech from the throne our government made a commitment to improving the literacy skills of Canadians by restoring funding to the national literacy program. I applaud this decision.

Inadequate literacy skills can have devastating effects. Thousands of Canadians find themselves unable to fully participate in society and Canada's ability to train its work force to compete internationally is compromised.

(1110)

An effort must be made to adapt all of the workforce to the changing workplace. This includes those who have been left behind.

In my riding of Algoma, literacy offices have been successfully established in Blind River, Espanola and Elliot Lake. The staff and volunteers who work in these communities understand the frustration felt by our fellow citizens who cannot read and I commend their efforts.

During my life I have had an opportunity to work in adult education. It is too easy to forget that thousands of adult Canadians cannot take full advantage of basic retraining and upgrading because they cannot read.

*S. O. 31*

### MANITOBA HVDC RESEARCH CENTRE

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw to the attention of the House four Canadians: Rudy Wierckx, James Giesbrecht, Trevor Maguire and Rick Kuffel.

These four graduates of the University of Manitoba have successfully designed, built and now commercialized a 10 gigaflop supercomputer that is being sold in Japan, Korea, India, China and the U.K.

What is remarkable is that this supercomputer is being built not in the Silicon Valley, not in Tokyo, nor in Seoul, but at 1619 Pembina Highway in the heart of my constituency of Winnipeg South.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CIGARETTE SMUGGLING

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean):** Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of native people are peaceful citizens who are willing to negotiate in a spirit of respect for the law and have always been respectful of law and order.

Cigarette smuggling is often wrongfully attributed to native peoples while we know that it is controlled by a bunch of criminals who base their power on armed threats.

The main difficulty then is the undeniable fact that the government is covering before a few armed individuals and abandoning its major role of ensuring the protection of all Canadians.

Cigarette smuggling exists because taxes are so high that the black market is flourishing. We believe that raising fines and imposing more controls will not solve the problem.

\* \* \*

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report reminded us that successive federal governments' tax policy has resulted in a tax regime that is now recognized by all to be unfair, unjust, biased, distorted, confusing, convoluted and discriminatory.

Having completely lost faith in the tax system, Canadians' responses include tens of thousands of businesses collecting the GST and simply keeping the money, hundreds of thousands of Canadians purchasing contraband cigarettes and illegal liquor, and perhaps most Canadians participating in the growing under-

ground economy where business transactions are conducted in cash or through barter to avoid paying tax.

This system has created a nation where millions of Canadians now consciously and regularly break the law. This has led to a serious erosion of our value system.

There are many reasons to clean up our tax system and to restore Canadians' faith in it. But surely what it is doing to our nation's value system ought to make reform of our tax system a major priority in the upcoming federal budget.

\* \* \*

### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's):** Mr. Speaker, 1.5 million Canadians are unemployed, including 400,000 young people. They are not too lazy to go to work; there is just no work to go to. That is why the Liberal Party during the election proposed the infrastructure program, both as a job generator and as a way of upgrading transportation and local services.

I am pleased that the government is moving so quickly to keep that promise. There is an agreement to be signed today. Some agreements have been signed and others are in the works. That is good news for municipalities, but it is great news for the jobless.

The infrastructure program will not by itself solve all our economic woes, but it is a great start.

\* \* \*

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce):** Mr. Speaker, first I am proud and honoured at the opportunity to represent the constituents of Huron—Bruce in the 35th Parliament of Canada.

I want to congratulate the Prime Minister on his first throne speech where the priority is on putting Canadians back to work from east to west and north to south and not on the Constitution.

The Prime Minister has shown Canadians his commitment to the promises he made during the election. I was pleased to see included in the throne speech a statement on our continued commitment to work with financial institutions to improve access to capital for such businesses.

I am sure all will agree with me that capital is the lifeblood of all small and medium sized businesses. Canada has an abundance of entrepreneurial talent and innovation. Therefore it must be our role as a government to ensure that businesses can unleash this talent by providing them with access to capital. Without this access Canadian small and medium sized businesses will not be able to compete globally, and therefore will not be able to create jobs for skilled, hard-working Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

(1115)

**ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** I wish to extend my thanks to the people of Nepean for again placing their trust and confidence in me.

Many of the major issues presented to me during the campaign have already been implemented by my government. Employment and job creation was the number one issue. Where would people find jobs? How would they be created? What does the future hold for secondary and post-secondary graduates? There was also job security for public servants and women and pay equity.

I heard about over-taxation and that deficit reduction must be achieved through a means other than tax increases. I heard from mothers at home who believe they are unfairly treated in Canada's taxation policies compared to mothers who work. I heard from the business community and the high cost of doing business due to overtaxation, a crippling GST and unresponsive and uncaring banks.

The government of Jean Chrétien places honesty and integrity as one of its highest priorities and it is a privilege for me to serve in this government. Again, my thanks to the people of Nepean.

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*[Translation]***PRO-EST GROUP OF MONTREAL**

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the efficient work done by members of the Pro-Est Group from Montreal, namely Mr. Jean-Guy Chaput and Mrs. Line Beauchamps.

Pro-Est is a socioeconomic promotion and consultation group in the east end of Montreal. It is formed of representatives of the main socioeconomic sectors of activity. Its mandate is to promote the control by locals of socio-economic development in the east end of Montreal. For that purpose, the group encourages dialogue between the various decision-makers in order to create the optimal conditions for permitting local interests to take charge of their socioeconomic development.

Pro-Est is in its fifth year of activity. I wish the organization a prosperous future and I congratulate it for its efficient work with citizens of the east end of Montreal.

\* \* \*

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to extend my congratulations to you and assure you of my full co-operation. I take this opportunity to congratulate also all

the women who were elected as members of the House of Commons on October 25. As female members we must join ranks in matters concerning the status of women.

We know among other things that a lot of women are experiencing housing problems, whether they be single, heads of household, single mothers or retired. At the end of each month, some needy households must cut down on food and clothing in order to pay the rent. What are we waiting for? In a society like ours, it is completely unacceptable to delay helping women in need.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***CIGARETTE SMUGGLING**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday in this House, the Minister of Finance said that lower cigarette taxes could be considered if the Government of Quebec and other governments, a majority of the governments concerned, agreed to it. Yesterday, the Government of Ontario said that it was open to such a possibility.

My question is for the Prime Minister. In light of the Quebec Premier's urgent request and of the openness shown by the Government of Ontario, can the Prime Minister tell us if he is prepared to review his government's position on this subject?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I said that we were discussing it with the provinces at this time. The Minister of Finance has met his provincial counterparts. I am glad to see that the Government of Ontario has taken a position.

Basically some details remain to be discussed and I hope there will be some movement but some provincial finance ministers said that they did not agree. The Minister of Finance is discussing this problem now and, as I said, we want to take the necessary action to end cigarette smuggling which is costing Canadians a tremendous amount of money and giving the impression that people can live in Canada without obeying the law of the land. We will act to enforce this country's laws.

(1120)

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister realize that his hesitation is the main reason for the growing revolt among Quebec convenience store owners?

**The Speaker:** Order. It is not allowed to show anything in the House. It is a small matter, but I know that you want to respect tradition.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, yes, I respect tradition and I will repeat my question so that everyone understands it clearly.

Does the Prime Minister of Canada realize that his hesitation on this issue is the main reason for the revolt of convenience store owners in Quebec which is growing considerably and assuming disturbing proportions?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it is a little surprising that I should have to rise in this House and say that I respect the different jurisdictions in Canada, that there is a federal government and provincial governments and that I do not want to act unilaterally. I am being criticized for not being firm enough and not imposing decisions on the provincial governments. If the member for Roberval is suggesting to the Prime Minister and the federalist that I am that the federal government should act unilaterally, that is very welcome from the member for Roberval. I will take note of it and use it on occasion.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's interpretation is very revealing and as a third question I will ask him this: Does the Prime Minister have such a short memory that he does not remember that this week the Premier of Quebec was urging him to act by lowering taxes and that yesterday the treasurer of Ontario followed suit and asked the Prime Minister to act to solve a problem which is creating a serious social crisis in Quebec?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that last night the Minister of Finance was discussing this problem with the provincial finance ministers so it is fresh in our minds. We were talking about it yesterday. I spoke about it in this House. We are developing a solution with the provincial governments and co-operation is required not only on taxation but also on policing; the Solicitor General has already met his colleagues or discussed this issue with them. This is an example of the federalism which this party advocates.

It may take a few days more but it is better to do it in harmony with everyone. If at some point the federal government must use all its powers and impose a solution on the provinces and if the Bloc Québécois asks the federal government to assert itself and ignore any objections from the provinces, well, perhaps we will do that.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of Indian affairs made a rather surprising comment yesterday for a minister of a government that claims not to want to talk about the Constitution. Indeed, he said yesterday that his government was prepared to institute a system of native self-government.

My question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. Does the government not realize that to bring about native self-government, the Constitution would need to be amended?

[English]

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, in fact the commission that has reported is working on this problem at this time.

An interim report earlier in the year said that it was possible to implement self-government for the native population in Canada without changing the Constitution and I agree with that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** My second question, Mr. Speaker, is for my good friend and leading spokesperson for federalists in Quebec, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister responsible for Quebec.

(1125)

Are we to understand that constitutional amendments are possible in so far as they concern the inherent right of native self-government, but that when it comes to overlap, the distribution of powers and constitutional issues affecting Quebec, amendments are out of the question? Do two of the founding peoples have different rights?

**The Speaker:** Do you wish to respond?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I am not certain if the question was directed to the secretary—

**The Speaker:** I believe the question was for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, the question was for the minister responsible for Quebec and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Plamondon:** With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, the question was directed to the Quebec lieutenant and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**The Speaker:** Of course, if the Prime Minister wishes to respond, by all means he can.

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** I know the Minister of Foreign Affairs would have been happy to answer the question, but unfortunately this matter does not fall within the jurisdiction of his department.

The hon. minister will surely be happy to answer questions during the course of a debate. This being said, I have nothing further to add to what I said earlier. Our goal is to treat every person in Canada equally because we believe everyone is equal in this country and that no one should have a special status.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES**

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Reform MPs in this House and the voters we represent are disgusted by the abusive use of taxpayers' dollars for the MPs' pension plan. In December our leader, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest, wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to change the plan so that Reform Party MPs or any member of this House could opt out. The Prime Minister's reply refers to yet another study which will not be complete until mid-July.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. Has the government not realized that Canadians want action not more studies on this matter?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think that we are about to have an election. The next election will be probably four or five years from now, so none of us is about to benefit from this pension until we have completed this term.

Therefore I do not see the urgency in that. We said in our red book that we would review the pension plan and work on it. We have four years to settle this before anyone can qualify for this plan. It is a problem that we will deal with and we will have legislation before the House.

Even if we were to pass the bill today it would not have effect until four and a half years from now. Perhaps the hon. member can wait a bit and we will have a bill in the House of Commons. If he does not want to have a pension plan applying to him I hope he will vote in a way that he will not benefit from it. I do not want members of Parliament to be in a position where they vote against a bill and after that collect.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Canadians want action on this immediately and so do members of Parliament who are making contributions to this pension plan today.

We would like to know if the government intends to continue to force MPs to participate in the MPs' pension plan.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** If the hon. member does not want to contribute we can make administrative arrangements to make sure he is not contributing and we will save—

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

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** But do not come and ask to have the portion of the money paid by the federal government put somewhere for utilization later on. If you are out, you are out.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, I sense some uncertainty in the government's position on the MPs' pension plan.

For the benefit of members' personal financial planning, could the Prime Minister tell this House if he will make a decision on the MPs' pension plan before or after the government moves to limit RRSP contributions?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** The member should not be worried at all if he does not contribute. We will pay him back the few dollars he would have contributed in the first few months. We will not try to make money off of him.

(1130)

I would like to make this statement. When we talk about compensation for members, we should realize that every elected member of this House makes less than half the salary of the worst hockey player in the NHL. Members of Parliament also make less than most police chiefs, directors of schools and directors of hospitals in Alberta who sometimes make more than \$120,000 a year.

I do not think that members are overpaid. However, if some members think they are not worth what they are making we will be happy to reduce their salaries.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NATIONAL REVENUE**

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister told the House yesterday that he wanted the action brought against the Government of Canada by his Minister of National Revenue to be withdrawn fully.

However, following Question Period yesterday, the Minister of National Revenue noted, as reported on page B11 of *The Gazette* today, that he was not the one who could terminate the Federal Court appeal division's procedure.

That comment made outside the Commons clearly infers that he wishes the Crown to drop its case so that he can receive the proceeds initially awarded to him.

Here is my question: Does the Prime Minister who is himself a lawyer recognize that the legal dispute between his Minister of National Revenue and the Government of Canada which is presently before the Federal Court appeal division is of the exact same nature as the case which was discontinued in the first instance?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, what I have been told is that the Minister had instructed his lawyer to drop the case immediately and that he will not be getting any settlement from the government.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, am I to understand from this incomplete answer that the Prime Minister will ask his Minister for National Revenue to discontinue his appeal of the lower court's decision or else he will ask him to leave the cabinet?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** I have nothing to add to my answer, Mr. Speaker. The minister has asked that all and any proceedings against the crown be discontinued and is not expecting any settlement from the government. It could not be clearer.

\* \* \*

[English]

**REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN**

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to put my question to the Prime Minister.

Yesterday during debate the government member for Davenport suggested that the government should consider further limiting RRSP contributions. When asked about the possible repeal of the clawback of old age security, a measure which his party opposed in opposition, he suggested that everyone who pays into seniors' programs like OAS should benefit from them.

Is this the policy position of the government or are those options that the government would be considering?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is preparing his budget. Any member of this House who wants to make a contribution and express his views on any part of the budget is free to do so.

The Minister of Finance will look at the member's speech of yesterday and make his own decision before the budget comes out. That is why we have the House of Commons and why members are welcome to express their views. I am happy when they express their views because that is democracy. However, it is up to the Minister of Finance to decide what will be part of the budget. We will know this some time in February.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views and hope that the Prime Minister will use this opportunity to express his own views on this subject.

Is it the government's policy to go in the direction that we increase the dependency of Canadians on the underfunded and overburdened old age security system while undercutting their ability to provide for their own retirement?

(1135)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add. Everybody in society has to contribute to

the financing of this government. This party wants to reduce the deficit and the debt and we are looking at all the options.

This is money earned by a lot of people on which they do not pay any tax. That is a way to accumulate money and I have nothing against it, but there is no tax paid on the money invested. We want to ensure that the system is fair between the poor and the rich in our society in relation to the tax system.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval-Est):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Upon returning from its visit to Chiapas, the Canadian delegation set up by Development and Peace met yesterday with the Secretary of State responsible for Latin America and informed her of its great concern regarding the violation of human rights in that conflict. The Secretary of State has evidently downplayed the issue.

My first question is: Does the Minister of Foreign Affairs share the attitude of his colleague who seems to make light of the fact that human rights are being violated in this conflict, thereby leading us to believe that Canada is ignoring these violations?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed when I read the article in the *Journal de Montréal* of this morning which refers to comments made by Mrs. Marthe Lapierre and which probably prompted this question. I believe on the contrary that the secretary of state paid great attention to the representations made by the delegation returning from Mexico.

Moreover I must point out that that the secretary of state has made public statements which were reported in several newspapers—and I am surprised that the hon. member did not read those—and which confirm my colleague's great concern regarding the respect of human rights. The article published in the *Journal de Montréal* is absolutely unfair to the secretary of State.

I can assure the hon. member that we on the government side are all listening to those who are willing to make suggestions concerning this issue. I myself met this morning with the head of another delegation, Mr. Ovide Mercredi, and in the next few days, we will state on behalf of the government our position regarding this issue.

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval-Est):** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister apart from listening, what specific steps does he intend to take to stress to Mexican authorities who, let us not forget, are Canada's partners under NAFTA, the vital importance of respecting human rights in Mexico?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I already said to the House in response to a question that we had expressed our views and our concerns to Mexican authorities in this regard. Our ambassador has made representations on behalf of the government. I myself have had discussions with the Mexican ambassador in Ottawa and I also intend to meet her next week. Following those discussions with Mexican authorities we believe that they themselves will be able to make a decision regarding this issue.

I mentioned the fact that for the first time a human rights commission was established through the Mexican legislation and that President Salinas was adamant that every Mexican citizen must receive equal treatment before the law.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. The day after the throne speech the Auditor General informed Canadians that some \$1.8 billion of GST was overdue and not collected. He also informed Canadians that some 576 Canadians had not paid their GST.

(1140)

Could the minister indicate whether those overdue payments will be paid or whether they disappear along with the GST?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, may I congratulate a very experienced parliamentarian on his first presentation in this House. May I assure him that I was very pleased to see the Auditor General made clear that many of the criticisms from this side of the House when we were in opposition of the GST were in fact supported by his report.

I would also like to point out that measures have been taken, and I refer particularly to a press release I issued three weeks after assuming my position as minister to the effect that we would enhance enforcement, carry out more audits and have more prosecutions. We will continue to do that and I again am very happy to find that the Auditor General has supported the approach I took back in late November.

I can also assure the member that the amount of money involved is approximately 4 per cent of the total GST amount which is almost comparable to other jurisdictions that have a value added tax of this type. I can assure him that while 31 per cent of the firms and individuals who should be reporting have not done so, many of those individuals are in fact owed money by us and on others there is no question of owing anything at all.

This would explain for the member the discrepancy between a 4 per cent figure and a 31 per cent figure in terms of total numbers.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. I thank him for the very comprehensive and objective answer; it is much appreciated.

The minister knows that often when tax levels are too high consumers resist paying. Possibly that is one circumstance with regard to the GST and taxation in Canada.

Could the minister indicate when there is a review of the GST and a change of tax whether consideration will be given with all sincerity for a reduction of taxation and possibly a remedy to the problems Canadians face?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, once again I am in the position of essentially agreeing with much that has been said by my hon. friend.

The fact is that this side of the House—and indeed I am sure both sides of the House—as I mentioned two days ago believes tax levels are high and are onerous. We wish to reduce them wherever possible.

In the examination of the replacement for the GST, which as the Prime Minister has indicated will go to a committee of the House, I am quite sure the issue of the level of taxation and its affect upon the willingness of Canadians to pay and willingness to abide by a fair tax system will be discussed by members.

I would suggest to the hon. member that the committee of the House dealing with the replacement for the GST will probably be one of the most important committees of the House. I suggest he put his name forward before he is trampled by his fellow members in the Reform Party.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne as well as various statements by Ministers seem to indicate that a reform of unemployment insurance will be presented with a view to reducing cost which will mean a reduction in accessibility and in payments to the unemployed.

My question is to the Minister of Human Resources Development since he said yesterday that this was his first target. Will the government assure us today that they will not raise again unemployment insurance premiums in 1994?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that through the speech from the throne I indicated that a number of issues needed to be examined such as the important matter of re-

*Oral Questions*

structuring our social security net. This includes unemployment insurance. Indeed, I announced before Christmas a freeze on unemployment insurance premiums, an initiative which should go a long way toward ensuring stability for small businesses.

(1145)

So, between now and 1995 when another UI premium structure will come in effect we will have a two-year period of stability. I hope the hon. member will support that.

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Should we understand that the Liberal Party deliberately duped and misled the Quebec people when a few short months ago in opposition they vehemently denounced Bill C-113 proposed by the Conservative government of the day because it was aimed at reducing accessibility and the amount of money paid to unemployed workers?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the hon. member may want to take a look at his remarks when they appear in *Hansard*, because I think he was in breach of the rules of the House by suggesting that we deliberately mislead anybody. That has certainly never been the intention of this party or this government.

Clearly what we were faced with when we took office was a decision by the past government to raise the level of premiums. That was already in the statutes; it had already been decided. We in fact reduced that to its bare minimum so that the actual raise was only 2.3 per cent for this year. To live up to the commitment we had made and that we undertook we froze the premiums for the entire year of 1995 so small businesses will have the two-year stability of a constant premium rate. That will give them the kind of incentive and stimulation they need to go out and create jobs.

In the meantime, if he and his colleagues were prepared to work with us and collaborate with us on a broad review of our social programs we would be able to take a look at the issue of payroll tax and give a real sense of hope not only to the unemployed but to the business people who would give them jobs.

\* \* \*

**YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT**

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

January 15 marked the deadline for submissions from all Canadians recommending changes to the Young Offenders Act. Will the minister provide a detailed report of his findings from these submissions to all members of Parliament?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend has quite properly pointed out that the submissions have been received by the Department of Justice. They are now under review. As the hon. member might appreciate it will take us some time to evaluate them and to draw conclusions.

I can assure my hon. friend, though, that the entire question of the youth justice system is under active review. As we made clear in the speech from the throne our commitment is to enhance community safety and the justice system in general, including youth justice, so the entire statute is very much a matter of priority for the department.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

As we all well know the Young Offenders Act has been under question for quite some time. Could the minister give us an indication of when we could expect action that would change the Young Offenders Act, something that Canadians everywhere want done immediately?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recall that during the course of the election campaign the Liberal Party made clear in its platform that it proposed specific changes to the Young Offenders Act. Those changes included longer sentences for violent crime, creating the category of dangerous youth offender, releasing information when it was in the interests of the community to do so, and changes of that kind.

I can assure my hon. friend, and I take this opportunity to assure the House, that when I speak next week in the debate on the speech from the throne I will be elaborating upon our plans with respect to the Young Offenders Act and the criminal justice system in general. I can also assure him that included in our plans at present are measures in the short term to implement the undertakings we made during the campaign.

\* \* \*

**GRAIN TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Canadian taxpayers subsidize the movement of grain in Canada by approximately \$720 million a year. This subsidy is paid directly to the railways and I might say that the subsidy is abused. As an example, to qualify by regulation for the subsidy grain destined for the U.S. market must first go to Thunder Bay. Then from Thunder Bay it is shipped somewhere out west and eventually gets to the market to which it is destined. This is an abuse of the system. It distorts the cost of shipping grain in this country.

*Oral Questions*

(1150)

Would the Minister of Agriculture consult with the Minister of Transport to stop the flagrant abuse of taxpayers' money through this subsidy immediately? Would he then consider removing the subsidy paid directly to the railways? If there is to be a subsidy on grain in this country perhaps it could be paid to the farmers to whom it rightfully belongs.

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Obviously the issue of grain transportation, and in particular the Western Grain Transportation Act, is a subject that is under active consideration by this government.

The previous government had established a number of processes that will result in a series of reports we expect to receive during the early part of this year, specifically on grain transportation efficiencies.

In the member's question he has pointed out a fairly glaring example of an inefficiency in the system. We await that report on grain transportation efficiencies. We also await a report on the method of payment under the Western Grain Transportation Act conducted by a producer payment panel.

While we as a new government are by no means bound by processes started by a previous government, we are anxious to receive this input. We will be making our decisions in due course.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. On September 7, 1970, a tanker, the *Irving Whale*, sank off the Magdalen Islands. Over time, corrosion by salt water caused the ship to leak its cargo.

Is the Minister aware that the Magdalen Islands and Prince Edward Island are facing a major environmental disaster? Does the Minister of the Environment have a specific plan to avert this disaster?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environnement):** First I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent question. I am familiar with the standing orders, but I thought I would make the point that "la chrétienté" is found on both sides of the House.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, after the election the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine advised me of his concern about reports of a suspected leak from the tanker when geese were found on the shores of the Magdalen Islands.

I personally visited the Magdalen Islands during the election campaign, and I am aware that this particular area is a favourite destination for tourists. Since I have a particular interest in the

tourism industry on Prince Edward Island, I am working very closely with my colleague, the Minister of Transport, to find a financial solution to a problem that, of course, predates current federal standards in this respect.

[English]

The member will know that this problem actually predated federal legislation governing the difficulties that we face when ships sink. In that regard I am working very closely with my colleague, the Minister of Transport, to try to find a financial solution to a problem that we both recognize.

I thank very particularly the member from Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the adjacent member from Prince Edward Island who brought this matter to my earliest attention the moment they were elected.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** The Minister of the Environment is aware that in 1992 the coast guard asked a private company to examine the wreck. The company's report was submitted to the government in December and has yet to be released.

Is the Minister of the Environment prepared to release this report as soon as possible? The people of the Magdalen Islands and Prince Edward Island are concerned and they have a right to know.

(1155)

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environnement):** Mr. Speaker, since two departments are working very closely to come up with a solution I am prepared to have my department and the government discuss particular aspects of the report with the hon. member who is the environment critic for this party and with the critic for the Reform Party.

A government response to the report is not yet available but I will try to have it ready as soon as possible. As soon as it is available we will share it with you and we will try to do that as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The failure of the Charlottetown accord even among aboriginal communities indicated that among other things the people of Canada could not support undefined aboriginal self-government. Although most people understand and identify with the aspirations of aboriginals to control their own affairs there is a deep concern that self-government might threaten the sovereignty of Canada.

*Oral Questions*

Will the minister assure Canadians that his government will promote and protect the sovereignty of Canada at all times when negotiating aboriginal self-government?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, not only would I give that commitment, I think that should be the commitment of every one who comes to this House.

Sovereignty is not in question. What is in question is how we take inherent right and develop it into something that is workable. I think the process of discussion over the next six months with the territories, the provinces, the leaders and the national aboriginal leaders will define just that.

As I said yesterday we must have one Canada but within this Canada many families.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, will the minister affirm that the individual rights of aboriginal people as guaranteed to all Canadians under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be protected and preserved under any form of negotiated self-government?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, the charter of rights is very important to me personally, having sat in this House when it was developed. It is very important to the aboriginal people and very important to Canadians. It will be protected at all costs.

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**PRIVATIZATION**

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker. I am confident you will serve the House and Canada well.

My question is for the Minister of National Defence and Veterans Affairs and involves household moves by the government which cost over \$100 million a year. The moves are managed by an interdepartmental committee chaired by National Defence.

I understand that the previous government authorized the conduct of pilot projects with two private sector companies to see if savings could be made.

Would the government seriously examine the proposals to privatize its move management services to see if they are feasible and if any further savings can be made on behalf of the taxpayers of Canada?

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on asking his first question.

The issue he raises with us has been raised by a number of members from other parties as well. The House should be informed that earlier last year the former government did solicit proposals for privatization of move management services.

Of the six bids received only one was compliant with the government's requirements. Independent accountants have found that the compliant bidder's costs were several million dollars greater than the government's costs.

I should inform the House that only 10 days before the election former ministers in the Conservative government directed the conduct of two pilot projects without authorization, one with a firm whose costs were millions more than the government's and the other one with a company whose bid was found to be non-compliant. As soon as we took office we cancelled this authority to conduct the pilot project. That is the way business was done under the Tories. That is not the way we are going to do business.

(1200)

I should say that in the context of cuts to the defence budget as promised by the Liberal Party in the red book that we are trying to examine every single way that we as a department can save money, to rationalize expenditures so that we can have a lean effective military.

I will work with the hon. member to make this come about.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TEAM CANADA**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Yesterday, the minister skirted around the fact that there is no Quebecer on Hockey Team Canada. He gave us some incomplete and sketchy statistics regarding the make-up of the Canadian National Olympic Team.

Since hockey is the national sport of both Canada and Quebec and since it would seem normal for Team Canada to reflect the Canadian reality, and given the fact that the minister had a chance to sleep on it, is he now willing to reconsider his position and have a word with the people in charge of Team Canada to rectify this unfair and unacceptable situation?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, I thought I was very clear yesterday. The hockey team is still in the process of being recruited. Recruiting is still going on. Therefore, as I said yesterday, I cannot blame those in charge as long as I do not have the results of their efforts.

I should probably mention to my colleague, to put his mind at rest, that the vast majority of athletes of Olympic calibre are bound by contract to professional teams. Therefore, Hockey

*Tributes*

Canada must negotiate their release with their employers. It is for Hockey Canada to do so, not the Minister of Canadian Heritage. I am keeping an eye on the situation and reserving my judgement until we see the results of the process.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that will conclude the question period.

The hon. member for Burin—St. George's has a tribute to Ches Carter.

\* \* \*

### THE LATE SENATOR CHESLEY CARTER

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's):** Mr. Speaker, it was the fall of 1973 and I was for the very first time seeking public political office. I went to a community, an island called Pass Island off the south coast of Newfoundland, an island that has since been resettled. In those days it had a couple of hundred people.

Pass Island produced a very famous man by the name of Major Ches Carter. Ches Carter distinguished himself in many ways, first by serving overseas with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment during the first world war during which he was gassed, placed among the terminally ill in a hospital in England and left to die. He did not. He came back and had a distinguished career in education in Newfoundland. Come the second world war we found Ches Carter back on the battlefields of Europe. This time it was with the Canadian army, a full 10 years before Newfoundland and Canada had become one country.

He came back from there and picked up his education career. In 1949 Ches Carter was one of the original seven men who came here as the first members of Parliament from Newfoundland after Confederation. He was elected again and again, a total of seven times, the last time having been in the 1965 election and then in 1966 he was appointed to the Senate.

Ches Carter died last week at the age of 91 in Nova Scotia. He leaves us a great legacy. I am pleased to stand as the successor member for Burin—Burgeo, as it was then called, and now Burin—St. George's, but essentially the same piece of geography with a little bit tacked on from time to time.

(1205)

There have only been four members for Burin—St. George's or Burin—Burgeo. They are the late Ches Carter, my late friend the Hon. Don Jamieson, Joe Price who sat here from 1984 to 1988 and of course myself.

I realize that there is only one member sitting in this House today who was here during the time of Ches Carter, but that is of

course entirely beside the point. If we come here and serve our people well then it is not necessary for all the people we serve with to be around forever to remember our deeds and Ches Carter is proof of that. If one does well while one is here and if one is true to those who sent one here then the legacy one leaves will be the memory one leaves.

Ches's legacy is a very important one. I looked through the *Hansard* index for 1960 and 1961. Yes, he was fighting about foreign draggers inside the three-mile limit. I am still fighting that one. He was talking about atomic radiation hazards and trade with Cuba. I could go on. There was page after page of intervention by an obviously active member.

Time does not permit me to even capsule the impact he had here, but let me give one clear example with which many will be able to very quickly identify. Having been a veteran with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in the first world war and in the Canadian army in the second world war, he had a particular interest in and knowledge of military matters and the legacy the war had left for those people who sometimes came back maimed and often without appropriate training to plug back into civilian life.

Ches Carter's battle was non-stop. His battle was non-stop in the interest of veterans in general and in particular the foresters who went out in the thousands from Newfoundland and eastern Canada to do their bit not in a military uniform but on behalf of the war effort. For many years after the war they were left without benefits because technically they were not military although they had gone overseas and had been exposed in many ways to some of the same dangers, certainly the deprivation and isolation of being away from home and so on.

It was Ches Carter who led the battle on that one. It was Ches Carter who after a long time won the battle. He saw to it that the battle was won on behalf of the foresters in the context of having them recognized for benefits under the veterans program.

In concluding let me on behalf of all Canadians, this Parliament and the Parliaments before it, salute a very great man, a very great Newfoundlander and a very great Canadian. Let me also say, on behalf of the House, our condolences, yes, but also our thanks for a life well served to his wife Elsie, to Alan his son and to his two daughters.

**Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add a few words to that of my colleague about Ches Carter. He and I sat together here in the back two rows when I first came here. Ches Carter was a very humble man. He had been in both world wars as my colleague has stated. He was a great champion of veterans. He went to bat for them and was responsible I am sure for some of the amendments to the veterans legislation in Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

Ches Carter also exemplified a man who had been a citizen of Newfoundland prior to it becoming part of Canada. He then got into the federal scene and came here as a member from Newfoundland and was highly respected in this House.

I want to extend our sincere appreciation to him for the work that he did on behalf of veterans across Canada and for his service in two world wars. He exemplifies very responsible Canadian citizenship and will be long remembered by those of us who knew him and should be long remembered by those Canadians for whom he made such a contribution.

I want to extend my condolences to his family. I thank them for allowing him to be part of this place and of the Canadian nation, to come forward to display his strength through humility for the improvement of veterans in Canada and to make his mark for the military forces in this country. He is an example for many to follow and we appreciate that.

(1210)

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, may I join this tribute to Mr. Carter. While I did not know him personally, we all of course want to pay our respects to anyone who served Canada in such a forceful, wonderful way. We applaud the eloquence of the two previous speakers in this tribute to Mr. Carter and extend our condolences, sympathy and best wishes to his family.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to join the three previous members to also say a few words about Mr. Carter.

Of course, none of the Bloc Québécois members who are sitting in this House knew Mr. Carter, even though the member for Longueuil and I have been here for nine years. However, when visiting veterans in our respective ridings and throughout Quebec, we have heard how that man led a remarkable battle defending veterans' rights and trying to give them some security after their efforts during the world wars.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and in joining the three previous members who spoke so eloquently, I would like to extend to Mr. Carter's family our most sincere condolences.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan on a point of order.

**Mr. Ringma:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if I was out of order in rising before the Bloc Québécois members. I do not know, but I think they have the right to speak before I.

**Mr. Plamondon:** I have been very honoured to rise after the member from the Reform Party today. There was no precedence. I think he was just anxious to pay tribute to Mr. Carter. We understand that full well.

*[English]*

**The Speaker:** It was very generous of the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan to point that out. However, in the case of tributes we more or less leave it quite open and you are able to speak at any time, sir.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, if there is one overriding objective of the new government it is to put our country back to work. Canadians want jobs. They want business opportunities. They want government to support their initiatives and they want their voices to be heard in the drafting of public policy.

Canadians also know something that politicians have been slow to recognize: that our environmental and economic goals can and must support each other.

Nowhere is that more evident than in our country's environmental industry. This is one of the fastest growing economic sectors, with some 4,500 firms employing 150,000 people. Its annual sales are now approximately \$11 billion and this figure is expected to double by the year 2000. By that year the global market for environmental technology, products and services will reach over \$500 billion. Canada wants to be on the cutting edge of that green market.

*[Translation]*

What we have here is a Canadian success story and we must build on it. Mr. Speaker, this government is wasting no time in doing that. With my colleague, the Minister of Industry, I am pleased to announce that next Monday, January 24, we will begin the first of a series of public consultations with the aim of developing a Canadian Environmental Industry Strategy.

The consultations in Montreal, Halifax, Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton are being organized in close co-operation with the provincial chapters of the Canadian Environmental Industry Association. We hope that they will give us an opportunity to meet and share views with representatives of all groups who can help to shape a winning strategy for Canada.

(1215)

As a focus for the discussions, we have prepared a paper entitled "Environmental Industry Strategy for Canada". This contains initial proposals for a partnership between the public and private sectors, a joint venture that will substantially increase Canada's share of the domestic and international markets for environmental industry.

*Routine Proceedings*

We already know what must be the key elements of such a strategy: increased funding for research and development, increased support for business, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, and better environmental standards, policies and programs. These are all priorities of the Canadian government and they received mention in Tuesday's speech from the throne.

[*English*]

We also have another priority. That is to ensure that every member of this House has a hand in helping to shape these strategies. We would welcome the participation of the representatives of the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois in participating in these meetings next week which are the very beginning of a new strategy to help Canada take advantage of our world market for environmental technologies.

We face the challenge of acting on those priorities to advance the environmental industry sector in Canada. We intend to listen carefully to all consultations. I can say that on the government side of the House we have a number of members who are specifically interested in this issue. We will use the input we receive to forge an effective strategy that promotes our country's economy and our environment.

The Minister of Industry and I are very happy to be working in close co-operation with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, and with the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development, the hon. member for Portage—Interlake who is taking a special interest in industrial and environmental technologies.

Our departments' and our government's twin goals are sustained job growth and a clean healthy environment. Green industries will play a growing part in helping us reach those goals.

An environmental industry strategy can help us act on pollution prevention. It can help us build green infrastructure in industries and it can and must help create the high-tech jobs we desperately need in those areas. That is the best way of guaranteeing a prosperous country, a healthy environment, and a realistic and brighter future for the Canadian economy and for Canada as a whole.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed essential that all intervenors in this area be consulted prior to developing a comprehensive government strategy. The environment as such transcends partisan concerns and it is in fact incumbent on all nations to work together to find solutions to the pressing problems confronting us today.

I applaud this initiative by the government and the Minister of the Environment to include the industry and environment minis-

ters in these consultations. It is indeed vital to examine these particular aspects of the issues we are being asked to consider. Instead of wishful thinking that is out of touch with our present day lives, the environment needs realistic and effective policies that will ensure sustainable development.

The environmental industry is one of the sectors that are crucial to our future economic development and the government must do everything in its power to promote the growth of this industry. The consultations with the provincial chapters of the Canadian Environmental Industry Association are essential in this respect. In the past, Quebecers and Canadians have too often been exposed to government strategies that were unrealistic and far removed from local needs.

(1220)

The government should listen to the various groups, draw up a strategy and then provide the necessary resources to meet the objectives set forth in the course of the consultation process.

Ministers should listen to what the people have to say and not view these consultations as a media event.

The minister mentioned the importance of developing this industry, and I agree. However, this commitment should be followed by proposals that provide an effective framework for this enterprise.

Promoting the environmental industry is all very well, but it should not be seen as merely a way to silence criticism from environmental groups in Quebec and Canada.

We also want to warn the federal government and the environment minister that public consultations are useless unless recommendations are acted upon.

The environment minister knows that I will monitor these consultations very closely and ensure that any useful proposals that may result are implemented by the government as soon as possible.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today in response to the statement by the Minister of the Environment.

Before commenting on her presentation I would like to express my sincere congratulations on your election, Mr. Speaker. The process with which you were elected provided an indication of the new, more innovative atmosphere of this House. Certainly the first days of this sitting have shown your fresh approach.

The Reform Party intends to approach all issues raised in this Chamber with a three-step process. First we express support for the positive, then concern about potential areas for improvement, and finally constructive alternatives.



*Routine Proceedings*

It has been instructive in reviewing the Reform Party blue sheet of principles, policies and election platform that there is in fact a strong parallel to the direction and intent expressed by the Liberals in their red book.

Of course we support public consultations in that we believe concerned Canadians are very intelligent and have already thought out many of the issues of concern with respect to the environment.

We also wish to commend the government on the speed with which it is initiating this process. It is unfortunate that with the arrangements which have been made, we received official notice of this yesterday. I received the details at about 9.30 this morning. Unfortunately therefore, the Reform Party will be unable to respond to the very kind invitation of the minister to take part in this process.

We do have some areas of concern when the minister uses the terms such as increased funding and increased support.

Where the Reform Party differs significantly from the policies outlined in the Liberal red book is that we note on pages 67 and 68 of their red book they speak of funding research and development for green technologies, commitment of new government funding and consultation of incentive and support programs.

We have learned from history with boondoggles like the scientific research tax credit program introduced by a prior Liberal government and ongoing regional development grants and special tax incentives that there is frequently abuse, pork barrelling and outright waste of resources that Canada no longer has.

The Reform Party will therefore be watching very carefully what impact this initiative will have on the government's out of control overspending. We will also be interested to see what economies it will put into effect even on its country-wide tour next week. What new thrift style will the government bring to the actual public consultation process? For example, will its members be travelling by regularly scheduled airlines?

We put the government on notice. We will be looking for a statement of expenses incurred for this process and would expect a cost benefit analysis on the expenditure.

(1225)

In summary, the Reform Party stands committed to ensuring that all Canadians and their descendants dwell in a clean and healthy environment and supports the federal government taking leadership in developing a new discipline integrating economics and the environment.

We also commend the minister on the speedy implementation of this process early in this government's life.

**Mr. Riis:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the standing orders do not permit me to respond to the minister,

but I simply want to say that we appreciate this statement being made in the House announcing this new government initiative.

Coming on the tails of what the House leader was saying the other day, that there would be a number of debates on important policy issues in the House of Commons to which members can contribute, I simply want to say—

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for not getting into debate or answering.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of the people of Woodrow, Saskatchewan, requesting that Canada Post be restrained from the further closing of rural post offices including their own.

[*Translation*]

## SOCIAL HOUSING

**Mr. Gaston Péloquin (Brome—Missisquoi):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I would like to present a petition denouncing rent increases in social housing in Bromont.

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition which has been certified.

The previous government made cuts in social housing and today people in my riding and in neighbouring ones are turning to the House of Commons because the federal government froze the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation budget for the next five years while asking it to save money to help young couples.

The petitioners are asking Parliament to forego any rent increase in social housing and to lift the freeze on the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation budget in order to build new social and co-op housing, especially in east Montreal.

[*English*]

## RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 the attached petition is certified correct. It is signed by many people from the greater Toronto area.

The undersigned residents of Canada humbly ask and draw the attention of the House to the following. As a consequence of the death, separation or divorce of their children, grandparents are often denied access to their grandchildren by their guardians. The relationship that exists between grandparents and grandchildren is a natural, fundamental one. Denial of access could constitute elder abuse and could have a serious detrimental emotional impact on both the grandparents and the grandchildren. Several provincial jurisdictions, including the Quebec

*The Address*

civil code, contain a provision to ensure the right of access of grandparents to their grandchildren.

Therefore the petitioners request that the Parliament amend the Divorce Act to include a provision similar to article 6(11) of the Quebec civil code which states: "In no case may a father or mother without serious cause place obstacles between a child and grandparents and failing agreement between the parties the modalities of the relations are settled by the court".

Further, an amendment to the Divorce Act would give a grandparent who is granted access to a child the right to make inquiries and to be given information as to the health, education and welfare of the child.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

(1230)

[*Translation*]

### 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; and of the amendment.

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of this House.

[*English*]

Some members will know that it was the Speaker who as much as anyone played a role in my coming to this place and I am so pleased to be here under his direction as Speaker. I have every confidence that you, Sir, will perform your task in a way which is going to bring great honour to this place and to the role that you hold.

[*Translation*]

I would also want to thank my constituents of Ottawa South for re-electing me on October 25. It is a great honour for me to represent them here, in the House of Commons. It is also an honour to have been appointed minister. But the greatest honour of all is to have this opportunity to serve the people of Ottawa South.

[*English*]

I think for all of us the greatest honour is to be able to represent our peers in the House of Commons. This is a place rich in history and tradition. The role that we play here I believe is very important. I believe it to be a great honour and a great privilege to be servants of the people.

Politicians have been given a bad name and we are all conscious of that and Mr. Speaker in his opening comments to us upon his election alluded to it.

I think what we need to reinforce is that after all is said the role of politician is not something of which we should be ashamed. The role of a politician is to be a servant. To be a politician is to wear a badge of honour because after all we are here as servants of the people who sent us. That to me is a very great badge of honour.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Prime Minister for the confidence he has placed in me in asking me to serve as his Minister of Industry. What I hope to do in these few moments is to outline some of the ideas I take with me into this portfolio as I undertake the work which was given to me. Much of my mandate has been made clear I believe.

[*Translation*]

The red book stressed the importance of job creation and economic growth, and in the throne speech we again emphasized the importance of economic growth.

[*English*]

The people who sent me here talked to me about a lot of things. What I heard repeatedly was the concern they have for jobs, if not jobs for themselves personally then very often jobs for their children or their neighbours. How many times I have heard people say: "I have adult children who are trained, qualified and skilled but they cannot find work".

(1235)

I believe the heavy weight of despair the recession of 1990 brought to bear on our people is one of the things that all of us were elected to address in a very direct and positive way. What we have to do is very clear. We need strategies to follow. We need strategies to create jobs. We need strategies to encourage growth in the economy.

Part of that strategy obviously has to be the tackling of obstacles because there are obstacles to overcome as we launch this new phase of economic growth. I know no one on this side is unaware of the unhappy circumstance when this week we passed \$500 billion in federal indebtedness. The burden of debt we are carrying as a country, not just at the federal level but also at the provincial and municipal levels, is something which no government regardless of its political stripe or ideology can fail to consider.

I have encountered questions about whether worry about the deficit did not indicate a certain political bent to one side of the spectrum. I cannot agree with that. Our colleagues from the New Democratic party who govern in three provinces in Canada are frequently engaged in discussions about how to deal with the serious problems of provincial indebtedness. Our colleagues from Conservative governments in some of the provinces are likewise faced with tackling those problems.

*The Address*

We are also faced with a slow economic recovery this time.

[*Translation*]

The fact that the recession that started in 1990 dragged on for so long is an indication that our economy is undergoing fundamental changes.

[*English*]

This is not just like the last recession. What we have encountered is a fundamental change in our economy. There is a restructuring whereby many companies are rebuilding on the basis of downsizing. We have seen a significant reduction in employment even while economic growth is beginning again. That in turn has caused what can only be described as a crisis of confidence, particularly among consumers.

If we look at the tracking of graphs as we grow out of the past recession and compare them to the tracking after the recession of the early 1980s what can be seen indicates the lack of consumer confidence which has been prolonging this recession. There are very low numbers in residential housing for example and in consumption of durable goods.

Consumers do not have confidence. Why? It is because not only do we have a high rate of unemployment of 11 plus per cent but we are also faced with the fact that virtually 40 per cent of the people who have jobs are concerned they are going to lose them. Where can we inspire confidence to begin to build again?

Internal trade barriers. I am talking again about obstacles that we have to overcome. Can it be explained to me why in Canada our regime of international trade is roughly equivalent to what the GATT provided internationally back in the late 1940s? What makes it so hard to us to break down the barriers of trade among our own Canadian provinces? We do not have a big market in the world. Our domestic market based on population is roughly the size of the state of California. Yet we have created these obstacles among us to take that already small market and make it even smaller. We like 10 little markets instead of putting together one medium sized market which would enable us to compete in the world.

(1240)

[*Translation*]

I have to say we have made headway in that area during the meeting held this week in Ottawa by the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Economic Development. There is a great common will among the ministers to find effective means of removing trade barriers between Canadian provinces.

[*English*]

We now have a fixed schedule. We will have a preliminary draft agreement of an internal trade agreement by February 14, Valentine's day. We hope that will be further transformed by

provincial negotiators into a draft agreement for consideration by ministers by the end of March. We are working on a strict and tight timetable on this file and we have enormous good will among all provincial governments and the federal government to tackle this obstacle.

It can create jobs, not just because of the encouragement of trade within Canada, but the fact that we have these internal barriers is a deterrent to foreign investment. Why? It is because under our international treaties it is just as easy to trade into Canada from the United States, in fact it is easier, than it is to trade within Canada across provincial boundaries. Why are we penalizing ourselves in this way? It simply does not make sense. I am hopeful that this process toward progress on this file will continue very rapidly.

In addition to attacking obstacles we have to build on our strengths. It is reflected clearly in the red book and also in the speech from the throne that one of the strengths in this country we have to build on is the small business sector. There are 900,000 small and medium sized enterprises in this country. If we could enable them each to hire one Canadian then our unemployment problem would no longer be upon us.

For that reason I think the efforts the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has under way to identify how to create one million jobs in Canada is something we in government ought to encourage and support. It is the kinds of partnerships we can build with the private sector, business organizations, labour organizations and others that are going to enable us to overcome obstacles and build on some of our strengths.

Small business has told us pretty clearly what problems they face. They are the masters or the creators of 80 per cent of the new jobs in Canada. Yet they tell us repeatedly—my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood has borne eloquent testimony to this—they cannot get adequate capital or financing to do what they want to do to create jobs.

We must find a way to bring our financial institutions to bear all of their resources on how to solve this problem of inadequate capital in small and medium sized business. I am not so sure we do it by passing laws and making rules but we are working very directly with financial institutions and trying to see what it is that makes it so hard to provide adequate capital for small business, in particular small businesses that are engaged in the process of developing and marketing new technologies. I will say a little more about the innovative economy in a few minutes.

I can understand why it is difficult. How does one secure debt against knowledge? A knowledge based enterprise finds it difficult, however, to get the capital resources it needs in order to build foreign markets, to do research and development, to get the kinds of sales it needs and to finance those sales over development periods. These are problems we are going to have to tackle.

*The Address*

Small and medium sized business needs technology. Technology diffusion has to be the key to building a more active and more aggressive small and medium sized business sector. It is clear in the studies that have been done that growing small business means adequate capital, adequate access to new and existing technologies, good marketing and management skills. Those are the keys. There are no secrets here.

(1245)

The question is: How do we help small business in achieving the things that it knows?

*[Translation]*

It is clear to us that the small and medium-sized businesses are the key to the economic recovery that, I believe, we are all waiting for.

*[English]*

We also need to concentrate our efforts on building a new and innovative economy. Canada is a very blessed country. We enjoy enormous prosperity and have over many years. Why? It is largely because we find ourselves in a country that is rich in natural resources. We built our prosperity on resources we were able to access easily and that the world wanted to buy from us for very good prices.

During the war my predecessor, whose desk I am proud to sit at in my ministry, C. D. Howe, built the Canadian manufacturing economy to meet the needs of the war. After the war, he was able to transform it to peaceful purposes behind tariff barriers.

At a time when Europe was flattened and when the new competition we now face in Asia was virtually non-existent, Canada was able to build a strong manufacturing based economy. There we were as we came through the 1950s and 1960s. With strong sales of natural resources, high prices and a good manufacturing base, things were going well for us. It looked like it would never end.

Today the problems that we face in some ways reflect upon the very strengths that we had in those decades. It was easy for us to be prosperous at that time relative to many other countries that had to build their war-torn economies up from the ground.

Now we find that our cheapest natural resources have been sold off. It becomes more expensive for us to acquire them whether they are from the forests or the mines. The fish are gone. Agriculture is becoming tough and competitive. Our manufacturing economy that was built up during and after the war is finding that change is overtaking it.

The rebirth of Europe in the 1960s and 1970s was tough competition. Now we have the emergence in Asia of strong manufacturing based economies. These are the problems we face. What do we do now?

We need to find the innovation and the change that will enable us to compete against these companies in places around the world. If I can put it in a phrase, my objective as Minister of Industry is to make the Canadian business sector synonymous with quality and innovation. It is by emphasizing these two characteristics that we are going to regain our place in the world. That will be the key to our economic growth.

Some people think governments do not play a role in these things. They think one just stands back and lets the world unfold as it is going to. That is wrong. Government plays a very important role in this. Government has to play a role solving some of the problems we talked about earlier. Government also has to play a role itself in not being an obstacle.

We are prepared to work with provincial governments to ensure that whatever burdens are being placed on business can be reduced. As an initiative of this government we want to work with the provinces to reduce duplication and overlap.

*[Translation]*

As the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said, overlap is indeed a concern for the government.

*[English]*

We are prepared through strategic investments, through the Canada Investment Fund, through the creation of technology networks and by giving leadership on issues like the electronic highway to help the Canadian business sector to move forward into the 21st century.

(1250)

The information highway is a good example of the fact that government has a role to play. We saw Vice President Gore in the last weeks make a major statement on what the information highway can mean and look like in the United States. We have to play a leadership role in defining what this highway is to look like, how it is to help Canadian business move forward into the future.

We have some advantages here as a country which is so huge geographically and so sparsely populated. We have built strengths in telecommunications and in satellite communications, despite what may have happened to Anik. Those who want to watch it on Newsworld will have to miss it for today.

However, there are strengths that our Canadian industrial base has within it that will tie perfectly to the rapid explosion of the information technologies. One of the roles of government is to provide the necessary leadership. We want to help find ways in which the regulatory regime should be structured to encourage the right level of competition of Canadian ownership. Those are two of our goals. We will see to it that we are in the right place to

*The Address*

encourage pilot projects to see how this new technology infrastructure is going to work.

We are playing a role, for example, in the Canary project which is tying research facilities across Canada together. We recently had the pleasure of announcing in Ottawa—Carleton the establishment of the OCI net which is a measure to provide what will ultimately be a node on the information highway which is to come.

These are exciting possibilities. There are many more to come. We have a role to play. We need to remove the obstacles that impede economic development. We need to build on our strengths. Canada is a marvellous country. We believe in it. We can overcome the obstacles as we have in the past and we can build on our strengths.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger)** Before proceeding to the 10 minutes of questions and comments, I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b) because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

[*Translation*]

We will open questions and comments with the hon. member for Québec—Est.

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec—Est):** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I am very pleased to be able to speak for the first time in this hon. Chamber, the symbol of democracy in Canada.

I believe that I am the last Bloc member to speak for the first time, but that does not take anything away from the importance I attach to my maiden speech or from the pleasure it gives me.

I am also especially honoured to be the member for Québec—Est and to represent that riding. I take the opportunity, as many of us have already done, to thank my constituents who had the good judgment to elect me as their member. I have the honour to represent a very beautiful riding in Quebec City and to have won by 21,000 votes. This is an impressive victory, all the more so since I ran against a very well-known personality in Quebec whose name I will not mention in this House.

I am a new member who intends to be a good MP and to represent his riding well. I come back to what the Minister of Industry said. I appreciated it as an opening. He said that we have an important responsibility to be honourable, to be sincere, to work hard because we have heavy responsibilities, and that is what I intend to do. I intend to do that for my constituents, especially since most of them voted for the Bloc knowing full well that we are a sovereignist party. I believe firmly in this option and I think that I will therefore defend it with great zeal and gusto.

(1255)

I would also like to take the opportunity to raise a point which has not yet been raised and that surprises me a lot. We have had many discussions to date on the relative merits of Canada versus Quebec, as they relate to the question of sovereignty, and no one has yet spoken about the rights of francophones outside Quebec.

I would have liked the Speaker to be here today, not only to congratulate him on his election, and I take the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to congratulate you on your appointment. Nevertheless, I would have liked him to be here because he is a Franco-Ontarian. I have had a chance to discuss the issue of francophones outside Quebec with the Speaker, because he comes from Ontario, as I do. I am a native of Ontario myself.

[*English*]

I was born in Ontario.

[*Translation*]

That is why I am a sovereignist today: I was a francophone outside Quebec and I know the situation they are in.

If there is one thing that I will mention and emphasize in this House, it is the abuses and injustices which francophones outside Quebec have suffered. Many people talked about the virtues of Canada, like the Minister of Foreign Affairs and others yesterday and the day before, but I did not have a chance to answer. Now I will give my reply.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just need some clarification. We had the Minister of Industry here. I thought I heard you say questions and comments. We asked the minister to stay here thinking there might be a question. I wondered if in fact there would be a question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I thank the hon. member for his comment. Recognizing the member for Quebec—Est in his first intervention here in this House of this 35th Parliament I think seized the occasion. I understand and have witnessed all members making reference to their constituents, thanking them and so on. Certainly I want to give the floor back to the member for Quebec—Est and give him the opportunity to complete his comment and would hope that in the end it would allow time also for the Minister of Industry to reply to his comment.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marchand:** Mr. Speaker, I did not want to be too long in my introduction; I simply wanted to comment on the very interesting statements made by the Minister of Industry.

As was mentioned, the minister referred to several issues. He said, among other things, that one of the most important objectives stated in the Liberal Party's red book is the creation of jobs. It just so happens that I am the official critic for the Bloc on agricultural issues and these days the minister of agriculture

is negotiating with the Americans a substantial loss of jobs in the field of agriculture, in fact a potential loss of 10,000 jobs in that sector for Quebec and Ontario.

It is rather puzzling that one of the first agreements signed with the Americans by a government which claims to be in favour of job creation could in fact lead to the loss of several thousand jobs in the agricultural sector.

I agree with the hon. member when he says that our society is undergoing radical changes. He emphasizes of course that those changes have strictly an economic dimension, and I agree with him that the world is indeed in a state of flux which affects Quebec and Canada, and which triggers a real problem of confidence. This brings me back to his comments on the role of members of Parliament: we must inspire confidence. We must inspire confidence, but I am under the impression that we are not doing very well in that regard.

(1300)

Take, for example, the GATT agreement which the minister alluded to. I assume that the hon. minister is among those who believe that GATT is a very good agreement. It is obvious that we derive some benefits from it, but we have also suffered substantial losses.

Personally, I am not among those who believe that GATT is such a marvellous thing. On the contrary, I am under the impression that the opening of new markets, in the context of that agreement, adversely affects levels of production. It favours major American industries at the expense of Canadian ones.

In the agricultural sector, we have suffered considerable losses through GATT.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In fairness, I will allow one brief question as I have to give the minister time to respond. Therefore, a very brief question from the hon. member for Québec—Est.

**Mr. Marchand:** My question will be very brief, Mr. Speaker. Among other things, the Minister of Industry said that efforts had to be focussed on creating and strengthening small and medium size business. Are the nearly 50,000 farmers in Canada who have invested in excess of \$1 million in their operations the kind of small and medium size businesses that he would like to promote?

**Mr. Manley:** First of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Québec—Est on his maiden speech in the House. It is never easy to speak in this Chamber for the first time. He will find that things get easier after a few years.

### *The Address*

I find the hon. member's comments rather odd. Canada accounts for approximately 3 per cent of world trade. Therefore, when we negotiate within an international forum such as the GATT, a forum that is of truly great importance to Canada and to Quebec as well since our economy is greatly dependent on trade, it is important to find a way to achieve a consensus with everyone.

Now the hon. member has said that he favours sovereignty for Quebec. Judging from his remarks, he seems to think that a sovereign Quebec would not be a part of international organizations such as the GATT. How then does a sovereign Quebec intend to become a player on the world trade scene?

International trade agreements are always a source of problems. There are always winners and losers. It is a difficult situation. Adjustments have to be made. That is always the case.

After all, there is a role to play on the world scene. If Quebec can negotiate a better agreement for the farmers to which the hon. member alluded with the world's trading partners, then I wish it good luck. As the minister of agriculture stated, the government is deeply concerned about the future of Canadian farmers. We also believe very strongly that Canada and Quebec must be members the international trade community.

(1305)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam):** I welcome the opportunity to take part in this throne speech debate. At the outset I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your appointment. I would also like to congratulate our Speaker of the House of Commons upon his election as Speaker of this 35th Parliament.

As someone who is vitally concerned with parliamentary reform I feel we owe a debt of gratitude to those who served on the special committee on reform of the House of Commons in 1984–85 and who recommended the method of election of the Speaker. A Speaker elected by his or her peers in a free vote is ideally placed to serve the needs of this Chamber and its members.

I would also like to congratulate all those who have been elected to serve in this 35th Parliament.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the electors of Mission—Coquitlam, a riding in the heart of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, for seeing fit to send me to Ottawa to serve as their elected representative.

For those of you not familiar with this most beautiful part of our country I can only attempt to describe it. Mission—Coquitlam has a population of approximately 115,000. Its population has grown more than 25 per cent between 1986 and now and

*The Address*

therefore has associated with it all the problems of a growing rural area located close to a thriving metropolis, Vancouver.

Employment in this area is spread among the primary industries of dairy farming, lumber and fishing as well as manufacturing, construction and the wholesale and retail trade required to serve the population.

At this time I would like to just take a few moments to address this House on two government initiatives that, depending on how they are implemented, may or may not be beneficial for my constituents. I understand the government is proceeding with its shared cost, two year, multimillion dollar infrastructure program to upgrade transportation and local services. I trust the moneys to be used for this plan are not new moneys but are already designated as government expenditures and we are dealing here with a simple reallocation of funds and priorities.

I also want to say that such a program would be of great benefit to my riding. Improved transportation and communication links are of vital importance to the industries of Mission—Coquitlam and to our residents, many of whom commute daily to Vancouver in a frustrating two hour, one way trip.

I am concerned that the outcome of the recent GATT discussions may have a detrimental effect on our nation's farming community and in Fraser Valley dairy farming in particular. The recently signed GATT agreement calls for the removal of border restrictions in article XI. This will, we hope, be replaced by a set of import tariffs which will be removed on a graduated scale until eventually completely phased out in approximately 15 years. I trust the government realizes that these tariffs and the long phase out period will be necessary to ease the transition of our supply managed farmers.

This being my first address to this House I would like to take a few moments to reflect upon why I believe so many of us from the Reform Party of Canada were elected on October 25, 1993.

During the past 10 to 15 years a feeling has developed among Canadians that government, the party in power, the opposition parties and the bureaucracy is not serving the needs of the people who are to be served and whose tax dollars pay for this government. The separation between government and the people grew in the last few years because the views of Canadians seem to be ignored by government or, alternatively, there was no means by which Canadians could see that their views were being expressed, especially in this House. This led, I believe, to an unprecedented feeling of frustration in Canadians.

I believe the electorate chose on October 25 a higher standard in political accountability and by their votes requested a role in the policy making process. The people of Canada want their views to be considered and they want to see how their views and interests are reconciled when policy is formed.

I believe the people of Canada are willing to give their trust once again to those of us who are willing to take up this challenge. They want to see politicians who are willing to exercise the courage necessary to state their views publicly, even though they may be contrary to party line. At the same time the public wants to see courage exercised by our leaders so that dissent may be publicly expressed without fear of retribution.

I am privileged to have been chosen as the chairperson of our caucus committee on parliamentary reform. In the short time I have been here I have had the opportunity to study this subject at some length.

(1310)

I have come to the conclusion that the first fundamental change we must make in this place does not involve rule changes but lies in an attitudinal change that must be made by the party leadership of this House both on the government and opposition sides.

This change in attitude relates to allowing private members, back bench MPs, to exercise some measure of independence from the party line when voting on measures in this House.

Freer voting among members requires only attitudinal change. However such a change in attitude would send a signal to the people of Canada that we as politicians are listening and are reflecting their views in our decision making.

I want to make it clear at this point that I am speaking about freer voting which means a relaxation of the established informal rule that private members vote the party line on all legislative matters.

This is to be distinguished from free votes when the party leadership actually tells members that on a particular piece of legislation they are free to vote either for or against it.

The declaration of free votes by the leadership of this House does not solve the problem of exercising independence by the members. It is my understanding that in our Canadian political system the leadership of political parties have taken the confidence convention to extremes. It has been linked to a view whereby virtually all votes both in committee and in the House of Commons are matters of confidence so that any member who votes against the wishes of the leadership, whether that member is in government or opposition, is being disloyal and is subject to reprimand.

A simple review of the voting practices in Great Britain illustrates that this does not have to be the case. In recent times backbench independence has been asserted with members voting against the party line. In some cases this defeats government legislation. Once this independence was exercised it could not be stopped and has successfully resulted in allowing members to influence the public policy agenda. It is important to note that punishment by the party leadership did not materialize. A participatory attitude prevailed.

*The Address*

What I am saying today is not new. Attitudinal change in relation to the confidence convention and freer voting was one of the major recommendations of the special committee on reform of the House of Commons in 1985. This committee even went so far as to categorize the types of confidence votes so that on all other matters private members, at least on the government side, would feel free to vote against the government position without fear of bringing down the government.

It is appropriate to recognize that today's Minister of Foreign Affairs represented the Liberal Party and the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona represented the NDP on that committee.

While in opposition the government participated in other committees and advanced a policy paper on January 19, 1993 on reform of the House of Commons. This also formed part of the red book giving more freedom to members to voice their concerns in the House.

Leadership on this issue must come from the government. A clear statement should be made by the Prime Minister that dissent will be allowed and only certain legislative matters will be looked upon as confidence matters requiring strict party discipline.

It must also be made clear that anyone exercising independence will not be punished. Opposition parties must agree to this so that their members are free to voice their own views. It is also important that opposition parties not treat government members voting against the government line as special or as lightning rods of dissent within the government caucus.

Opposition parties should not call on the government to resign if a few of its members break with party discipline or if the government loses the occasional vote in the House or in committee.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that this change of attitude will require political courage on the part of all concerned. For the first few times that members break with party discipline the media will pounce on the situation as a sign of weak leadership. Political parties must resist the temptation to capitalize on this. In fact they should stress that allowing dissent is a sign of strength.

While we listened with interest to the speech from the throne and the promise of the government to create a greater opportunity for members to contribute to the level of public policy and legislation, I was disappointed that no specifics of how this was to be done were presented.

If members are to become a vital part of the policy making process in committee and in the House then dissent must be allowed to be articulated and occur without retribution.

If this occurs the House of Commons may become a more accurate reflection of Canadian public opinion and the policies of government may become more attuned to the needs of Canadians.

It is unfortunate that the Bloc in its amendment had not dealt with the major issue of parliamentary reform, that is free votes and relaxation of the confidence convention. Then I would have moved a subamendment in this House as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should permit members of the House of Commons to fully represent their constituents' views on the government's legislative program and spending plans, or, by adopting the position that the defeat of any government measure including a spending measure, shall not automatically mean the defeat of the government unless followed by the adoption of a formal motion.

(1315)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me today. I thank the voters of Mission—Coquitlam for placing their trust in me.

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member on her maiden address in the Parliament of Canada. She touched on the very important issue of the freedom of members of Parliament to express the views of their constituents and not be reprimanded.

I rise as a member of the government party to clarify a position of our party. It would be unfair to leave the impression with the viewing audience or Canadians in general that we on the government side do not have the ability to be creative, to debate our views, or even to have the ultimate option of dissenting or not supporting a particular government measure. I want to try to explain the fine line.

In our party we have always been encouraged to work at new ideas and develop policy initiatives. We debate them in our caucus committees and at our policy conventions. From those experiences we ultimately develop a consensus and a party position. Once a party position is taken we have to decide whether or not we want to continue as members of that party.

In our particular case we as members of the Liberal Party signed on to campaign under the red book. It would be inappropriate for us not to support the measures in the red book, seeing as that is in fact what got us elected. However that does not preclude us from participating in debate in committee or in the House.

Having been a member of the past Parliament I just want to say to the member that there was more than one occasion when we constructively debated publicly in the House. Some of us had



*The Address*

different opinions than the party thrust but ultimately when the time came and some of us differed we were not punished. The member mentioned that members could be punished or used as lightning rods. That is mythology. That really does not happen.

The Liberal Party is very vibrant and encourages creativity and debate but ultimately, seeing as we have campaigned on a certain position, it is incumbent upon us to stick with the position that our electorate supported us on.

**Mrs. Jennings:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments regarding my speech. I was very pleased to hear that in fact Liberal members of the House are encouraged to speak freely and to use their own thoughts and ideas in the process of deliberations. I am very encouraged by that.

I want to point out that while I recognize the red book has been used in the campaign and the red book has alluded to certain ideas which I think correspond with many of the Reform ideas, I still feel strongly that there has been much reprimand in the past. We have seen the results of it.

I honestly would like to say here today that allowing MPs to do their jobs in the House and freeing them up to represent their constituents properly can only improve the legislative process.

Differences of opinion are healthy. As long as members are constructive in their criticisms of all members' proposals, all members of the House will witness the parliamentary process as it was meant to be, as it actually has been in the earlier part of this century. The relaxation of the confidence convention will strengthen the proceedings in the House, not weaken them.

(1320)

I look forward to working with all members of the House, and particularly with the hon. member opposite, in both a co-operative and a constructive way.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, let me offer my sincere congratulations on your appointment to the chair. I also thank your colleagues who are willing to share in the responsibilities of overseeing the proceedings in this Chamber. I take this opportunity to congratulate members on both sides of the House on their election. I look forward to getting to know all of them. I trust we can be friends even if we agree to disagree from time to time.

I also thank my wife, Gail, and our three children, Ehren, Byron and Marlyn, for their love, support and encouragement. They are a big reason why I am here in this Chamber.

Indeed it is a pleasure and a privilege to address the House on behalf of the voters of the federal riding of Kindersley—Lloydminster in west central Saskatchewan who have sent me here to be an agent for constructive change. I thank the residents of

Kindersley—Lloydminster who put trust in me by placing an *x* beside my name. I pledge to work on behalf of all residents of my riding regardless of how they voted.

Last October 25 Canadians from coast to coast sent an unmistakable message to politicians saying: "You had better begin to listen to us like you have never listened before and you had better act on our behalf more responsibly than you have acted in the past, or we will remove you from office".

The results of the last election decimated an old, proud federal political party, sending it the way of the dodo bird. Another party has been delegated to the equivalent of whooping crane status.

[*Translation*]

Every member in this House, whether Reform, Liberal, Bloc or independent, has thought about the very clear message sent by his constituents. Compared to our predecessors, we have improved our performance. Canadians will accept no less.

[*English*]

I commend the government for many of the reforms it has listed in its speech from the throne. Some reforms it now proposes are the same ones for which Reformers have been working so hard for three, four, five and even six years. I trust our efforts are not in vain now that the government is talking about reform. Talk is a good start but mere talk without substantive action becomes rhetoric, and rhetoric is not what Canadians want from us.

I also join my colleagues who have expressed grave concern that no mention of agriculture or energy was made in the speech from the throne. I hope this is not an indication of the importance the government places on industries vital to Kindersley—Lloydminster.

I was disappointed the government's parliamentary reform measures outlined in the red book and in the speech from the throne overlook one of the most embarrassing institutions of Parliament. Canadians have rightfully called the other place, the Senate of Canada, a disgrace to the nation. Over one-quarter of the legislators in Parliament are not accountable to the people they are supposed to serve. With regard to Parliament and its occupants, second only to the bloated MPs' pensions, my constituents expressed their absolute disgust with the Senate and demanded that something be done about it.

Many Canadians disillusioned with the inability of previous governments to fix this problem are calling for the abolition of the Senate. Just because our political leaders of the past have been unable to find the constitutional key to unlock the gate barring us from Senate reform it in no way precludes us from taking giant steps toward fixing the other place.

*The Address*

Before we look at ways to begin to address the embarrassment of a Senate that does not work, we would be wise to review reasons why the Senate cannot only be useful but invaluable.

Canadians are demanding more balance and fairness in national decision making. Having only a lower House where members are elected by the people has left the most sparsely populated regions of the country like my province of Saskatchewan feeling handicapped when important legislation is debated and passed in Parliament, because no accountable federal institution by its very nature is designed to protect us from the overwhelming political clout of the more heavily populated regions of Canada. For instance, the people of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta had no effective tools to prevent the infamous and unfair national energy program from being foisted upon them by a Liberal government dominated by Ontario and Quebec.

(1325)

The current infrastructure program which has the economic stimulative capabilities of a one legged kick-boxing sparrow is based on population and unemployment levels and this concerns the residents of Saskatchewan. Our province has suffered severe economic depression for a decade resulting in lost jobs and depreciating infrastructure such as roads.

Saskatchewan people have left the province looking for work rather than going on unemployment insurance or social assistance. With a declining population, low employment rates, high taxes, and deteriorating infrastructure one would think Saskatchewan would be a prime target for the benefits of the government's infrastructure program but in fact the criteria for the program penalizes. I am certain the criteria would be much better if Canada had an elected Senate with equal seats from every province.

The government has the opportunity to take a great leap forward in the cause of Senate reform. We know it can be done because it has been done. One province, Alberta, enacted legislation allowing the people, not the Prime Minister, to indicate their choice in filling a vacant Senate seat. By democratic election at less cost than the cost of political patronage the people of Alberta said they wanted Stan Waters to be their senator to represent their interests in Ottawa.

The Prime Minister of the day was playing a game with dice and one of his moves in the game was to appoint the people's choice to the vacancy in the upper House. He later undid this good by stacking the Senate with friends who lacked commitment to represent people over parties in the GST debate.

The current membership in the Senate is dominated by Conservatives, a party rejected by Canadians right across Canada. Rather than the Prime Minister replacing them with his friends, it is only right that the government give Canadians an opportunity to select women and men to sit in the upper House.

If the Prime Minister and his government really want to move Canada out of the 19th century and into the 21st century, they could take a first step to Senate reform by asking the provinces such as my province of Saskatchewan to pass legislation similar to bill 11 in Alberta. They could then assure that every province with such a measure would see the democratically chosen candidate for the Senate appointed by the Prime Minister to the upper House. This does not require an amendment to our Constitution. What a step forward this would be in the evolution of an elected, equal and effective Senate.

In closing I wish to assure members opposite that Reformers are prepared to support measures the government introduces that will help fix this place. If the government will not fix it then we will wait until the next election and fix it ourselves.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on what was said by the previous speaker, who, I am glad to say, is a member of the Reform Party, because I have the impression that if we consider the causes behind the emergence of the Reform Party in western Canada and the Bloc Québécois in Quebec, there are a number of similarities.

There is of course the aspect of voter dissatisfaction in the west and in Quebec. That explains why these parties suddenly emerged. It is also the very obvious difference between the aspirations of Canadian and Quebec voters, and an apparent inability on the part of the government or governments, and I was going to say the big national parties, to meet people's expectations. I think Canada's very nature makes this inevitable, considering the size of the territory, different needs and the fact that the Conservative and Liberal parties have always insisted on proposing the same solutions from coast to coast.

Where the Bloc and the Reform Party differ is on how to deal with the situation. The Reform Party seems to think it is possible to change the system. Quebecers, after 30 years of attempts at constitutional reform, have concluded, and there is a broad consensus to that effect, that reform is impossible.

(1330)

Finally, I want to put a question to the previous speaker. He mentioned the Senate, and my question will deal with this institution. At the present time, Senate reform would require the unanimous consent of the provinces. Last summer, in a nationwide survey, more than 60 per cent of Canadians said we should get rid of the Senate.

Considering that the member of the Reform Party seems to be saying his party is concerned with the needs of the people, and considering that the premier of Newfoundland, an old friend of the Prime Minister of Canada, says he will never agree to abolish the Senate, how can the members of the Reform Party of Canada still believe the Canadian system is open to reform?

*The Address**[English]*

**Mr. Hermanson:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. What I suggested in my speech, had the hon. member listened, was not a constitutional change to make the Senate more effective but to actually have it elected. We have already had one elected senator in the upper House. He was elected by the citizens of Alberta and appointed by the Prime Minister.

The purpose of my speech was to challenge the government and to challenge our current Prime Minister to follow that precedent and encourage the provinces to pass similar legislation across Canada so we could bring some respect and legitimacy to the Senate. This is so that people who live in the more scarcely populated provinces such as mine would feel that they have somewhere in Parliament to appeal their case and have regional interests heard.

Just to expand a little further yes, with the observations of the hon. member from the Bloc, we are both unhappy with some of the current situations in the country and we are both working to improve them.

However, coming from western Canada, when we have a problem we usually roll up our sleeves and try to fix it. That has been the approach of the Reform Party. If you see a problem, fix it. That is why we are called Reform which means constructive change. We think that Canada is a wonderful country which should contain ten equal provinces, each represented equally in the Senate. We recognize that in some ways Quebec is unique and should have its own cultural and linguistic needs represented at a provincial level.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Prior to resuming debate, this is our first week in this 35th Parliament and we are all learning our new responsibilities. It has come to my attention and I want to share with all members in the House that there is a tradition that we do not refer to the Senate. We refer to it as the other place.

*[Translation]*

Traditionally, in the House we never refer to the Senate as such. For instance, you could say "the other place". This is just for your information.

*[English]*

It is only for the information of all members that I share this new information I have just discovered, even though this is my second term here.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure and an honour for me to participate in the throne speech debate. We heard earlier today that one of the Telesat Anik satellites is out of commission. I will ask you to decide in 15 or 20 minutes whether it is good or bad that this is not on live television across the country.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your colleagues on your appointment to the Chair. It is my firm belief that you will be presiding over one of the best Parliaments that this country has seen in a long, long time.

I do not agree with the media pundits who refer to this as a potentially fractious Parliament. I do not agree with those who think we are going to be faced with problems day in and day out. I am not naive but from what I have seen so far and in talking to colleagues in my own party and colleagues from other parties everyone I have spoken to has agreed that we have the potential to have a truly great and productive Parliament. No doubt that will be partly due to the great contribution you and your colleagues in the Chair will make.

(1335)

I would also like to pay tribute to my colleagues, the member for Victoria—Madawaska and the member for Bruce—Grey who moved and seconded this debate. Like the speakers we have heard from our ministry and from other private members, they have given me great confidence that this place will truly reflect the views of Canadians in a way we have not seen in at least 10 years. I dare say that we will be very proud of that in the years to come.

We have this honoured section to your left that at times has been disparagingly referred to as the rump. I would like to disabuse members of this House of that name. I am pleased and proud to take my turn over here. When the others have their turn here I am sure they will be pleased with the view and the chance to see what is going on. They will have a chance to speak directly to our fellow members in the government. Maybe we can come up with a more creative description for this area. Take note that three of the Speaker's team are part of this area.

We should look at this section of the House as evidence that Canadians have put great trust in our party. It is impossible to reflect that confidence any other way except to have some of us over here because of our great numbers. If things work out there will be government members over here for a long time to come. Therefore we may as well look at this area as an honoured place to be. I feel very proud to be here, for now.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the voters of Algoma riding. I will talk a little about my riding in a moment before getting to the thrust of my comments on the throne speech.

The confidence my constituents placed in me has made me very proud. I have assured them at every opportunity and do so again now that I will work very hard for them. We talk about serving the country and individual Canadians. There is no greater honour than to have a chance to serve our fellow Canadians in this place. There are many callings in life where service is the thrust of an individual's activities. I cannot imagine a better way to serve our fellow man than as a par-

liamentarian. I am sure we all feel that way regardless of the ideological differences we might have.

I truly look forward to getting to know better all the members of this House in all parties. Whenever I am in this place I want it to encourage me in the work I do. I want it to strengthen me in my work here and in the riding.

For a while we are going to feel a little bit schizophrenic. It seems that the work here is different from the work in the riding. The nature of the day is obviously very different. Over time we will find that these two different lives will come closer and closer together. I would certainly defer to the opinion of those who have served in this place for a long time to confirm that. However it is my belief that our work here and our work in the riding is really one. It is only a matter of time before we actually feel that in our experiences. I look forward to that.

I would like to thank my family, particularly Julie. Those of us with families know the great sacrifices they have had to endure to allow us to serve in this way. It goes unnoticed by Canadians in general and it is important that we say in this public place that our families also serve the country. I am truly grateful to mine and to all our families who in some ways are forced to contribute. We appreciate that.

(1340)

We all had many volunteers working for us in our campaigns and we would not be here without them. The whole exercise of democracy is built on the building blocks of volunteers. The volunteers that work in the political process are as valuable as any volunteer raising funds for heart research or the kidney foundation. All those activities are important and the volunteers that work in the political realm are equally important. They make this country run. They are the lifeblood of democracy, in my view.

Of course we all depend on staff and I can assure you that the staff I have working for me are among the best.

I have the honour of representing the riding of Algoma which for the last 25 years was represented by a colleague of many of the returning members, Dr. Maurice Foster. I had the pleasure of working closely with him as his parliamentary assistant for a number of years. It was an experience I will never forget. He will be my adviser, at \$1 a year shall we say, for quite some time whether he likes it or not. He distinguished himself as a committee chair, as chairman of Ontario caucus for a number of years, as a parliamentary secretary, and as a representative of this country in several international delegations. He was the kind of parliamentarian who was truly Canadian and truly motivated by service. There is not an ounce of self-serving in Maurice Foster's attitude toward service and I could not let this

### *The Address*

chance go by without paying tribute to him and his work on behalf of Canada and Algoma.

Dr. Foster followed in the footsteps of Lester Pearson who represented Algoma East. I dare say I feel humbled to follow in the footsteps of such great Canadians as Lester Pearson and Maurice Foster.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite you as well as the other members of this House to visit Algoma riding. We all claim to have the greatest riding in the country and if there is such a thing as the greatest among equals then I will claim that title for Algoma.

Algoma riding is situated in the northern area of Lake Huron. It includes Manitoulin Island and the north shore of Lake Huron approximately from Georgian Bay to the eastern shore of Lake Superior. Like some other ridings it is very large. It takes over seven hours to drive from one end to the other. It is a spectacularly beautiful riding with many unique features, but like many ridings it is suffering difficult economic times.

We have a mining sector in Elliot Lake that has suffered tremendous downsizing. In the months ahead you will hear me make numerous interventions on behalf of Elliot Lake where thousands of jobs in the mining industry have been lost, but where tremendous effort is being made to revitalize the economy.

We have a substantial tourism industry. Our proximity to Michigan is helpful but the tourism industry needs revitalization too.

Forestry is a major industry for us but the constant badgering by the U.S. of our softwood lumber industry has had an impact.

I certainly appreciate the attitude of our government, of our leader and Prime Minister that he will take a firm businesslike stand with the Americans. We can no longer tolerate being pushed around. The Americans are our friends on a personal basis but I believe when it comes to country to country relations those have to be conducted in a businesslike manner. In fact during the campaign I asked the then leader if he would commit not ever to go fishing with the U.S. President. His response was that he did not think he would but it certainly seemed to me that the relationship between our previous Prime Minister and the U.S. President was too cosy.

We also have some farming. Believe it or not in northern Ontario there is a substantial farming sector. We have dairy farmers. Like many members who have dairy farmers or other supply managed sectors in their ridings, the GATT has been a tremendous exercise in frustration. I believe though that our government took up the challenge after October 25 and has produced for us a result that was the very best that could be obtained under the circumstances.

*The Address*

(1345)

In Algoma riding we are blessed with over 40 small communities including over a dozen First Nation communities. I will not dare start listing them for fear of forgetting or leaving one out. One has to visit.

I would like to come to the point of this exercise. I hope I did not leave myself too short on time. I am thinking back to the campaign where one was required to speak longer than one should too many times. I would like to make reference to a comment made by the member for Broadview—Greenwood yesterday. He made an intervention in response to the speech by a member from the Reform Party. That member from the Reform Party talked about the bottom line and generally the need to run Canada like a business.

I was very proud to hear the member for Broadview—Greenwood say that this country is not just a bottom line, this country is people. After all if there is any vision of this country that we should have front and foremost it is that of its people. When I look at the commitments made in the throne speech, the comments made by the member for Broadview—Greenwood and our famous red book, line after line after line, it is people first.

We cannot have a vision about a technological revolution or a vision about being a major trading country without first having a vision about the people who make up this country. I dare say, and with all due respect, the agenda of the Reform and Bloc parties really misses the mark. The deficit is important. The issues that the Bloc bring forward on behalf of their particular constituency are important, but they really ignore the fact that above all it is people and people want to have dignity. People want to have jobs. People want to be able to put food on the table using money that they have earned, not money that was given to them because they could not find a job.

The whole thing goes back to mobilizing and energizing the creativity of our people, mobilizing the capital resources, coupled with creativity to get this country moving again, get it out of the starting blocks.

I do not want to blame all our ills on the last 10 years, but let us blame some of the ills. Members will seldom hear the right hon. Prime Minister blame the last government for the predicament we are in, but those are the facts.

It really requires of us now that we always put people first. If I go through the list of the throne speech initiatives I do not see one that does not put people first, even something like the Rural Residential Assistance Program, the housing program. I can say that in my riding of Algoma where there are a lot of older people who are trying to stay in their homes longer so that they do not have to go into nursing homes that it is important to have access to funds to improve their homes so they can stay in them. That is a program about people.

Let us look at municipal infrastructure. That is a program about people. It gets people, I do not want to say at the bottom of the economic ladder as I do not mean that, but labourers, contractors and equipment operators, working. It gets money into the economy at the local level and gets it there quickly. We are talking about putting people back to work.

When I was preparing for my earlier S. O. 31 statement today on literacy I was reminded of how many of our adult population have difficulty functioning in our modern society because they cannot read. I just beamed with pride when our government's commitment to literacy, not only in the red book and not only by the appointment of a minister responsible for literacy, was given major mention in the throne speech.

(1350)

If we do not have strong building blocks and if we do not have strong people, how can we have a strong country.

As I mentioned earlier in the statements, literacy is an important issue in my riding of Algoma. We have people who spent years working in the resource sectors of mining, forestry and so on. When times were good it was easy to get a job. Maybe they did not get the education that was required or for economic reasons they had to go to work. Now with our country having to restructure itself economically these people are being left out. I think it is important that we do not leave anybody behind.

When we talk about the social safety net we are talking about people again. The social safety net without a doubt has become frayed over the years. There may be a few holes in the safety net. We would not want any trapeze artist falling into that safety net and hitting the wrong spot. That is what happens too often unfortunately.

I believe we have to honestly look at our social safety net programs to make them better. It does not mean that it is going to cost more. I really appreciated the comment in the speech by the member for Madawaska—Victoria, the seconder of the reply to the throne speech, that we can have a leaner government without a meaner government. We can do things better.

I am prepared and I am sure that my constituents are prepared to look honestly at changing constructively our social safety net program. We want it to do a better job. I campaigned openly, saying that there were abuses and that I was prepared to look honestly at making changes. I look forward to working with other members in this House to that end.

Even our initiative on crime talks about people. Who is it that is worried about getting mugged? It is people. Whatever we can do to make people feel safer on their streets, to make people feel that the justice system serves not only the victim but the community and deals effectively and constructively with the criminal will be moving this country forward.

*The Address*

Why is it that this country is singly the most desired country in the world in which to live? As long as we do not tell people how cold it can get here sometimes, I am sure everybody in this world would like to move here.

We have a community of peoples. Just imagine, this country was really built on three founding nations.

When one considers that we have such a desirable country, what better chance do we have than to serve together to move this country forward into the next century.

I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that we as a group certainly have many tough decisions to make in the months and years ahead. I think if we continue to be transparent in our dealings with the public they will look at us with confidence. If we try hard and we listen to the people I believe we will be successful. Fortunately for us and unfortunately for the other parties in this House, we will be here for a long time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Algoma for his speech. However, before making some comments and asking a question, and since this is my first speech before the House, I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the people from the riding of Anjou—Rivières-des-Prairies, in the east end of Montreal, who elected me.

As you know, many newspapers are describing Montreal as the capital of poverty in Canada, and the east end of Montreal is one of the most disadvantaged areas of all the metropolitan area. Therefore, I want to make the commitment to my constituents, those who elected me and even those who did not vote for me and whom I represent today, that I will promote their interests in the best way I know how.

I would also like to thank all members who, probably for the first time, rose or will rise in the next few days in this House. I think that most people, and this has been stressed, realize that it is a difficult task. I believe we all did an excellent job and that is a good sign for the days to come. Surely, we will learn very quickly the technicalities of government. I should point out that this will be extremely important for the debates to come.

(1355)

You know that, to a certain extent, we are here to learn. In view of the economic situation, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we will have lively and, hopefully, spirited debates in this House. All parties are committed to raising the level of parliamentary debates which people have considered a bit too low over the last few years.

We are presently in a political situation quite peculiar as in a few months, I strongly believe, Quebecers will be called upon to determine their own future. We will probably have a referendum within 18 to 24 months and, in due time, this referendum will generate some debate in this House where, for the first time, there will be clearly defined positions on both sides. Canadians will no doubt follow that debate. We will have to approach it in a very professional way.

I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague from Algoma, and I thank him. He mainly spoke of something I also believe in, something he referred to by using the terms "people first". I would like to ask him a question in this regard. Clearly, the first role of government and of people in government is to represent and defend the citizens who elected them.

I believe that the Conservative Party—if you allow me this political digression—lost the elections when Ms. Campbell said that she would reform social programs. We know that the Liberal Party did not make that promise, on the contrary, it promised to stimulate employment. However, statements by the Right Hon. Prime Minister lead us to believe that the government do indeed plan cuts in social programs, either directly or through cuts in transfer payments to the provinces.

My question to the hon. member for Algoma is this: How can you say that you put "people first" when in actual fact you are planning cuts in social programs?

[*English*]

**Mr. St. Denis:** I would like to thank the hon. member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies for his question and offer my good wishes on his first intervention.

It is because we are putting people first that we have included in the throne speech a number of initiatives. It is because we put people first that we need to look at the social safety net so that it better serves Canadians. Maybe all of us, certainly I did during my campaign, have people approach us and talk to us about what they perceive as abuses to the system and ways to improve it and make it serve the public better. I am not saying that we have to make cuts to improve it, but we have to look at what we do. We always have to renew our contract with each other and consider the terms of our contracts with the public. If we do not constantly update and reflect the current situation in our relationships with others we will lose track of where we are going.

I have great confidence in the minister of human resources who is, as members know, now undertaking a review along with the provinces in consultation with people across this country. I am very confident. I have faith that changes will be proposed that will be constructive, acceptable, fiscally responsible and reflect the realities of today.

*The Address*

(1400)

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Algoma on his maiden speech in this House, but I feel I must comment and set the record straight on one thing regarding the position of my party on the bottom line. That position on the bottom line, through you Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member is people related.

As a small businessman I appreciated the importance of the bottom line because if I did not have a bottom line my people lost their jobs. Therefore, as a businessman I was constantly concerned about the bottom line and how it related to my ability to employ people and pay fair wages.

The concern of my party is that the government is a business with a bottom line. Our taxpayers support that bottom line. Our bottom line is in danger of collapsing and then who will be there to look after those who are truly in need? We want to save the social safety nets for those who are truly in need. It is the deficit and the debt that is the real threat to those social safety nets. That is the threat to this economy and the creation of jobs. Our party is dedicated to doing something about that. That is why I say to all members of the House that our party's position on the bottom line is very much people related toward the people who need us most.

**Mr. St. Denis:** Mr. Speaker, governments are not businesses. I do not disagree with conducting our affairs in a businesslike manner. However, one cannot lay off a citizen. One can lay off an employee from a business but one cannot lay off a citizen. One cannot tell them to go away because one cannot afford to provide a certain fundamental and essential service.

When I talk about my concern about a single minded focus on the deficit as not being people oriented it is in recognition of the fact that people have to be working to pay the taxes that will allow the deficit to be managed.

I had this debate numerous times during the campaign. I really appreciated the other candidates in the campaign. They were excellent, all of them.

It is a matter of what comes first. It is not a chicken and egg problem because people must really be working first. If it requires investment to bring that about then I think we have to do it. If we have to use bottom line then we have to look at it in longer terms.

Consider the motion that was put forward about limiting the expenditures this coming fiscal year. Without thinking that through I have to question if it is people first or is it just a blind devotion to the bottom line without that consideration for people?

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish you great success in carrying out the responsibilities vested in you, at the beginning of the week, by the parliamentarians of this House.

I am confident that you will discharge these new responsibilities of yours with a firm yet courteous hand, and above all with a keen sense of fairness, a sense a fairness which the veterans of this House did not fail to mention.

Mr. Speaker, tradition has it that on the occasion of our maiden speech in the House, we are allowed to tell our fellow members what inspires and motivates us. As the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, I will be guided by three principles.

The first one is never to forget that all of us are parliamentarians, elected by the people, and as such our behaviour must constantly reflect and be based on the right to express our diversity.

The second principle deals with the fact that we live in a representative democracy .

Mr. Speaker, if I can address you today, it is because people put their trust in me. These people, you will have understood, are my constituents in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve to whom I would like to express my deepest appreciation; they can rest assured that I will defend their interests with all my energy and enthusiasm.

(1405)

Hochelaga—Maisonneuve is an urban riding, 92 per cent French speaking, located in east Montreal. It is a typical working class riding.

I am the son of a labourer and proud of it, and I think this is the best guarantee for my constituents that I will never let the government cut social programs, drop its plans for tax reform or downgrade the extent of our economic problems.

Finally, my third principle arises from what we must conclude from the last election on October 25, and my conclusion is that Quebecers rejected the constitutional status quo once and for all.

By electing 54 Bloc Québécois members, the people of Quebec rejected a government that attacked the most vulnerable members of our society. For instance, we had the notorious measures to reform the unemployment insurance system, when Canadians saw their benefits reduced from 60 to 57 per cent. Canada also made dubious history when it became the only OECD member that does not contribute to a public unemployment insurance fund.

On October 25, Quebecers chose to support a national liberation movement. This movement, as you know, is rooted in the recent and not so recent history of the only French-speaking people in the Americas.

*The Address*

Quebec, as lawyer André Brassard reminded us, is the only example in the world of a people living within a federation where 82 per cent of the same population has a territory, democratic institutions and common aspirations.

The election on October 25 made it clear to the political elites that the concept of national unity, so dear to Pierre Elliott Trudeau and his followers, died with the demise of Meech Lake and the clear rejection of the Charlottetown Accord.

The arrival of a strong contingent of Bloc and Reform members is eloquent testimony that Canada has entered the era of regional identities. As these identities mature, Canada will have to make a thorough review of its institutions. I am firmly convinced that as a result, Quebec will be able to propose new forms of political co-operation with English Canada. These new forms of co-operation will reflect a generous, modern and effective approach and together they represent sovereignty. Sovereignty as defined by international public law, that is to say the power for the State to collect all taxes on its territory, to see to its own external relations and to enact all the laws that apply to its citizens.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the Speech from the Throne read by His Excellency the Governor General on behalf of the government.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Prime Minister and his cabinet, and wish them the best of luck in their responsibilities.

Among the positive aspects of the Speech from the Throne, I would like to mention the commitment of the government to enhance the credibility of Parliament and insist on integrity and honesty. This is to the credit of the government.

I cannot but concur with the intention of the Prime Minister to change the rules of the House of Commons to give Members of Parliament a greater opportunity to contribute to the development of public policy and legislation.

However, on the financial side, the Speech from the Throne is rather disappointing. This is because it is so vague, so nebulous, because as the philosopher Pascal would have said: "It is a speech where the centre is everywhere and the periphery nowhere." It is so conservative that it looks like a commitment to the status quo.

We would be hard pressed to find any project of significance, capable of giving some hope to out-of-work Canadians and Quebecers.

There is no indication that the government is determined to get out of the rut we are in, to innovate and create the conditions that should lead us to what is really needed, and that is full employment.

(1410)

We cannot limit our economic development policy to the national infrastructure program. Even if that program does address some of the issues raised by the municipalities, we must admit that the tripartite financing could create problems since municipal administrations are tragically short on resources and provincial governments are not much better off.

What is disturbing is that the national infrastructure program is likely to create temporary jobs that will only bring disappointment to workers.

Finally, the Speech from the Throne was totally silent on the question of tax reform.

For now, let me examine the Speech from the Throne from the point of view of research and development since my leader has chosen me as our party's critic in that area.

It is easy enough for me to deal with that issue since there is a consensus on research and development. I think I can safely say that all parties in this House recognize that research and development is a necessity for the future, a pathway to the next century.

We all know that industries who want to be competitive in the near future have to invest considerably right now in research and development.

Why is research and development so important? Simply because the strength of any economy no longer resides in the possession, the processing or the transformation of raw material, as the Minister of Industry indicated this morning.

Competitiveness lies mainly in a worker's ability to master new production technologies and deliver new goods and services. This translates into a demand for a more educated and better trained labour force willing to continuously upgrade their skills. It is in such a context that the relationship between competitiveness, training and research takes its full meaning.

Several advisory bodies, in Quebec as well as in Canada, warned that in the next 10 years, half of all new jobs will require up to five years of postsecondary education.

The increased significance of research and development will shape a society in which economic growth will rest first and foremost on skilled labour.

In the eyes of the Bloc Quebecois members, research and development is particularly important. If there is an area in which Quebec has been the poor relation of the federation, in which Quebec has been systematically discriminated against, it is in that one.

It is important to remind Quebecers that the federal government is a main player in that area. For example, in 1990, the federal government invested around \$6 billion in research and development.

No matter how you look at this issue, disparities are painfully obvious when it comes to Quebec. One fact is clear, the



*The Address*

distribution of research and development expenditures has constantly been unfair to Quebec and, consequently, has hampered its future economic development.

This fact is so clear that even Robert Bourassa's former government had to recognize it on the strength of the now famous study carried out by the ministry of industry and commerce, which can hardly be suspected of being a sovereignist sympathizer.

The great merit of this study performed under Étienne Grégoire in 1991 is that it assessed the distribution of federal funds allocated to research and development over the past decade, using four seldom considered criteria: the size of the population in each province; federal spending in relation to the size of the provincial economy; as well as regional support for research and, last, development and the federal support in that area as compared to that of each province.

The study shows that over the last decade a mere 18.5 per cent of research and development funds went to Quebec, while Ontario got the lion's share, receiving 50 per cent of the funds. These findings are both disturbing and unacceptable, especially knowing how pivotal R and D is in societies intent on expanding their share of the market on the international market.

It is imperative that the Minister of Industry and the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development develop corrective action to put an end to this underfunding affecting Quebec.

I can assure you that my colleagues and myself will fight relentlessly to put a stop to such discrimination.

(1415)

Quebecers have invested too much in their development over the last 20 years to put up with this situation. We will act and be vigilant to ensure that Quebecers do not tolerate any unfairness in research and development.

While federal investment in research and development in Quebec is far from satisfactory, R and D in Canada is also cause for concern on several fronts as well. First, Canada is one of the industrialized countries which spends the least on R and D, on average, a mere 1.44 per cent of its gross domestic product, while the other OECD countries spend 3 per cent on it. Second, most Canadian and Quebec companies do little or no research. Third, Canadian industrial research is concentrated in a few very limited sectors.

What does the Speech from the Throne offer us in terms of research and development? Very little, actually, except for a centre of excellence for women's health, with which we agree. Nevertheless, in the last election campaign, the Liberal team and its leader, the present Prime Minister, swore to heaven that R and D would be a priority in a Liberal government.

These promises did not make it as far as the Speech from the Throne.

The greatest disappointment of the scientific community is the government's silence on the Liberal team's commitment to spend \$1 billion in support of research and development. I want to say it loud and clear: the Official Opposition will not accept the government shirking its responsibilities in such an important area as research and development.

The scientific community is concerned, for two reasons: first, no one in the inner cabinet is responsible for science, research and development as such. Mr. Speaker, you will tell me that there is a secretary of state responsible for these issues, but you will agree that he does not sit in the council of ministers. Will he be able to influence the government on policy development? Will he be able to convince the government to invest the billion dollars promised in the last election? That is very uncertain!

Secondly, will the government allow the main granting agencies such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Medical Research Council to play their proper role by stabilizing their resources and giving them a five-year funding plan? In this regard, I heard about the concern of some social science researchers following the departure of the former president of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Dr. Paule Leduc. I take the opportunity to thank her for her services to the scientific community and urge the government to fill the void left by her departure, in consultation with the interested agencies.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has a key role to play in reaching Canada's and Quebec's R and D objectives. Therefore it wants its funding to continue to come from the same envelope as the other two granting agencies, thus showing the public that social science research is also scientific research.

Rumours have been going around that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council could be transferred to the Department of Canadian Heritage. Such a move would disturb the scientific community in that it would suggest that the social sciences are closer to culture and the arts than to science.

One sector that must receive particular attention from the government is biomedical and biological research, especially since Canada and Quebec have solid experience in this area.

A coalition, the coalition for biomedical and health research, was created a few weeks ago. This coalition brings together 16 medical schools and 6,000 biomedical and biological researchers.

*The Address*

(1420)

I submit that a novel approach to curbing the growth of health costs and the deficit would be to invest significant amounts in biomedical research.

Disease and its accompanying harmful effects create not only personal hardship but also a financial burden that we must strive to alleviate.

Did you know that, each year, loss of productivity due to short-term or permanent disability costs \$21 billion to the Canadian economy?

In order for biomedical and health research to constitute a viable solution and to help curb health costs significantly, the Minister of Industry and the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development must be urged to take three steps. First, to restore funding to federal research councils to their 1992 levels. Second, to develop a mechanism to protect R and D activities carried out in federal laboratories from government-wide budget cuts. Third, to call a summit conference bringing together representatives of the stakeholders in the area of biomedical research and health as well as the Prime Minister and his ministers responsible for finance, science, health, human resources and labour to develop an integrated research and development strategy with a long-term view to improving Canada's international competitiveness.

These suggestions, which take into account the present state of government finances, would enable the government to honour a number of election promises and above all send a strong signal about this government's commitment to biomedical research.

In closing, I want to reiterate that federal investment in research and development in Quebec is a great tool afforded this government to correct the injustices Quebec has been suffering for much too long already. This is an area where economic development and constitutional reform are not incompatible. I hope to have persuaded the hon. members that the horizons of the Bloc extend way beyond sovereignty, even though this is indeed our ultimate goal.

[English]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his opening remarks. I would like to deal specifically with those remarks in his speech pertaining to research and development.

I would also like to make a general statement through you, Mr. Speaker, to members of the Bloc Quebecois. I have been sitting here listening to their speeches over the last few days. Quite frankly I am impressed and encouraged because I find many of the things they are representing and fighting for, with the exception of independence, are the same things that we and our constituents are fighting for. If we could somehow get them to rekindle their spirit toward Canada rather than give up on

Canada, this could probably be a very interesting Parliament. However we will not try to get that all accomplished in the first week.

I want to make a point about research and development funding. Proportionally the amount of funding for R and D in Quebec and in Ontario is relatively the same. We inherited a situation where a lot of the cuts were made for us. We are not going to cry over a mistake that was made in the past. I want to give an assurance that we on this side of the House are looking forward to a renewed commitment toward research and development in all regions of the country with laboratories because funding is more organized around the labs than on an across the board basis.

If the member reads the red book closely he will see we have made a very serious commitment to enhanced research and development in the up and coming session.

(1425)

[Translation]

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend for his kind words. From the outset I noted that he was an excellent parliamentarian and it is a pleasure for me to debate these issues with him.

I know the Bloc Quebecois is concerned about a number of issues, including independence, which it will have the opportunity to address.

However, I disagree with him when he says that proportionally, Quebec and Ontario receive relatively the same amount of research and development funding. Moreover, I would be happy to provide him with some material on this subject so that we can discuss the matter with full knowledge of the facts.

Which brings me to the role the Official Opposition will be called upon to play in the next few years. It will be our job to make our friends in the government party understand that sovereignty is first and foremost a form of political organization, one that is inevitable when one belongs to a minority.

As for the rest, as a number of members have said in this House, there is nothing to stop us from sharing the same interests. My hon. friend will agree with us that States share interests first, and feelings second. I think we will be able to demonstrate in this House that as parliamentarians, in areas of mutual interest, we will not hesitate to recommend associative formulas.

There have been a number of references to an economic union. In our program, we speak of sharing the same passport and of the free flow of goods. There are many areas in which Canada and Quebec can find common ground as two distinct nations. Where it hurts, however, is when one is in a minority position, and that is why the government will be unable to avoid a proper debate on the Constitution.

*The Address*

As Maurice Séguin, a celebrated Quebec historian and the first of his kind to advocate independence, once said, a nation must demand the right to take full charge of the development of its economy, culture and language. And in order to accomplish this, it needs to have all the political levers required.

What we are demanding, with magnanimity and an open mind, is the economic leverage we lack to initiate this development. I know I can convince my hon. friend that this is certainly a debate worth getting into.

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

[English]

**Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to express my congratulations to the member on his address.

I was particularly interested to hear his references to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. They were of particular interest to me because I had a grant from the council that I had to give up when I joined this Chamber. I was the first person to do so since the member for Winnipeg South Centre gave his up in 1974. Also the remarks about Madam Leduc were appropriate. She has been an excellent leader of that organization.

In addition to the possibility of support from the SSHRC in the province of Quebec there is the possibility of support from the provincial government which I did not have in the province of Ontario. In other words, social scientists in Quebec have more substantial opportunities for funding for their social science research than do social scientists in Ontario.

Second, having served on juries for the SSHRC, I recall that the province of Quebec received a proportion that was higher than the portion of its university population. In terms of the member's larger remarks about sovereignty, in considering these questions he should recognize that over the past 25 or 30 years these councils have developed social science research. The province of Quebec has had an extraordinary amount of research supported by the SSHRC and the federal government. Social science research in the province of Quebec has benefited admirably by this contribution. In a sovereign Quebec it would be lost.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I appreciate the excellent job done by the former chairperson, Dr. Paule Leduc.

(1430)

True, Quebec is particularly active in social studies. There are historical reasons for that, and I would like to remind the hon. member that, when we consider such issues, the first criterion to use is the specific amount of money invested by the government. But since the accepted proposals have to go through a peer

assessment process, there is a second criterion to take into account, and that is the number of requests and research proposals received. My colleague would certainly agree with me that, historically, in the past, Quebec has submitted more proposals than a number of provinces.

When we talk about sovereignty, it is not that we do not want to recognize but first, we have to recognize a significant and historical event, which I am not afraid to refer to in this House. The people who were 20 or 30 years old during the fifties felt freedom in the air, a feeling originating from Ottawa. I can appreciate that and I know some people who can testify to that effect, namely Gérard Pelletier and Pierre Elliott Trudeau. A number of them published articles in *Cité libre*, a publication which had a lot of influence on intellectuals. What has changed today is the fact that Quebec built itself a modern State and seems capable of handling all the levers and responsibilities granted to a modern state. That is why sovereignty is supported by more and more people in our province.

[English]

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate you on your appointment this week. It is an appointment much deserved. I am sure that the good people of Stormont—Dundas are very proud of you.

I also want to offer my sincere congratulations to my good friend and colleague and now former room-mate who was elected Speaker this week. It is a great honour. I know that he will serve us and the whole country very well.

Over the past five years I have come to know the Speaker well. I can tell Canadians with utmost certainty that he is kind, decent and a man of great integrity. We parliamentarians would do well to emulate our new Speaker. I will do everything in my capacity to do that.

I also want to thank the people of Winnipeg St. James for electing me to my second term. It is indeed an honour to represent the people of Winnipeg St. James. I promise to continue to do my best to represent their best interests.

It is a privilege to participate in this debate. Before I get on to the economy, which is the number one priority for this new government, I want to talk about restoring integrity to government which is a preoccupation of the Prime Minister.

Over the past 10 years Canadians came to believe that they could not trust their government any more. In fact, it spilled over to include almost all politicians. Canadians thought that they could not trust anyone any more. They saw sleaze everywhere. Sometimes they saw sleaze when none existed. People were in the grips of cynicism. Such was the mood of Canadians. They were distrustful and cranky and they used the last election to make a point: "Mess around with me and mess around with my country and you're gone, you're history". The people across the way, the Bloc Québécois, would be very clever to take note of that.

*The Address*

That explains, at least in part, why there are so many new faces in this the 35th Parliament, over 200 new MPs, an unprecedented number.

The message we Liberals received, one which we have already acted upon, is that Canadians want a government they can respect, a government of integrity, a government that works with Canadians not against them, a government that says what it means and means what it says and, in these difficult times, they want a government that is lean but, as the Prime Minister has pointed out and as the seconder to the throne speech pointed out, not mean. That can be done. A compassionate government can make difficult financial decisions. I think that the government has made a good start in that regard. We understand that people do not want a big spending, pompous government. They want one which is down to earth. They want practical managers who are careful with the public purse.

(1435)

Examples of such careful decisions were the cancellation of the Pearson airport contract, cuts in government departments and staff, and the Prime Minister's services such as the sale of the so-called Mulroney air force 1 aircraft or the bulletproof Cadillac and the proposed reforms to the House of Commons budget and procedures where we will see a significant reduction in the services offered to members of Parliament.

I am enthusiastic about our government's promise to delegate more power to opposition MPs in standing committees in influencing public policy and determining legislation.

These actions all highlight the characteristics of our government, frugality, rationality and openness which we solidly stood for during the election campaign. These are some of the things that reflect the style of this new government, a government that wants to earn the respect and trust of Canadians.

If this is done, and I am confident that the government is well on its way to that goal, Canadians will I believe be more understanding of the difficult decisions which are bound to come. I think the electorate has already responded positively to the messages and signals that we have set out.

I have taken note of some of the letters I have received and I want to read into the record a few of the comments made by constituents in letters to me.

"Mr. Chrétien is an honest man and I am sure he will work for the people in Canada to the best of his ability". Jean Cutting from St. James.

Joyce Chapman of St. James writes: "I am impressed with Mr. Chrétien. I have a feeling he is an honest man. What a difference from King Brian".

There are more letters. "I do not know what is involved in the job of the Prime Minister but it seems to me that he has a frugal nature that will extend to all of his work," writes Cathy McLean of St. James.

Here is one from Carey and Christine Lee of my riding: "So far the Liberals have shown that you don't need all the bells and whistles that the Tories had to run a government. I hope it stays that way. Keep up the good work".

Those are just some of the comments made by constituents. You can tell they are listening and watching, as they should.

Let us hope that the days of bad mouthing everything the government tries to do are gone for good. We have had enough of the neo-Conservative nonsense that government is essentially bad, that it is an enemy of the people.

Over the period of Thatcher, Reagan, and Mulroney we were told that the government should just get out of the way and leave most big decisions to the marketplace. I can say that I have the utmost respect for the marketplace and, yes, government is far from perfect. The neo-Conservative approach to government certainly proved that. But in a democracy, Sir, there is a major role for government. It can lead. It can act as a partner. It can work toward equality and justice for all and it can be a unifying force for good.

The Prime Minister understands that perhaps better than any person in this country. Instead of dismissing government as ineffectual this Prime Minister is committed to making government work better for all Canadians.

Specifically we were given the mandate to turn the economy around. Our main objective as stated so often during the campaign and in the red book is to create jobs. We were committed to that through the throne speech and we will continue to be so in the upcoming budget.

Canadians want the opportunity to work. Our focus on developing opportunities for small and medium sized businesses by improving access to capital such as the Canada Investment Fund to help high technology firms means better employment prospects.

The tripartite infrastructure program has already been welcomed by politicians at all levels of government and the public in general. The reintroduction of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program and the establishment of the Youth Service Corps will give young people and others who have limited opportunities a chance for a good livelihood and prosperity.

*The Address*

Through partnerships, streamlining and improved accessibility to capital our Canadian economy will bounce back with much needed job opportunities.

(1440)

We have already heard criticism on our policy on the deficit and the debt. The hon. member for Calgary Southwest apparently did not hear alarm bells go off during the throne speech debate on Tuesday with regard to the deficit and the debt.

I would suggest that the hon. leader of the Reform Party check his hearing. The throne speech did mention the importance of deficit reduction. Let me just quote a couple of the sentences in the throne speech: "The budget will be tabled in February and will include measures to bring the federal debt and deficit under control in a means that is compatible with putting Canadians back to work". The throne speech continued: "The government will work with the provinces to ensure that our shared fiscal challenge is dealt with co-operatively and creatively". I think that is pretty clear.

The throne speech did mention the importance of deficit reduction. That is why we proposed a prudent balance to the economy as mentioned in the red book. Members can be sure that the budget will reflect that.

As the Prime Minister so clearly pointed out yesterday the best way to control the deficit is through job creation. It creates revenues and thus lessens the need for cutbacks to important government services.

Let us not hear any more talk about the government not being serious about the deficit and the debt. Instead of rhetoric and corny analogies the opposition should offer alternatives and ideas.

I am excited about the government restating its commitment to a national forum on health. I find a touch of irony here that the hon. Leader of the Opposition should come out in defence of medicare and social programs. On this issue we agree. However this is the same man who wishes to take the province of Quebec out of Confederation. Let us try to understand the situation. He wants to save our most cherished social program which brings Canadians together, but at the same time would rather forsake it to break up the country. I do not believe that the people of Quebec see it that way. I cannot envisage a Canada without medicare and I cannot see Canada without Quebec.

The government is completely committed to maintaining medicare and the social safety net. Admittedly there are problems with the system and we in the Liberal Party have been long concerned by the situation, not just since becoming government. How better a way for Canadians to influence the future of health care in this country than through a national forum. We have agencies and ordinary citizens who may come together with

federal and provincial politicians to strengthen, not weaken, universal health care. Not only is medicare a way to cover service costs, but it is available to all, not just the rich. The only qualifier for our health care system is that one be a Canadian resident. We pledge to keep this inherent right for all Canadians in the future.

I cannot forget the riding and the province which I am privileged to represent in this House. Growth in the Manitoba economy in the last 10 years has been well below the national average. My good friend from Winnipeg South has done research on this and has made that case forcefully, not only here in Ottawa but in the Manitoba legislature when he served the people of the provincial constituency of Osborne so well. He showed graphically with strong evidence that Manitoba when it comes to its own economy, compared to the economies of other provinces, has not kept up to the national pace, if I can put it that way.

We now have 12 government MPs from the province of Manitoba and as the chair of the Manitoba Liberal caucus I am confident that this fine group of experienced and some rookie members will work together as a team. I can assure the House that we are all Canadians first and foremost.

(1445)

As we say though, we believe Manitoba should have a just share of the nation's prosperity. We have an excellent senior minister in the hon. Minister for Human Resources and Western Economic Diversification. He knows the province of Manitoba as well as he knows the back of his hand. His assurances of economic growth in our province give me optimism for the near future.

Manitoba will benefit in the short term through the infrastructure program, a \$68.3 million investment by the federal government and over 10,000 direct and indirect jobs. We have also heard of a revamped core area initiative with a wider scope. This means good news on the horizon for all the people in Winnipeg and not just those in the downtown area.

In my riding a vibrant aerospace industry exists. Part of this industry took a serious hit when the helicopter contract was cancelled. Our party made very clear during the election campaign our intention to revoke approval of this deal because of its enormous costs. The Prime Minister carried through on that promise just days after the election.

While layoffs brought all of us pain, especially to the workers involved, I still believe there is a strong future for aerospace in Winnipeg—St. James. Our government I am sure will do everything to make this happen. We have taken a leap of faith in our defence conversion program which proposes to adapt aerospace technology to civilian projects. With the right policy we will see more, not fewer, jobs coming to the province of Manitoba.

*The Address*

I also consider the Winnipeg International Airport a constituent of sorts. As a regular stop for several domestic and international airlines the Winnipeg International Airport can become a major centre for air cargo facilities. Studies prove that Winnipeg is in an ideal location, at the heart not only of North America but between western Europe and the Pacific rim.

Government and the private sector are now working to create what is called an intermodal transportation service at the Winnipeg International Airport. I can see no reason why it cannot become a world class facility worth billions of dollars and hundreds of jobs for Winnipeg and Manitoba. I believe our government will be committed to supporting this initiative.

While I am on the subject of the Winnipeg International Airport and before I close I would like to voice concerns relating to the proposed privatization of the airport. The previous Tory government introduced a plan toward privatization but that plan has been put on hold by the new government pending a review. I think that is prudent on the part of the new government because the plan as proposed by the Tories raises many questions.

I would like to bring to the attention of this House the Auditor General's report on this matter. The report warns that privatization could cost taxpayers millions of dollars. In fact the Auditor General states that at Montreal, Calgary and Edmonton, airports which were recently privatized, revenues are much lower than forecast. That shortfall could mean another hit on the taxpayer or it could mean slapping user fees on air travellers. Air travellers through Vancouver airport are familiar with such user fees and I can say that they do not like them.

Therefore, airport privatization, at least Tory style privatization raises concerns and a government review of how that is to be carried out is very much in order. Over and above cost concerns I have a concern about accountability or perhaps more precisely, a lack of accountability. That accountability as proposed by the previous government amounted to little more than the printing of an annual report and holding a public meeting once a year. To me that is not accountability.

If we are going to have a local airport authority to run the Winnipeg International Airport, and I am not opposed to this change in principle, there must be transparency and openness. Business cannot be done behind closed doors. Business plans proposed by such an authority that have a substantial impact on air travellers, people, or business around the airport or the airport itself should be scrutinized publicly. Such an authority should manage the airport on a sound business basis. However, the airport should make room on its board for people representing air travellers, labour and the public at large.

(1450)

This government promises greater accountability. That accountability starts here in Ottawa, but it must extend right across the country and include all institutions of government. The Winnipeg airport is a public facility and it must be managed accordingly.

This approach fits in with the style of this government, a government committed to openness and whose Prime Minister is committed to restoring integrity to government.

In closing I would like to say that we face some daunting problems, repair of the economy and overhaul of social programs to name just a couple, and things cannot be turned around over night. I believe that if we offer good honest government, and I think we will, Canadians will give us the time needed to get the job done. The throne speech shows that that job has already begun.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean):** Mr. Speaker, since this is my first speech in the House, I would like to take this opportunity to convey my congratulations to you as my hon. colleagues have done.

Before I put my questions to the hon. member for Winnipeg St. James, I would like to focus in on some remarks he made to the effect that the Bloc Quebecois and its leader wanted to break up this beautiful country. In my opinion, this is not only a pejorative, but also an inaccurate statement. I would like to draw his attention to several historic footnotes to this debate.

First, there was the Act of Union which, in my estimation, may have been the beginning of the emergence of the two solitudes. As we know, Upper and Lower Canada were united in 1840. Lower Canada came out on the losing end since at the time, it had a much more effective and efficient administration than did Upper Canada. The situation was unfair from the beginning.

I will not review the events of the past 200 years, since it would only bring me to cite examples of the way Quebec has been treated by English Canada. Specifically, in the case of the Meech Lake agreement which set out five minimum conditions for bringing Quebec back into the constitutional fold, English Canada was unable to accept these conditions and these were just our minimum demands.

Charlottetown ultimately signalled the end of this debate and for one very simple reason. English Canada as a whole rejected the Charlottetown accord, claiming that Quebec was asking for too much and that the accord was slanted in its favour. Quebec rejected the accord for exactly the opposite reason. Our goal is definitely not to break up the country. It is to build a nation that would work side by side with Canada, share the same economic space and viability.

*The Address*

I would like my hon. colleagues to think of our objective as being not to break up the country, but rather to complement it on our terms.

Now then, as far as the economy is concerned, I fail to see how the Liberal Party can resolve the problem of the deficit which will hit \$45 billion this year, tackle the national debt which just surpassed \$500 billion and create jobs without touching social programs. This would seem to me to be a Herculean task, one that I personally think is impossible to accomplish. Therefore, as we can already see, there are some glitches in the throne speech which lead one to believe that this government says one thing, but when the time comes to follow through, it will find that it cannot.

Does the hon. member for Winnipeg St. James agree that a parliamentary committee should be set up to look at ways of resolving the country's economic problems? This is the course of action we are advocating. Why not make this a priority, sit down together and review each budget item separately? And everybody knows that the bureaucracy must be streamlined. So, let us start there before embarking on a crusade against social programs, which is what could well happen now. I would like the hon. member to answer a question. Would it not be better to have an all-party joint parliamentary committee instead of a red book or a throne speech which is only wishful thinking?

(1455)

*[English]*

**Mr. Harvard:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I will try to answer his questions as best as I can.

In so far as this Parliament examining the kinds of issues that he raised and wants examined, of course we are in favour of that. The committees will be up and running in the next few days and they are going to be working very hard.

The Prime Minister has already pointed out when it comes to tax matters, especially the GST, the finance committee will be given instructions to do a very thorough job. The finance committee will also be taking into consideration not only the budget that will be brought down next month but future budgets as well.

I say very sincerely to the hon. member from the Bloc that there will be plenty of opportunity at the committee level to discuss all the issues that weigh so heavily on his mind.

Let me respond for a moment to his remarks about his leader not being a man who wants to take Quebec out of Canada. As far as I know, the leader of the Bloc Quebecois calls himself a sovereigntist.

My definition of sovereignty is a country that is sovereign, separate from another country. It seems to me when a party leader says he wants to establish a country that is sovereign, that is a country which is separate and apart from Canada. As far as I know the province of Quebec, which is a terrific province and one that is as good as any other province in this country, is still not a separate country.

Let us not try to treat this as some kind of semantic argument. This is a political problem and a political issue. No fancy dancing with semantics will change it. What we are talking about here is a faction in this House that wants to break up the country.

If the Péquistes in Quebec win the next provincial election and if, God forbid, they win the referendum as they promise to do, does anyone think that these ladies and gentlemen who call themselves the Bloc will be sitting around here representing the best interests of Canada? Not on your life.

Let us put a stop to this talk about semantics. One more thing. The hon. member tries to misquote the Prime Minister when he said that the Prime Minister was indicating that we were going to solve all our economic problems and revamp our social programs in the coming year. Nobody ever said that.

When it comes to government and politics, a year is a very short period of time. In fact, one never completely solves all economic problems and one never completely solves all social problems. This is an ongoing thing.

We have promised to tackle these problems head on. We are going to make some changes. We are going to create jobs. We are going to turn this economy around, but it will not be overnight and it will not happen in one year.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to be brief.

As you know, my name is Jean-Guy Chrétien and I am referring to the letters read earlier by the hon. member for Winnipeg St. James. I wonder if the hon. member could tell me why the right hon. Prime Minister is so unpopular in Quebec, and so well-liked outside that province. The primary problem which I encountered in my riding during the six weeks of the election campaign was my surname. People would say: "Your name is going to work against you. Some will think that they are voting for Jean Chrétien, the leader of the Liberal Party." Much to my surprise, the name of the party on the ballot was written in very small characters.

(1500)

**An hon. member:** You only have two minutes left.

**Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac):** I only have two minutes left. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member for Winnipeg St. James could use that time to try to explain to us, Quebecers, why the popularity of our Prime Minister varies so much?

*The Address*

[English]

**Mr. Harvard:** Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to be an expert on Quebec politics but I can tell you one thing. I do not know what his definition of popularity is but I did check the voting results in the riding where the right hon. Prime Minister serves and he won with an overwhelming majority. I think that in his riding he is a very popular politician. I will make this prediction. After four to five years of his prime ministership not only will he be exceedingly popular in his own riding but he will be exceedingly popular right across the province of Quebec.

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, I will be succinct in my question but I cannot respond with any degree of authority for my colleague who is going to give the answer as to brevity.

I first wanted just to rise and compliment my colleague from the riding of Winnipeg—St. James for the excellent presentation that he has just given this House with respect to comments on his speech from the throne. I wanted to do that because of the very strong relationship and love between the people in his riding and all ridings in Manitoba and those of us in northwestern Ontario in the centre of this great country of ours. We have always felt that. What happens basically in Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg and what happens in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario is that we both feel each other's reverberations. There is a jointness and a oneness there that we share from the centre of Canada.

Let me make this comment. I will try to be succinct. From the interventions that we heard and the remarks my colleague made there are so many things that they both talked about that bring us together: the grain business is vital to Manitoba and Quebec; the aerospace industry is vital to Manitoba and to the future of Quebec; the transportation industry and the local airport authority which Dorval and Mirabel have already implemented and which the city of Winnipeg is on the threshold of implementing brings us together. There are other areas of mutual interest that they both spoke about that lead us to being together in this country. I just wanted to compliment my colleague and my friends on the other side. There are many issues that should bring us together.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by adding my congratulations to those which have already been expressed to the Speaker of this House on his election to a post of great trust and responsibility. I hope my words will not be taken as a mere formality because they are most sincerely meant.

Members of this House chose their Speaker in a free and democratic vote. We hope it will be the first of many free and democratic votes in this Parliament. I believe their vote was a clear indication of members' confidence in the Speaker and his ability to preside over this Chamber fairly and effectively.

I also congratulate the right hon. Prime Minister and members opposite on being given the opportunity to form the government of this great country as well as all members here for earning the confidence of fellow citizens in their home ridings.

(1505)

Voters in the riding of Calgary North have allowed me the great privilege of representing them in the Parliament of their country. I want to take the opportunity of my first speech in the House of Commons to once again express to the citizens of Calgary North sincere thanks for the confidence they have placed in me and in the Reform program which I intend to work for as I work for them.

Other members will be interested to know that the riding of Calgary North has the largest population of any of the 26 Alberta ridings. New residential areas are continually being built in Calgary North and our people are forward looking, dynamic and working hard to build sound futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

It has been my pleasure to meet and talk with many of them in recent months and I am determined to do my very best to provide the competent and trustworthy representation they want and deserve.

In the many hours I have spent talking with Canadians in Calgary North I have heard two messages loud and clear. One is a real concern and growing anxiety about the mismanagement of this country's finances. The people of Calgary North like most Canadians do understand that there is a connection between the enormous amounts of debt which successive governments have run up and the difficulty people are having in finding stable jobs with good incomes.

Excessive government spending has led to more and higher taxes. Taxes are like weeds in a garden. Let too many grow and pretty soon there is not enough soil left to grow flowers.

The second message is the focus of my own reply today to the speech from the throne. It is this. Canadians have a profound and disturbing distrust for the institutions of government and for politicians in general. It is no secret how this has happened. Politicians tell us they will do certain things. They do something different.

We try to tell politicians what we want them to do. They do not listen. Yet it is our money they are spending and it is our future they are deciding.

That is why I together with many other Canadians in Calgary North and elsewhere applaud the statement in the speech from the throne which reads:

The government is committed to enhancing the credibility of Parliament. Changes will be proposed to the rules of the House of Commons to provide members of Parliament with a greater opportunity to contribute to the development of public policy and legislation.



*The Address*

I would like to inform the government and the members in this House that the people in Calgary North would be all for this. They want and are prepared to contribute to the development of public policy and legislation through me as their elected representative. In fact since the election they have been working with me to set up mechanisms which will genuinely allow me to inform, consult with, and be advised by constituents.

Less than a month following the election over 300 people packed a school gym in my riding for our first constituency meeting to discuss how this could best be done. Out of this meeting and through subsequent consultations have and will come many excellent recommendations. We will hold regular public constituency meetings to discuss key issues and legislation which come before this House.

Constituents have requested regular communications about what is happening here and they want to know how government activities will affect their lives. They want their say on major legislation and that is why we are designing ways to get their input before I come here to vote.

In early March we will discuss the federal budget at a public constituency meeting. The people will tell me which budget initiatives they support, which do not carry their judgment and where this is so what alternatives they would recommend. This is a constructive approach and one which the people of Calgary North believe is consistent with the principles of representative democracy which this House has been entrusted to uphold and to practise.

(1510)

Calgary North constituents are also able to participate in question period by sending questions they want asked of the government to the fax line and voice mail number installed in our Reform parliamentary office. People are demanding that the parliamentary process must be opened up and made more relevant to the real needs of Canadians.

Believe me, they will be watching. They are watching these proceedings and the highlights of the daily question period on the nightly news to see if the decorum and attitude in this place will truly change.

When Canadians watch television they expect to see the body checking, cheering and jeering left to Hockey Night in Canada, but when they watch Parliament they want to see us put the puck in the net. They want and look to us to work together to find real answers to real problems facing this country.

The decisions taken in this House must reflect the will of the people of Canada expressed through their legitimate representatives and not just the will of a small group of ministers and bureaucrats who advise them. Government proposals must be tested and balanced by the people themselves.

In this 35th Parliament I believe the courage to demonstrate faith in the democratic system by making this possible would prove to be justified. It is clear not only to myself as a new member but to all members that there now exists an unprecedented and genuine desire in this House for new directions and new approaches.

I sincerely believe that we want this Parliament to operate for the people of this country by consulting them meaningfully and by seeking direction from them. I and the Canadians I represent are willing and waiting to see whether the good intentions which have been expressed in the speech from the throne to enhance the credibility of Parliament will be implemented and whether the words will be matched by the deeds.

I would appeal to this government to allow members of Parliament to do the job we came here to do. I hope it will not allow our reports and recommendations to this House and to the government to gather dust on some shelf. I would ask that all members be allowed to vote freely in consultation with the people they were elected to speak for. We want this House to operate in such a way as to provide us with the opportunity to make a real difference and to carry out the wishes of our constituents.

I conclude by affirming to the people of Calgary North my sincere intention to represent to the best of my ability their interests, concerns and aspirations for themselves and for their country.

**Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on her speech. It was very well presented with some very good ideas.

I just wanted to comment that in fact many of the ideas that she suggested certainly have been used by my colleagues in the Liberal Party. I know in talking with many of the members that they have used faxes for a number of years to connect with their constituents. In talking to others they have effectively used householders to communicate new and innovative ideas with members of their ridings.

For myself, I have had a forum on finance already as the member is suggesting she is going to do in her riding. It has been very effective and very useful. I think many of the things that the hon. member is talking about are in fact things that are done by individual members and they do not require specific legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** On a point of order, the hon. member for Richelieu.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a problem. We cannot hear the interpreter.

Oh, it seems to have been solved now. My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

*The Address**[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The member for Richelieu is raising a point that the translation was not working, so I will give the floor back to the member for Brant.

**Mrs. Stewart (Brant):** Mr. Speaker, what I would like to say to the hon. member is that her suggestions are very good. I think some of them are not necessarily new. Perhaps they felt out in the wilderness in the west because they have not been represented by Liberals in the very recent and in the long term.

(1515)

**Mrs. Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the kind remarks of the hon. member for Brant whom I have met and hope to get to know better. Her remarks underscore the fact that there is a genuine and possibly unprecedented desire in Parliament for new directions and for doing things differently. Members are very much determined to consult their constituents and to represent them truly.

That is the point at which we have some question marks, or at least I do as a new member. It is all very well to consult with constituents, talk to them, to have meetings and to hear what they have to say. However if we come back here and we are told how to vote, what is the point? Their input does not mean anything.

When our constituents tell us they want us to represent them and voice their desires and concerns because they are paying us to do so since they cannot be here, we have to be free to do that. We cannot have our parties telling us: "You cannot vote that way. We have decided to do something different".

That is the reform we must have in the House and that is what we are going to keep working for. We have to support that together. If not just our particular caucus but all members have the drive and determination to achieve that, it will turn this House upside down and make it truly a House of the people which it was meant to be.

*[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** There is one minute remaining in the five minute question and comment period. I will allow one short question and, hopefully, the answer will be equally short.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate and thank my hon. colleague from Calgary North for her speech. Listening to our colleagues from the Reform Party, I note an underlying concern having to do with members gaining the ability to make a greater contribution as well as reducing government spending and generally putting government finances in order. We must, I think, salute the sense of initiative and determination of the Reform Party in that area.

However, I am somewhat surprised to hear them go on and on about the need to put government finances in order, after having heard yesterday the hon. member for Calgary Southwest blame the Bloc Québécois for bringing up the constitutional issue a number of times in this place. The speakers who spoke after him asked questions dealing with various issues, like free votes, free trade—which reflected the obsessive fear you can often find in English Canada on that subject—and self-government, but very few questions relating specifically to government finances and fiscal consolidation.

Of course, I would like to press on with this issue. So much so that I will ask my hon. colleague from Calgary North if the Reform Party would consider supporting the proposal the Bloc Québécois put forward several weeks or months ago to strike a special committee to examine, item by item, all the tax and budget expenditures of the federal government.

I would be interested in hearing what my colleague from Calgary North has to say on that. This would allow us, in fact, to know better where to make cuts, so that social programs and those intended to provide assistance to the poor would not be such easy targets.

Can our hon. colleagues from the Reform Party tell us whether or not it would be possible to set up a parliamentary committee to go over all government tax and budget expenditures, item by item?

*[English]*

**Mrs. Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, that does not sound like a set up for a one-minute answer.

In answer to my colleague's question I would say that Reform certainly would be very open to anything that could help the government get its spending under control. I believe many people in Quebec voted against the past government very much because they rejected the fiscal policies and mismanagement that have practically ruined not only the province of Quebec but our entire country.

We have to get a grip on that. I think as members we have a mandate to do that. Our people want us to do that. We would be very happy to co-operate with and support anything that would assist in doing that.

(1520)

On what we would cut back, I would commend to my colleague a study of the program we put forward during the election called our zero and three plan to balance the federal budget over a three-year period of Parliament. It would be interesting for the member to know—and a lot of people do not know it—that our plan balances the federal budget while preserving funding for important social programs like health care, education and pensions for people who need pensions.

*The Address*

A lot of people are not aware that is something that has been done, with figures attached. We have been promoting such a program during the election and will continue to promote it. We know that Canadians put the highest priority on social programs like health care and education. Our program to balance spending does not jeopardize those programs. In fact it ensures, we believe, that those programs will be sustained into the foreseeable future for when I am older and need most of them and many Canadians are in the same boat.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as a deputy speaker. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Speaker on his election to that office. While this position has been a challenge over the years, the unprecedented number of new members in this 35th Parliament may provide the most difficult challenge of all.

As one of the new members I will do my best to learn the rules as quickly as possible and in so doing make both our jobs a little easier. Under your guidance, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope the House will enjoy the same harmonious relationship that exists in the Ontario caucus of my party.

My congratulations go out to all members on their election or re-election to this new Parliament. From the number of new members it would appear that being re-elected was a much more difficult task, so a special bouquet goes to those members.

To those who voted for me in my riding of Simcoe Centre, I want to say how much I appreciate the honour and the opportunity to represent them in this House. The trust my constituents have placed in me will not rest lightly on my shoulders as I work hard to be deserving of that honour.

A special thanks also goes to my wife and my family for their love, support and hard work on my campaign.

I have always regarded my riding of Simcoe Centre as grassroots Ontario with a good mix of industry, tourism and farming. It has been said that as Simcoe Centre goes so goes most of Ontario.

My riding is named for the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, and like the governor the riding has played an important role in the development of this province and this nation.

The agricultural community in Simcoe Centre has been a mainstay of the local economy since the land was first opened up in the early 1800s. Towns have gained prominence such as Alliston, Ontario's potato capital. Alliston is also famous as the home of Nobel prize winner Sir Frederick Banting, co-discoverer of insulin.

As a place to work and play, Simcoe Centre offers a quality of life that is second to none. Hundreds of thousands of people come to visit each year, to shop and dine as they enjoy both

skiing and cottaging in the region. Between the shores of the world's largest fresh water beach in Wasaga and beautiful Lake Simcoe we offer outstanding year-round recreation and leisure activities.

My riding also includes Canada's largest military training base, Base Borden, which has played an important role in the defence of this country since World War I.

I would be remiss if I did not speak about my own city of Barrie which is central to my riding and is the largest city. Barrie enjoys its location around the tip of Kempenfelt Bay. Its manufacturing base and service economy are prime examples of what the hard work and entrepreneurship of Barrie residents can produce.

Being situated just an hour's drive north of Toronto, one of the world's truly great cities, we can enjoy the best of both worlds in Simcoe Centre.

When I made the decision to seek office I was certainly aware of the low image of politicians held by many Canadian people. However as I went door to door I was surprised and shocked at how deeply these feelings were held. Voter after voter complained that politicians had lost touch with them, were only hearing what they wanted to hear, and were not to be trusted. Far too often I heard this comment: "I will not be voting. You are all the same". To me that hurt more than any other response.

(1525)

In addition to the cynicism and lack of trust, the main issues within Simcoe Centre were the never ending and ever increasing tax burden as well as the economy and job creation. Simcoe Centre and indeed all of Canada is on the verge of a tax revolt. The huge underground economy is evidence of how close we are.

As a youngster I was told there were only two sure things in life: death and taxes. Little did I know then that one was going to cause the other. Unless we are going to get government spending under control we will never eliminate the deficit so that we can offer Canadians tax relief.

Deficits and debt are the most serious issues we face. All others are pale by comparison. Indeed the answer to job creation, stimulating the economy and saving our social safety nets, is directly tied to the solution of this problem.

I campaigned very hard on this issue and was disappointed the throne speech contained no plans for substantial reductions in government spending. Many times I have been asked why I chose to seek office. There are two words that best describe my desire and conviction to come to Ottawa. They are Jessica and Nicholas, my grandchildren. The realization that I have been part of a generation that had lived beyond our means and was now leaving a huge debt on their shoulders did not sit well with me. I had to run for office and try to do something about it.

*The Address*

The decisions we make in this 35th Parliament will not greatly impact on our lives, but they will influence tremendously the Canada our children and grandchildren inherit.

One of the most encouraging points in the speech from the throne was the commitment to parliamentary reform. Trust is a two-way street. If we are to earn it from our constituents we must be prepared to place a level of trust in them.

Canadians have said very clearly they want more voice in the decisions affecting their lives. The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future chaired by Mr. Spicer listened to 400,000 Canadians as well as another 300,000 Canadian elementary and secondary school students.

One of the strongest messages the forum received was that Canadian people had lost faith in their political leaders. They did not feel their governments, especially at the federal level, reflected the will of the people. They did not feel that they had the means at that moment to correct it. Many of the participants were prepared to support substantial change of the political system if they would result in a responsive and responsible political process and in responsive and responsible political leaders. The forum cost the Canadian taxpayers about \$27 million. However, if we can change and respond to this message, it will be a bargain.

If there is a constant in today's world, it is change. After 48 years of Tory representation Simcoe Centre voted for change. I thank it for that. With the improvements in communications and technology changes are occurring within an ever shrinking timeframe. Many of us are reluctant to change but change we must. This Parliament must examine new approaches to the way existing institutions and procedures are used. Changes must be made so that members can be made more responsive to their constituents and more responsible in the exercise of their judgment.

The time to look at these things differently has never been more important or opportune. With over 200 new members we have a window of opportunity for parliamentary reform that must be taken advantage of. There should be changes such as amending the Canada Elections Act to eliminate clauses that place members of Parliament in a position beholden to their national party executive or party leaders rather than their constituents.

We should amend the MPs' oath of office such that they swear a fundamental allegiance to their constituents as well as to the Queen. We should place restrictions and limitations on the number and types of orders in council permitted by a government during its term in office. In the interim my caucus will strive to make parliamentary committees effective in reviewing any regulations before implementation.

We should insist all laws that apply to individuals in the private sector should apply equally to the Government of Canada, its personnel, its agencies and Parliament. On Monday the Hon. Gilbert Parent in his acceptance speech indicated the comfort he felt in the comments made during the past weeks about restoring dignity and respect in the House. Doing things differently, civility and parliamentary reform are words that I have heard and give me hope that the will exists to bring about change.

(1530)

In closing I will again make reference to the Spicer commission report. The final paragraph in the report was not a quote from Mr. Spicer or one of his commissioners. These are the words of one of the citizens who participated and I quote: "No hyperbole or political hedge can screen any member of any legislature who thwarts the will of the people on this matter. The voters are watching and waiting".

The previous government ignored this message at its peril. I trust and hope this 35th Parliament will not make the same mistake.

**Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Simcoe Centre for his excellent address. Like him when I campaigned in my constituency I did hear those kinds of remarks about politicians.

However, there is a larger problem with the question of representation that he is talking about. In the House of Commons over the last few days we saw the example of a question from a constituent that was sent in to the hon. member for Calgary Southwest. This person was a doctor. It seems this method of gaining public opinion, replying on a fax which you pay for and secretaries in some cases when you can afford it, illustrates the kinds of difficulties faced with making democracy more representative. The previous speaker from the Reform Party related the same difficulties.

We have heard questions from the Reform Party about reform of RRSPs. I recall reading recently in the newspaper that only four out of ten Canadians use RRSPs and there is certainly a role for government if that is the case. Only about 20 per cent of Canadians make the maximum contribution allowance to RRSPs.

When I was canvassing in my constituency I encountered people who were in opposition to the gun control legislation. I make these comments with respect because it is a broader question for all of us who are seeking to represent our constituents. These people said they were joining the Reform Party because they were told to do so by their local executive. All of these things strike me as a real problem with the member's definition of what representative democracy is. I believe it was the Prime Minister who said that you are the grandchildren of

*The Address*

the Social Credit movement. The Social Credit movement raised these questions in the province of Alberta many years ago and it did not follow through with them despite three decades of government.

How can you ensure that those who are not wealthy and those who do not represent special interests and those who do not have access to fax machines can be heard as well as the people we have heard from before.

**Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kitchener for his question. I do not think I indicated in my speech that solving the problem of representing constituents was an easy one. It is not and there is no member of my party who is confused about that.

I feel that what has happened in the past is that governments have responded to the special interest groups. They are the ones who have had the ear of government to a larger degree. Average Canadians, the ones who are paying the bills, are the ones who have not been heard from. It is incumbent on me and I believe my party members share this feeling that we must go out into our ridings with town hall meetings, meet the people, talk to the people but more importantly to listen to the people about what they have to say about what is going on in this place, what we are talking about and the decisions that are being made. That is the challenge that faces me. I am going to meet that challenge because when I go back to my riding I am going to maintain that contact with the people.

I believe that is the main factor that caused the upheaval we experienced in this House after this past election. The people who sat here had lost touch with their constituents and the result is what we have here today. We want to make sure that we do not lose that contact, that we keep in touch with the average Canadian and not be heavily influenced by those special interest groups that have captivated our ear.

(1535)

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, let me join in congratulating the hon. member for Simcoe Centre on his maiden speech and on his election to the House. He was the only member as we know to resist the Liberal juggernaut in Ontario and he is therefore extra due for congratulations.

I share one thing with the hon. member. Simcoe is the birthplace of Sir Frederick Banting and London is known as the city where he began to do his important work at the University of Western Ontario.

That leads me to my question for the hon. member. The Reform Party is very concerned with deficit reduction as indeed all members of this House are or should be. In the campaign it

became clear to me that the Reform Party proposals on the health care plan for Canada would give too much leeway to the provinces, that in fact in the name of deficit reduction it would threaten the universality of our health care program. I have yet to hear that adequately explained by a member of his party.

I give the hon. member the opportunity now and I ask through you, Mr. Speaker, how they can ensure that when provinces are given such leeway to decide what health care would be like in their provinces that does not in fact jeopardize in an insidious way the universality of the health care system of which all Canadians are so proud.

**Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his compliments on my election. I am considered the green dot in a sea of red. It was the subject of much media attention to see what this giant killer looked like. They were some shocked when they found I was only five-foot-four.

To deal with the question, health care in this country is in grave peril. Our position is that the system must be saved. Our provinces have the constitutional responsibility for health care. When we brought in health care the federal government was supporting the provinces on a 50-50 cost-sharing basis. That position has declined to the point where I think it is something like 30 per cent coming from the federal government and is heading in an even lower direction to the point where the federal government in a few years time will no longer be participating in a cost-sharing plan for health care.

By virtue of that mere fact it will end up with the provinces having that responsibility which I and my party members feel is properly their responsibility. They are the ones who are closest to the people in delivering health care. They are the ones who will ultimately answer to the voters on the job that they do in running the health care system. We think the responsibility properly belongs there.

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's):** Mr. Speaker, it has been a marvellous week and this kinder, gentler House is soothing. It is absolutely soothing. I am hearing rumblings among the old boys and girls that it is not like it used to be. I admit I used to love having a spar or two with John Crosbie from St. John's West and we are going to miss fellows like Crosbie, but we are also going to miss people like Bernie Valcourt and Michael Wilson. You know there are some things you do not miss.

I am proud to stand as I have done either here or in the legislature in St. John's for the past 20 years and represent the people of the south coast of Newfoundland and since 1988 a chunk of the west coast of Newfoundland as well with the expansion of the riding that is now Burin—St. George's.

*The Address*

Let me tell you about those people. There is George Sam Fudge, a fisherman in his forties from a community called François, a community of 150 people, who until a year or so ago when I last spoke to him personally had never in his 30 years of fishing drawn a cent of unemployment insurance. There is at least one Newfoundlander out there who is not on UI 42 weeks a year.

There is Minnie White who was here in Ottawa a few weeks ago to receive the Order of Canada because she is one of the best accordion players in Canada and is making quite a contribution to preserving the Irish tradition in Newfoundland from her community of Tompkins.

There is Misel Joe, a proud Micmac in his late thirties, who has been both chief and spiritual leader of his Micmac band at Conne River in my riding. There is Lisa Cheeseman who is for the moment in Kingston, in the riding of my colleague, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, at the Royal Military College, but who before that was at the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean where she had taken second place in her engineering class there.

(1540)

*[Translation]*

There is Tommy LaFitte who is 103 years old and whose father came from France. Tommy, his son and I celebrated his 100th birthday at the SkyDome in Toronto.

*[English]*

Yes, these are the people for whose voice I am here, these and 86,000 others in 158 communities stretched along 1,500 miles of rugged coastline.

I am, as I have been for 20 years, their man in Ottawa. I am not Ottawa's man in Burin—St. George's. I have not come here to blindly support government policies, but rather to help craft policies which will help my people in Burin—St. George's and to oppose those which do not help them. That is why I support the extension of custodial management beyond the 200-mile limit to preserve our fisheries, but it is equally why I oppose with everything in me the GST.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I represent franco-Newfoundlanders. There are three small villages on the Port au Port peninsula: Grand'terre, l'Anse-aux-Canards and Cape St. George where people protect their tradition, their culture and the language of their Acadian ancestors who came to Newfoundland following the 1755 deportation. Furthermore, many others decided to stay in my riding when they came off French ships during the last century.

*[English]*

Yes, the Micmacs are there also and the Scots came and the Irish, the Welsh and the English so that today Burin—St. George's is one of the more culturally diverse areas of eastern Canada.

*[Translation]*

I was not born a Canadian. In 1948, my parents requested voted to become Canadians. My country was Newfoundland and it still is Newfoundland. But these days, it is also Canada. The people of Newfoundland did renounce their independence 45 years ago, not at all; they just adopted a larger independence.

*[English]*

That larger independence will stand us in good stead not far from now when Canada takes over custodial management beyond the 200-mile limit of our fish stocks.

Who in his or her right mind would ever suggest that the dominion of Newfoundland, the republic of Newfoundland and Labrador could have ever hoped to have tackled alone the entire world on that important issue?

*[Translation]*

Independence and no more semantics. I say this to my Bloc Quebecois colleagues. I also want to say something else to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, particularly the member for Richelieu, the member for Saint-Hubert and some others who were here during the last session and who surely remember what I said in this House two years ago, and I quote:

*[English]*

“I will vote for a motion any day that runs this crowd clean out of this place once and for good. I will go for that motion because they do not belong here.”

*[Translation]*

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I said that. But I was wrong, very wrong. In fact, during the election campaign, I was offended from time to time with some people suggesting that the Bloc candidates did not have a right to sit in the Parliament of Canada. That suggestion is ridiculous and even insulting. Those people wanted to deny others what they were claiming as having the right to do. The day that we start considering some viewpoints as acceptable or unacceptable in this Parliament, we will be imposing limits on democracy.

(1545)

*[English]*

There are only three requirements to get here: We have to be 18 years of age, and good Lord most of us look 18 to me; we have to be a Canadian citizen; and we have to get ourselves elected. Those are the only three requirements to get here. Nobody looks behind and says: “The member for Simcoe Centre, now what does he represent? No that is not acceptable. What does the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan represent? Oh, that is acceptable”. We do not do it that way. We say: “You are 18, you are a

*The Address*

Canadian and you got yourself elected. Come on in". You get past the bar if you satisfy those three requirements. That is how I got here. That is how the NDP got here and even a couple of Tories made it here that way. How democratic can we get? Why should it be any different for the Bloc?

My new friend from Simcoe Centre voiced his disappointment here yesterday over the focus during Wednesday's sitting on the issue of constitutional matters. I have to tell the member that I share his view on that. The constitutional future of Quebec, I say to my friends in the Bloc and also to my friends on this side particularly my friends from Quebec, is a crucial subject, but it is not going to be resolved in this Chamber.

Parliament has no mandate to arbitrarily decide the future of a province. Imagine the uproar there would be if the government leader stood up one day and put down a motion to talk about the future of Saskatchewan or New Brunswick without having consulted the people most directly affected, the people of that particular province. Surely it is the people of that province who must decide.

I say this kindly but I say it firmly and with conviction, those who insist on pursuing the Quebec debate here do a disservice to the people who sent them here. I trust Quebecers to make the right decision when the time comes. The time is not now and the place is not here.

I have a lot of new-found friends and I do not know what to do with them all. My new-found friend, the leader of the Reform Party, the gentleman from Calgary Southwest, said that the credibility of Parliament would be enhanced by the institution of genuinely free votes. He is right. I have to check with my colleagues because I am up here agreeing with two Reformers in a row and I am about to be run out of here. However, he is right.

It is too late on a Friday afternoon, I say to the member for Winnipeg St. James, to take him on. It is too late. I am in too charitable a mood. I am trying to get psyched up for Sunday.

I agree with the leader of the Reform Party. This place does need free votes. This place does need a bit of a shaking up. It is in that context that I believe the Reform caucus, together with the 199 people who are here for the first time, are a breath of fresh air around here because there are enough of the old guys and girls to keep what is good from the past but not enough to block some change and we need some change.

I want to say just a word of caution as it relates to the issue of the concept of free votes. Do not oversell the idea and do not get carried away because it is not the panacea that it looks like at first glance. Let us not inadvertently mislead the public on the issue that free votes somehow will suddenly double their paycheques, lower their taxes and solve all their other problems. It is not that simple. Hear me out for a moment.

(1550)

Even if we embrace immediately the concept of free votes, I give you notice now, Mr. Speaker, that in the overwhelming majority of cases I intend to vote with my caucus. I will tell you why. I submit that so will the member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia. I submit that so will the gentleman from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. I submit that so will people from other parties. Why? It is for a very good reason. It has nothing to do with being sheep. It has nothing to do with being servile putty in the hands of relentless party leaders who will not bridge dissent.

If I support a government measure perhaps to spend money on a youth service corps or to cut defence spending, both policies of our government, both of which I support but I throw them in as examples, it will be because I have had a hand in crafting those policies in my caucus.

I assume that when the Reform stood yesterday en masse without exception and voted for the subamendment it was not because they were a bunch of sheep. It was because they had consulted each other on that issue. More to the point, they were carrying a pretty strong mandate from their electors on that matter.

Therefore you can get your jollies out of talking about free votes all you want and I will too—and I want some free votes—but do not let anybody think, suggest or mislead the public on the idea that somehow everybody is going to be voting all over the place every day of the week. If that is the case, this country is not going to be well served. We would have to wait for this Chamber to have a meeting of 295 minds. It is better to have Wednesday morning meetings of 52 minds in one room, 54 in another room, 177 in a third room, 9 in a fourth room and the other 2 in a telephone booth. For my hon. friend from Beauce, of course all he needs is a fair-sized mirror.

Then when one gets a good consensus after it is fought out in that caucus room, come here and let us take a vote on it. If someone does not like what the caucus is doing, stand up and have a free vote. If five of us do not like what the other 172 are saying, stand up. That is a free vote. We did it in this caucus and I can name names but will not. Two of them are still members of this caucus and the other is not here because he elected not to run again.

We had the situation a year or so ago on gun control. Three of our members stood up in this House and opposed the party position on gun control. We were supporting the government measure for tighter gun control, the government being the Conservative government. All but three of us supported that legislation. Three of our people opposed it. Two of them continue to be in the caucus and the other would have, had he decided to run and got elected.

*The Address*

The government of the day led by a fellow, Mulroney—that is his name. He had two people, one of whom is now the Deputy Speaker of this Chamber and the other who was the member for Calgary Northeast. What happened to them when they voted against the GST? They not only had a free vote, they got a free ride right out of their caucus the same day.

We will in the overwhelming majority of cases be voting with our parties, not because we are sheep but because we have hammered out our compromises behind closed doors.

I will get suspicious if I see a free voter voting free too often. I will say to myself: Can he not convince his colleagues of anything? Is he a lone ranger? Has he no clout in his own caucus? Does he have to come here and vote his own way all the time? Why is he not back in his caucus room convincing his own caucus of the rightness of his ways? That is what the caucus system is all about.

(1555)

Yes, we will have free votes, but will it become the order of the day. I cannot see why it would. As a Canadian let alone as a politician I think it would be a fairly messy way to do business. We did not get here by our good looks. One or two of us did maybe. The people of Canada did not take us as individuals. They embraced the Liberal message in one riding. They embraced the Bloc message in another riding and the Reform message in another. Each of our parties had very specific platforms. And now for someone to stand up and say that has all gone out the window and that from now on we are going to be real free around here. Real free. Remember that mandate you got back there in so and so riding? Forget that buddy, just be free.

Some of us understand that any freedom attaches to it responsibility. If I exercise my freedom when I stand and vote for cuts in defence spending, I will be having a free vote. Just because another 176 members happen to be of the same mind on that free vote is not my problem. I will be voting because I believe in it. I will be voting because that is what my constituents told me to do. Now that is about as free as you can get. Free does not have to mean being alone. If you want me to be an isolationist I will pick some “comma” legislation some day and stand up against the government just to show that I am a free spirit. But who have I helped? How have I helped my constituents with that bit of grandstanding?

The people of Canada want us to do the right thing and if we carry this free vote thing to its conclusion, what we ought to do is what the gentleman from Beauce did. All 295 of us should go out and get elected without a party label. But Canadian people like choices now. They like to say that here is what the Liberals stand for, here is what the Bloc stands for and here is what the Tories stand for. I think we will take those. I cannot willy-nilly

having gone through that process say: “Okay people of Canada, thanks now forget it because I am going to be my own man”.

Finally, in my last minute or so let me deal directly with the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition together with the subamendment of the leader of the third party. Both of them are well-intended I am sure. I will not read the wording because I see my time is running out. But you all know the wording. You had better because you voted on it. Both asked me, I say with candour but deference, to say that I have no interest in putting public finances on a more sound footing. That is not true. I do have an interest.

Therefore why do they ask me to vote a lie? Why do they ask everybody on this side to vote a lie on that particular issue? Surely the wording of these motions are classic examples of what is wrong with this place. That clever use of well chosen verbiage in the hope of creating one-upmanship in the hope of sucking somebody in to get him to vote for something he does not believe in. That is what is wrong with this place. Oh, that clever use of verbiage.

I was a bit disappointed that it came from the leader of the Reform party and the leader of the Bloc. That they would ask us to say that we have no interest. Mea culpa, mea culpa. I have a great interest in seeing that public finances are put on a sound footing.

Did the framers of those two amendments honestly believe for one minute, for one millisecond, that nobody on this side, not one single soul of the 177 including the crowd over there in the Siberian rump on the other side, not one of us is concerned about the state of the country's finances? Does anyone in the Reform Party believe that for a second? What an insult to 176 people.

(1600)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Burin—St. George's for his brilliant speech. I would also like to tell him that the province of Newfoundland—he will remember for sure when he reads his history books—joined the Confederation in 1949.

We will recall that the citizens of that province voted in more than one referendum before joining Canada in the late 1940s.

Would the hon. member from Newfoundland not agree that, conversely, Quebecers can vote for their full sovereignty, in a second referendum, according to the democratic rules that prevail in Canada and in this Parliament?

If the citizens of Newfoundland were able to join the Canadian federation freely, why would it not be possible for Quebecers to withdraw from it freely? That is the essence of the democracy that exists in this country and millions of people around the world envy us for that.



*The Address*

Being a democrat, the member for Burin—St. George's should agree with the Opposition and abide by the Quebecers' ultimate decision.

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for La Prairie for his question. In fact, that is precisely what I said in my speech. I said that the decision will be made by Quebec voters and I also said that it should not be made in this place. I am convinced that the time has almost come for Quebecers to examine that question. I cannot agree more.

As to his reference to the referenda—there were two in Newfoundland, in 1948—my father and my mother took a decision they believed to be right. I do not dispute the fact that if the various areas of a province can decide one way, they also have the power and the right to decide another way. This is what I said; I said people in Quebec will decide, not the citizens of the whole of Canada.

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval—Est):** Mr. Speaker, following consultations with my colleagues on the government side and in the Reform Party, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to allow the hon. member for Bellechasse to give his speech in response to the Speech from the Throne.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is there unanimous consent to authorize the hon. member for Bellechasse to deliver his speech in full?

[*English*]

**Mr. Keyes:** Mr. Speaker, if the House is adjourned at the conclusion of the hon. member's allotted time then given the new era of co-operation in the House we would be in agreement with that suggestion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, allow me, as is the custom, to congratulate you and all the others who will sit in the Chair and play such an important role in this House. I have been here just a few days, but I can already appreciate the tact and the competence of the Chair.

(1605)

I especially want to thank the hon. member for Burin—St. George's for his eloquent speech on the right to self-determination. The member is himself from a nation, in fact the only nation to do so in this country, which has freely and voluntarily decided, through a referendum held in 1948, to join the Canadian federation. If a referendum is the process used to join the

Canadian federation, it is now clearly established that a referendum is also the proper way to create a sovereign State.

Since the House started sitting, I have not been surprised by the fact that our Liberal friends across the floor keep referring to their red book. This book was their election platform and they won a majority of seats by referring to it. As well, I am not surprised when I hear my friends from the Reform Party talk about changes, even cuts—we are not yet dealing with the details regarding social programs—and talk about reforming the voting process or adopting a different approach regarding ministerial responsibility. Indeed, this comes as no surprise since the Reform Party's campaign was based on that theme. Therefore, why should you be surprised to see a Bloc Québécois member, who campaigned on the sovereignty of Quebec, come in this House and talk about Quebec's sovereignty? We were elected to do just that. It is our *raison d'être*. It is the mandate of our party to defend and promote Quebec's sovereignty, a sovereignty which is not directed against anybody but, rather, which is premised on the self-determination of our nation in order to be able to treat on an equal basis with any other nation, including our Canadian friends and neighbours, who are of course particularly close to us geographically, but more importantly because of our common past which has promoted the development of such strong friendships over decades and even centuries.

We asked ourselves the question raised by the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who said: "But who speaks on behalf of Quebec?" I disagree with a lot of comments made by the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, but it is true that this question will have to be answered.

The hon. member for Burin—St. George's said earlier that this is not the place to decide over Quebec's sovereignty. I agree with him. The decision will not be taken here; it will be taken in Quebec, by Quebecers, who will be asked to vote on the issue following a debate which we hope will be as open and as enlightening as possible. So, we need to hold a referendum to settle once and for all the issue of the legitimate right to speak of Quebec, because Quebec never was a truly sovereign state, unlike the Dominion of Newfoundland, which, before 1949, was as independent as the Dominion of Canada.

Without going back to ancient times to establish the rights of aboriginal people, we know that Canada existed before 1867. We can describe the institutions which have made Canada what it is today. I will touch briefly on some of the events.

Our first very own institution was set up in 1663 and was called the Sovereign Council of New France. Of course, this council emanated directly from the French monarchy, an absolute monarchy which did not stand for any division of power with a Parliament.

*The Address*

(1610)

We were governed by the Council for nearly a century. Until September 1759, we were subject to the authority of the Sovereign Council of New France, and as we know from our history books, then came the battle of the Plains of Abraham. One party's victory was the other's defeat, so that the victory by General Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham ushered in a British military government.

For four years we lived quite peacefully under the authority of a military government. Historians do not mention any rebellion. The "Canadiens", today's Quebecers, although in the majority, tolerated and accepted this British military presence.

The war between Britain and France ended in 1763, when by royal proclamation, Canada was ceded for all time, if there is such a thing in this world, to Great Britain.

The proclamation of 1763 vested authority in a British governor appointed by His Gracious Majesty, the King or Queen of Great Britain. Without parliamentary institutions, Quebecers became subject to British private and public law.

In 1774, the Quebec Act entitled us to the restoration of our civil law and to certain parts of British criminal law, which have expanded over the years. This was probably the most enduring legacy of the British: the principles of British criminal law, criminal procedures, habeas corpus and trial-by-jury, which we did not have under the French regime. This is a legacy we intend to preserve in a sovereign Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

Around 1778-80, Americans who had remained loyal to the British Crown left the American republic and came to Canada. Some settled in New Brunswick, others in the eastern townships in Quebec and some Loyalists emigrated to Upper Canada, today's Ontario.

Subsequently, Loyalists in Canada decided to ask Canada, the Parliament in Westminster and the British government for the same institutions they had in the American colonies. Parliament and the British government were in a poor position to refuse their loyal subjects, who had often given up land and property to come and settle here, to refuse them these institutions.

But so as not to put the minority, which was then English-speaking, under the French speaking majority, Canada was divided in two, Upper Canada and Lower Canada, with a legislative assembly for each part that was elected by the people. This was the first time that we had a legislative assembly directly controlled by the people and answerable only to the people. What a fine step in our historical progress!

Nevertheless, at that time we did not have ministerial accountability as it had existed in Great Britain since the 1750s or thereabouts. The governor still held most of the powers and there was also the legislative council, which he appointed and which could object to measures coming from the legislative assembly.

Problems arose fairly quickly. In the 1820s, conflicts between the governor, the legislative assembly and the legislative council easily degenerated. As we sadly remember, these led to the events of 1837, the Patriots' Rebellion, when twelve of our people were hanged following a trial by a court martial composed of fifteen members, none of whom was French speaking.

This was a far cry from trial by jury. Those people were hanged under the Durham government and the special council of 1837.

(1615)

After studying the situation, Lord Durham, as his mandate from the British government required, submitted a report saying that in order to assimilate the Canadian nation, today's Quebecers, the British government should pass a law merging the two Canadas.

Although we had some 150,000 to 200,000 more people, the Union Act of 1840 gave equal representation to both parts. Moreover, the Constitution of 1840 said that English was to be the only official language. There were no provisions regarding ministerial responsibility. We would get that in 1848, at the same time as the repeal of the constitutional provisions banning the use of French.

We now come to 1855, the year of reversal. This is a date we should never forget. That was the year that English speaking people outnumbered French speaking people for the first time. What happened then? As soon as English speaking people realized they were in a majority they asked for proportional representation. From 1855 on, and increasingly until 1867, they were asking for what was refused to the "Canadiens", today's Quebecers, in 1840. The demand was so pressing that, in 1867, the parties agreed on what I call a compromise based on a misunderstanding.

On one side was Sir John A. Macdonald, who wanted a legislative union of all provinces of British North America, with a single Parliament. On the other side, representing the Quebec way of seeing the issue, was Sir George-Étienne Cartier who wanted strong, autonomous provincial governments sovereign in their field of jurisdiction, a fact acknowledged in 1883 by the British Privy Council in its decision respecting the *Hodge v. Regina* case.

This compromise based on a misunderstanding resulted in a single document, then known as the British North America Act, and now as the Constitution Act of 1867.

It so happens that to reconcile two visions so diametrically opposite it became necessary to play around with sections of the Constitution so that people would be on opposite sides. It is no wonder that the courts are constantly being asked to give their interpretation of the Constitution. Indeed, the Constitution cannot reconcile black and white, cannot say yes and no in the same breath.

*The Address*

Every time a province is granted a power, somehow, somewhere another section gives the federal government more power. The judicial power is a case in point.

Under subsection 92(14) of the British North America Act, 1867, the constitution of provincial courts, both of civil and of criminal jurisdiction, is a provincial responsibility; it is very clear. However, if you read beyond section 92, you will see with great surprise that under section 96, the Judges of the Superior Courts, of criminal and even of civil jurisdiction, are appointed by the Governor General. A province can set up a court, even a superior court, but cannot appoint the judges to that court.

They even took further precautions since, in 1867, we did not have a Supreme Court. Appeals were launched directly from provincial appeal courts to the Privy Council in Great Britain.

As a further precaution, section 101 of the British North America Act gave the Parliament of Canada sole power for the constitution of a general court of appeal for Canada, without the consent of the provinces. A few years later, in 1875, the Supreme Court of Canada was constituted; the judges there are appointed by the governor in council, without having to consult the provinces.

Which led one of our former Quebec premiers, the hon. Maurice Duplessis, to say that in view of the way judges were appointed to the Supreme Court, it was akin to the tower of Pisa as it was almost always leaning towards the same side.

A referendum was never held, despite the repeated calls for one by the Leader of the Opposition at the time, Antoine-Aimé Dorion, who also happened to be a Liberal. Over and over he introduced motions calling for a popular referendum to ratify the agreement reached by the Fathers of Confederation, but such a referendum was never held. Newfoundland and Labrador were the only ones to hold a popular referendum on the issue. Soon there will be a referendum in Quebec. Events will run their course and we are betting the Quebecers will make the mature decision. The fact of the matter is that we have been excluded from the process since 1981 when this House asked the Parliament of Westminster to amend the Constitution without Quebec's consent and in fact over the virtually unanimous objections of the National Assembly.

(1620)

Of course, we had reached an impasse at the time. The 1980 referendum had failed to give the Quebec government a mandate to negotiate sovereignty.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister who had been elected in 1984 promised at the time to do everything he could to bring Quebec into the federation and to make it possible for it to ratify the 1981 and 1982 agreements with honour and dignity. For some, this was the last chance. All of the Bloc members are sovereignists, but we did not all follow the same path to get here. Some of us were members of the RIN, the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale back in the sixties, while others became sovereignists following the failure of Charlottetown. They saw that the minimum conditions set out by Mr. Bourassa—and we know the meaning of the word “minimum” when it comes from Mr. Bourassa's mouth—really amounted to very little. Some came to it on October 26, 1993, when they saw that it was no longer possible to renew this country and that the time had come to make a choice, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition and some of our colleagues mentioned the other day. The time has come to choose between the status quo as we know it, since there will be no further amendments to the Constitution, and an opening to the world, a willingness to consider all possible arrangements, including and mainly, of course, arrangements with Canada, since we have already so many things in common.

We cannot afford to miss this historical opportunity, because for our generation and probably the next, it is the last chance. It is somewhat like a spacecraft that has to be put back in orbit or to get back to Earth: if it misses its window of opportunity, it might have to orbit a long time before getting another one.

So we have to work very hard in Quebec as well as here in this House, where we belong of course. And here I digress for a moment to say that I was asked recently in a survey whether I sing “O Canada”. But of course I do, for this anthem was the work of Calixa Lavallée and Basile Routhier, referring to the French version of “O Canada”. Read in French, it is the national anthem of Quebec. The English version is something entirely different. We used to sing “O Canada” when our friends opposite were singing “God Save the King” or “God Save the Queen”. There is a gap between the two versions, through nobody's fault though. We followed parallel courses, each people created its own destiny.

Whether we decide to become sovereign, whether we now want boundaries, because we feel that our territory has been encroached upon a bit too much, that will not keep us from being good friends. Boundaries with your neighbor do not necessarily make an enemy of him. When the hedge is put in, you know the limits of your territory, you know when you must give and take and when you can do whatever you like within the limits of decency and acceptability in a free and democratic society.

*The Address*

Therefore, it is to this great gathering that I am inviting Quebecers, the referendum gathering that will soon take place, the first step being the Quebec election where, in all likelihood, a sovereigntist government will be elected in Quebec City, and then, a provincial referendum that will be, we are all hoping in this side of the House, in favour of Quebec sovereignty, but in

keeping the friendship of Canadians from anywhere in Canada.  
[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It being 4.25 o'clock p.m. this House stands adjourned until Monday next at eleven o'clock a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 4.25 p.m.)

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