



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, October 5, 2004**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

The House met at 3 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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## OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber

• (1500)

[*English*]

*And the House being returned to the Commons chamber:*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I have the honour to report that, the House having attended on Her Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber, I informed Her Excellency that the choice of Speaker had fallen upon me, and in your names and on your behalf, I made the usual claim for your privileges which Her Excellency was pleased to confirm to you.

\* \* \*

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

## ORDER PAPER

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that in accordance with the representation made by the government, pursuant to Standing Order 55(1), I have caused to be published a special Order Paper giving notice of a government motion.

I now lay upon the table the relevant document.

\* \* \*

## OATHS OF OFFICE

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-1, An Act respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office.

(Motions deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*English*]

## SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when this House did attend Her Excellency this day in the Senate chamber, Her Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament. To prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

*HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE,  
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:*

I congratulate both the returning members of Parliament, as well as the more than one hundred who are newly elected, as you take up your duties in the House of Commons for this Thirty-Eighth Parliament of Canada.

This year, Canadians commemorated the 60th anniversary of D-Day and the landing of allied forces in Europe—an event that spelled the beginning of the end of the Second World War. Canadian soldiers, sailors and aircrews fought with dogged bravery and were ultimately victorious on Juno Beach that day.

Shortly, I will be going to Italy to commemorate the significant campaign in which six thousand Canadians sacrificed their lives. To me, personally, these commemorations are a symbol of our eternal gratitude and an affirmation that we have not forgotten.

On these occasions, we are reminded of the huge debt we owe to those in uniform who have served this country—then and today. Our veterans connect generations and Canadians. As a country and as individuals, we gain in pride and in purpose from their deeds and their service.

I recently concluded extended visits to six cities of varying size—Saint John, Quebec City, Toronto, Saskatoon, Calgary and Vancouver. In them, I found remarkable, innovative projects for social renewal and individual commitment. They express the confidence and love that we all hold for this country. This is the spirit of Canada I see as Governor General.

The Government starts this new session with a commitment that all parliamentarians share—regardless of political affiliation—to contribute to real progress for Canadians, for this country, for our future. The Government faces a new Parliament fresh from an election. The people of Canada want this Government, and all parliamentarians, to rise above partisanship to address the public interest. They want their political leaders to catch up with Canadians' own ambitions for the country and their readiness to take on the world with confidence.

### *The Address*

Each of us must take responsibility. The Government will do its part to ensure that this minority Parliament works. Working together, we can unite the voices of all Canadians in common purpose.

The Government's actions on behalf of Canadians will be guided by these seven commitments:

- to be unwavering in the application of fiscal discipline, the foundation of so much of Canada's success over the past decade;
- to promote the national interest by setting the nation's objectives and building a consensus toward achieving them;
- to pursue these objectives in a manner that recognizes Canada's diversity as a source of strength and innovation;
- to aim for tangible, practical results for Canadians and report to them so that they can hold their governments to account;
- to defend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and to be a steadfast advocate of inclusion;
- to demand equality of opportunity so that prosperity can be shared by all Canadians; and
- to assert Canada's interests and project our values in the world.

Together, we can move Canada forward.

### **A STRONG ECONOMY**

Our quality of life, job opportunities and capacity to support our social goals rely on a globally competitive economy.

Canada has a solid record of economic achievement. Over the past 10 years, we generated over three million new jobs. Since 1997, we have led all G7 countries in the growth of living standards. And low interest rates have made home ownership easier than it has been in decades.

This has not happened by accident. A virtuous circle led to increased confidence, lower interest rates and robust growth of well-paying jobs. The increase in revenues and the recovery of fiscal sovereignty have in turn permitted the Government to reduce and improve the fairness of taxes, and make new social and economic investments. This virtuous circle will continue.

We have been successful, but we will not be complacent. The Government will not spend itself into deficit. It will continue to pay down debt. Its objective is to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio to 25 per cent within 10 years. It will provide transparent, accountable management, treating every tax dollar with respect. The Government will make the difficult decisions among competing priorities and systematically review all expenditures, reallocating from old to new, from past to future.

Canada must now elevate its economic performance to the next level. Advancing technology and pervasive global competition demand of Canada a commitment to excellence, the pursuit of greater productivity, and a vision directed outward to the challenges and opportunities the world presents.

The Government will pursue a five-point strategy to build an even more globally competitive and sustainable economy.

The first element is to invest in people, Canada's greatest source of creativity and economic strength.

We must invest in helping workers to continuously enhance their skills to keep pace with constantly evolving workplace requirements. To that end, the Government will develop a new Workplace Skills

Strategy, including steps to enhance apprenticeship systems, and to boost literacy and other essential job skills. This will be complemented by up-to-date training facilities and labour market agreements to be developed in collaboration with the provinces and territories, unions and sector councils.

The Government will continue to review the Employment Insurance program to ensure that it remains well-suited to the needs of Canada's workforce.

Efforts to improve the recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience have yielded too little progress. Looking to the growing contribution that will be required from new Canadians as our population ages, this Government will redouble its efforts, in cooperation with the provinces and professional bodies, to help integrate them into the workforce.

To increase access to post-secondary education, the Government will introduce legislation to implement its Learning Bond, an innovative savings vehicle that it announced to help low-income families provide for their children's post-secondary education.

The second element of the economic strategy is to strengthen Canada's ability to generate and apply new ideas.

The Government of Canada has made substantial investments—more than \$13 billion since 1997—that have built a strong foundation in basic science and technology, including the Canada Foundation for Innovation, health research and other initiatives to create leading-edge capabilities. It will continue to build on this strength.

The National Science Advisor is assisting the Government to ensure that these investments are strategic, focused and delivering results, and is working to bring about a fuller integration of the Government's substantial in-house science and technology activity.

The next challenge is to turn more of Canadians' bright ideas into dynamic businesses, great jobs and growing export earnings. To that end, the Government will ensure a supply of venture capital, particularly for early-stage businesses—for example, through the venture financing arm of the Business Development Bank of Canada.

The Government will develop policies to foster Canadian capabilities in key enabling technologies—such as biotechnology, information and communications, and advanced materials—which will be drivers of innovation and productivity in the 21st century economy.

Providing “smart government”—the third element of our economic strategy—aims to make it easier for businesses to do business in Canada.

Smart government includes a transparent and predictable regulatory system that accomplishes public policy objectives efficiently while eliminating unintended impacts. This can be a key competitive advantage for Canada. That is why the Government welcomes the just-released report of the External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation.

Smart government also includes providing an up-to-date legislative framework for business. The Government will therefore propose changes to modernize the Competition Act.

The fourth element of the Government's overall economic strategy is a commitment to regional and sectoral development.

The Government will do its part to enable the success of important sectors, including automotive, aerospace and other manufacturing, as well as agriculture and other resource-based industries.

Canada's regional economies are a vital source of economic strength and stability. Support for regional and rural economic development will target the fundamentals—skills upgrading, support for research and development, community development, and modern infrastructure such as broadband communication—by employing the regional agencies and tools such as the Atlantic Innovation Fund.

The Government's regional objectives will be complemented by the most fundamental reform of the Equalization program in its 47-year history. The objective is to make more stable and predictable the total payments by the federal government to the less-wealthy provinces in support of key public services.

A region of particular challenge and opportunity is Canada's North—a vast area of unique cultural and ecological significance. The Government will develop, in cooperation with its territorial partners, Aboriginal people and other northern residents, the first-ever comprehensive strategy for the North. This northern strategy will foster sustainable economic and human development; protect the northern environment and Canada's sovereignty and security; and promote cooperation with the international circumpolar community.

Promotion of trade and investment is the fifth pillar of the Government's economic strategy.

Strong investment will be the primary generator of growth and good jobs for the future. The Government will foster investment by attending to the conditions that encourage entrepreneurs and providers of risk capital. These include sound monetary and fiscal policies as well as competitive taxes, efficiently targeted to promote economic growth.

Canada has always been a trading nation, but never more so than today. It is therefore vital that we secure and enhance our access to markets, both in North America and the world. To this end, the Government will continue to push for an open, rules-based international trading system and a successful conclusion of the Doha Round of global trade negotiations.

Issues such as softwood lumber and BSE underline the importance the Government attaches to obtaining more reliable access to U.S. markets. It will build on the successful Smart Borders initiative and on measures designed to develop a more sophisticated and informed relationship involving business and government officials in the United States.

The Government will enhance its capacity to expand international trade and commerce, with a particular focus on North America and emerging markets.

### *The Address*

To complement its international commerce initiatives, the Government is determined to forge a stronger Canadian economic union, free of the internal barriers that still diminish opportunities and reduce our competitiveness.

## **THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS**

Canadians have told their governments, year after year, to renew Medicare, to stop bickering and work together to ensure that it will be there for them and their children. Governments have responded. On September 15, all fourteen First Ministers agreed on the *Ten-year Plan to Strengthen Health Care*.

The Plan sets out a clear commitment, shared by all provinces and territories, to achieve tangible results—results for patients. What united all First Ministers was the commitment to a meaningful reduction in wait times for health services because it is key to transforming the health system. The Plan holds all governments to account by establishing a requirement for evidence-based benchmarks, comparable indicators, clear targets and transparent reporting to the public on access to health care. This means that the needs of patients will drive change.

The Plan will accelerate reform and ensure better access to key tests and treatments. It will increase the number of doctors, nurses and other health professionals. This will be helped by quicker assessment and integration of those who have received their training abroad. The Plan will improve access to home and community care services and to safe and affordable drugs.

The Plan commits to a 10-year track of substantial, predictable long-term funding, closing what has been called the "Romanow Gap." The Plan creates a Wait Times Reduction Fund, so that Canadians can see tangible progress in key areas such as cancer and heart treatment, diagnostic imaging, joint replacements and sight restoration.

The Plan addresses the unique challenges facing the delivery of health care services in Canada's North, including the costs of medical transportation, and encourages innovative delivery of services to rural Canada.

As part of the Plan, governments will, for the first time, set goals and targets for improving the health status of Canadians. The Health Council of Canada will provide an annual report on health status and health outcomes, and will report on progress in implementing the Plan.

Funding arrangements will require that jurisdictions comply with the reporting provisions agreed to by First Ministers.

### *The Address*

Better health for Canadians requires more than just timely access to health care. It requires the promotion of healthy living, addressing risk factors such as physical inactivity and nutrition; the prevention of injury; and integrated disease strategies.

The Government will also work with partners to enhance sports activities at both the community and competitive levels. The Government has already appointed a new Chief Public Health Officer for Canada to drive real change. The Government will also proceed with new health protection legislation. And it welcomes the development of the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network, which will strengthen collaboration among public health organizations nationwide. The Network will build capacity and provide coordinated responses to infectious disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies.

#### **CHILDREN, CAREGIVERS AND SENIORS**

For a decade, all governments have understood that the most important investment that can be made is in our children. That is why, even when it was fighting the deficit, the Government established the National Child Benefit—the most significant national social program since Medicare.

There is more that must be done to help families help their children. Parents must have real choices; children must have real opportunities to learn. The time has come for a truly national system of early learning and child care, a system based on the four key principles that parents and child care experts say matter—quality, universality, accessibility and development.

The Government will put the foundations in place with its provincial and territorial partners, charting a national course that focuses on results, builds on best practices and reports on progress to Canadians. Within this national framework, the provinces and territories will have the flexibility to address their own particular needs and circumstances.

As our society ages, Canadian families are caring not only for young children but increasingly for elderly spouses and grandparents as well.

The Government recognizes the vital role of Canadians who care for aged or infirm relatives or those with severe disabilities. It will improve its existing tax-based support and will ask Parliament to consult across the country on additional initiatives.

Building on previous measures, the Government will assist people with disabilities in becoming more self-reliant by drawing on the upcoming recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities.

Canada's seniors are healthier and living longer than ever before. Many want to remain active and engaged in community life. To help them, the Government has announced the New Horizons program and will explore other means of ensuring that we do not lose the talents and contribution that seniors can make to our society.

Canada's seniors have earned the right to be treated with dignity. As one step, the Government will increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement for Canada's least well-off seniors.

#### **ABORIGINAL CANADIANS**

We must do more to ensure that Canada's prosperity is shared by Canada's Aboriginal people—First Nations, Inuit and Métis. We have made progress, but it is overshadowed by the rates of fetal alcohol syndrome and teen suicide in Aboriginal communities. These are the intolerable consequences of the yawning gaps that separate so many Aboriginal people from other Canadians—unacceptable gaps in education attainment, in employment, in basics like housing and clean water, and in the incidence of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

The Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable held last April was a major step along a new path of partnership and prosperity. The Government and Aboriginal leaders agreed to measurable goals to reduce these gaps and their consequences.

What could be more profound than targeting real change in the rate of fetal alcohol syndrome and teen suicide?

At their meeting on September 13 of this year, all First Ministers and Aboriginal leaders took action. There, this Government undertook to provide \$700 million to encourage greater Aboriginal participation in the health professions, to address chronic diseases such as diabetes, and to create an Aboriginal Health Transition Fund to better adapt existing health care services to Aboriginal needs.

The Government is working together with Aboriginal Canadians and provincial and territorial governments to create the conditions for long-term development—learning, economic opportunity, and modern institutions of Aboriginal governance—while respecting historical rights and agreements.

The Government and Aboriginal people will together develop specific quality-of-life indicators and a "Report Card" to hold all to account and to drive progress.

#### **CANADA'S CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**

Canadians want their communities, towns and cities to be great places to live—safe, with affordable housing, good public transit, clean air and water, and abundant green spaces. Communities are key to our social goals and our economic competitiveness. They are the front lines in building a better quality of life.

Through the *New Deal for Canada's Cities and Communities*, and working with the provinces and territories, the Government will make available, for the benefit of municipalities, a portion of the federal gas tax, growing over the next five years. These funds will enable municipalities to make long-term financial commitments needed to help contain urban sprawl and to invest in new sustainable infrastructure projects in areas like transit, roads, clean water and sewers.

*The Address*

To address key issues such as urban renewal, immigrant integration and the challenges facing off-reserve Aboriginal Canadians, the Government will expand the partnership approach used to develop the Vancouver and Winnipeg Agreements and proceed to implement its recent agreement with the Government of Ontario to cooperate in service delivery. The Government will also build on the work of the Harcourt Advisory Committee.

Shelter is the foundation upon which healthy communities and individual dignity are built. The Government will extend and enhance existing programs such as the Affordable Housing Initiative, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative for the homeless, and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program.

What makes our communities strong is the willingness of men and women from all walks of life to take responsibility for their future and for one another. We can see this in the number of voluntary organizations and social economy enterprises that are finding local solutions to local problems. The Government is determined to foster the social economy—the myriad not-for-profit activities and enterprises that harness civic and entrepreneurial energies for community benefit right across Canada. The Government will help to create the conditions for their success, including the business environment within which they work. To that end, it will introduce a new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

What makes our communities work is our deep commitment to human rights and mutual respect. The Government is committed to these values. It will modernize Canada's Citizenship Act to reaffirm the responsibilities and rights of Canadian citizenship and our values of multiculturalism, gender equality and linguistic duality. It is implementing the Official Languages Action Plan and will continue to promote the vitality of official language minority communities. It will take measures to strengthen Canada's ability to combat racism, hate speech and hate crimes, both here at home and around the world. And it will table legislation to protect against trafficking in persons and to crack down on child pornography.

What makes our communities vibrant and creative is the quality of their cultural life. The Government will foster cultural institutions and policies that aspire to excellence, reflect a diverse and multicultural society, respond to the new challenges of globalization and the digital economy, and promote diversity of views and cultural expression at home and abroad.

**OUR ENVIRONMENT**

Our quality of life today, and the legacy we bequeath to future generations, demands fundamental change in the way in which we think about the environment.

The Government will work with its partners to build sustainable development systematically into decision making.

As the ethic and imperative of sustainability take deeper root worldwide, human ingenuity will turn increasingly to ways to produce and use energy more cleanly and efficiently; to eliminate toxins from our air, water and soil; and to build more sustainable communities. Here lie great new opportunities for the world economy. Canada's entrepreneurs must aim to be at the leading edge.

To that end, the Government will work with the private sector to improve the commercialization of the best new environmental technologies. Major investments funded out of the proceeds of the sale of the Government's Petro-Canada shares will support their development and deployment.

The Government will work to get its own house in order. It will consolidate federal environmental assessments and will work with the provinces and territories toward a unified and more effective assessment process for Canada. By 2006, the Government will implement a new Green Procurement Policy to govern its purchases. It will also introduce legislation that will strengthen the focus on the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks.

Nowhere are the challenges and opportunities of sustainability more evident than in the way in which we use and produce energy. The Government will place increased focus on energy efficiency and energy research and development. It will engage stakeholders in developing comprehensive approaches to encourage increased production and use of clean, renewable energy and to promote greater energy efficiency. This will build on efforts already underway, including support for wind-power production in Canada, stimulated by a quadrupling of the Wind Power Production Incentive.

The Government reiterates that it will respect its commitment to the Kyoto Accord on climate change in a way that produces long-term and enduring results while maintaining a strong and growing economy. It will do so by refining and implementing an equitable national plan, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders.

As the Government builds a sustainable society at home, it will continue to pursue multilateral and bilateral approaches to what are ultimately global challenges. For example, it will work with the United States and agencies like the International Joint Commission on issues such as clean air, clean water and invasive species. In 2005, the Government will bring forward the next generation of its Great Lakes and St. Lawrence programs, underscoring its commitment to protect and preserve these internationally significant shared ecosystems.

The Government will also move forward on its Oceans Action Plan by maximizing the use and development of oceans technology, establishing a network of marine protected areas, implementing integrated management plans, and enhancing the enforcement of rules governing oceans and fisheries, including rules governing straddling stocks.

*The Address***A ROLE OF PRIDE AND INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD**

In today's world, effective international engagement is needed to advance national aspirations. Now that time and distance have lost their isolating effect, it is no longer possible to separate domestic and international policies. Canada's internationalism is a real advantage, but we must find new ways to express it if we are to effectively assert our interests and project our values in a changing world.

Just as Canada's domestic and international policies must work in concert, so too must our defence, diplomacy, development and trade efforts work in concert. This fall, the Government will release a comprehensive International Policy Statement that will reflect this integration. Parliamentarians and other Canadians will have the opportunity to debate its analyses and proposed directions.

Meanwhile, the world does not wait. The new security threats that face Canada demand new approaches immediately. The Government has already responded. In April of this year, it introduced Canada's first-ever comprehensive National Security Policy, which will ensure a more focused and integrated approach to securing our open society. The Government is now implementing this policy. In this context, the Government is also deepening cooperation with the United States on mutual assistance in the event of major natural or human-caused emergencies.

This new context requires us to manage wisely our relationship with the United States, to know our friend better, and to strengthen our economic and security relations. Our relationship must be built on shared values, on mutual respect, and on a strong and independent voice for Canada.

Enhancing Canada's security means that we have to invest more in our military as part of defending ourselves at home, in North America and in the world. We have to earn our way in the world. But ours will never be the biggest military force, so it must be smart, strategic and focused.

Canada's proud tradition as a leader in peacekeeping is being tested today by increasing demands in extremely dangerous and politically complicated situations, often involving failed and failing states. We have seen what extraordinary work Canadian men and women can do in places like Afghanistan, Bosnia and Haiti. We know that Canadians are among the best in the world in meeting the challenge of being soldiers to make the peace, diplomats to negotiate the peace and aid workers to nurture the peace.

That is why the Government will be increasing our regular forces by some 5,000 troops and our reserves by 3,000 so that they may be better prepared and equipped to meet these challenges.

As Darfur and other situations have shown, sometimes intervention is best achieved by regional forces attuned to their cultural and geographic conditions. In such cases, particularly in Africa, Canada intends to continue playing a role by training regional peacekeepers, to prepare them to conduct challenging security operations within the principles of international humanitarian law.

In so many of the world's trouble spots, establishing order is only the first step. Poverty, despair and violence are usually rooted in failed institutions of basic governance and rule of law. This is where

Canada, with its commitment to pluralism and human rights, can make a unique contribution.

That is why the Government is establishing the Canada Corps. Its mandate is first, to put our idealism to work by helping young Canadians bring their enthusiasm and energy to the world; second, to bring our skills and ideas to bear by ensuring that experts of all ages and backgrounds—for example, in governance, health, economics, human rights—can get to the places in the world that need them; and third, to coordinate the efforts of government and to work with civil society. The Canada Corps will bring the best of Canadian values and experience to the world.

For all that we as Canadians want to achieve, and for all that we want for others, we also need international institutions that work. Dealing with complex issues like the "responsibility to protect" and managing the global commons will require leadership from all continents—from North and South. For that reason, the Government will work to bring about a meeting of G20 leaders to address common and pressing concerns, such as how to improve public health systems, combat terrorism and reform our multilateral institutions.

**GOVERNING IN COMMON PURPOSE**

The Government's agenda for this Parliament is based on a comprehensive strategy to build a prosperous and sustainable 21st-century economy for Canada; strengthen the country's social foundations; and secure for Canada a place of pride and influence in the world.

Supported by a committed and excellent public service, the Government will work diligently in this minority Parliament to address the priority areas it has identified. It will also introduce initiatives in many other areas, including commitments from the last Speech from the Throne, and will build on the work of Parliamentary committees, involve parliamentarians in the review of key appointments, and examine the need and options for reform of our democratic institutions, including electoral reform.

The Government invites members from both Chambers to join with it in the same democratic spirit: committed to unity and the inclusion of all regions and all voices, ready to work in common purpose on behalf of Canada.

*Members of the House of Commons:*

You will be asked to appropriate the funds required to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

*Honourable Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Commons:*

As you carry out your duties and exercise your responsibilities, may you be guided by Divine Providence.

[*Translation*]

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.)** moved:



*Business of the House*

That the speech of Her Excellency the Governor General, delivered this day from the Throne to the two Houses of Parliament, be taken into consideration later today.  
(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[English]

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the following members have been appointed as members of the Board of Internal Economy for the purposes and under the provisions of the act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act, Chapter 32, *Statutes of Canada, 1997*, namely: Mr. Valeri and Mr. Bélanger, members of the Queen's Privy Council; Ms. Redman and Mr. Lastewka, representatives of the government caucus; Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Hill, Prince George—Peace River, representatives of the Conservative caucus; Mr. Guimond, representatives of the Bloc Québécois; and Ms. Davies, representative of the New Democratic caucus.

**Hon. Tony Valeri:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to propose the motion that I put on notice two days ago. This motion was negotiated by House leaders of all parties, and I want to take the opportunity to thank the House leaders for their cooperation in ensuring that these motions move forward.

While I gave notice in order not to have to request the leave of the House to propose the motion, I think all members will have observed that the motion is several hundred words long. Since the motion represents an all party agreement and in order to avoid spending a great deal of time in the House reading aloud a lengthy motion that is in fact printed in the Order Paper, I would suggest that the reading of the motion be dispensed with and that it be put as if read.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. leader of the government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to have the motion put to the House and deemed to have been read for that purpose?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** I move:

That

I. For the purpose of considering the Main Estimates for the year ending March 31, 2005, Standing Order 81 shall apply with the following ad hoc amendments:

1. In section (4) thereof,

(a) the first sentence shall be read as "The main estimates to cover the present fiscal year for every department of government shall be deemed referred to standing committees on or before October 8, 2004.";

(b) the words "May 31" shall be read as "November 30"; and

(c) the words "May 1" shall be read as "November 1".

2. On the last allotted day in the period ending December 10, 2004, proceedings shall take place pursuant to section (18) thereof, rather than section (17);

II. Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 28(2)(a), the House shall sit on October 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2004 and, for the present Session only, Standing Order 28(2)(b) shall be amended by deleting the words "September 30" and by substituting therefor the words "October 29" and by deleting the words "the Monday following Easter Monday" and by substituting therefor the words "June 23, 2005", provided that the hours of sitting and order of business on Tuesday, October 12, 2004 shall be those of a Wednesday and provided that the recording of any division requested on

any debatable motion on October 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2004 shall be deferred to 3:00 p. m. on October 18, 2004;

III. Notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, in the present Session, the Speaker shall alter the application of the Standing Orders or practices of the House in order to permit the full participation in the proceedings of the House of any Member with a disability;

IV. Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 104(1) and (2), the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs shall consist of twelve Members; namely, Françoise Boivin, Don Boudria, Bill Casey, Yvon Godin, Michel Guimond, Dale Johnston, Dominic LeBlanc, Judi Longfield, Pauline Picard, Karen Redman, Scott Reid and Chuck Strahl; and the said committee shall, within the first ten sitting days following the adoption of this Order, prepare and report to the House lists of twelve Members to serve on each of the following Standing Committees:

(a) Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development;

(b) Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics;

(c) Agriculture and Agri-Food;

(d) Canadian Heritage;

(e) Citizenship and Immigration;

(f) Environment and Sustainable Development;

(g) Finance;

(h) Fisheries and Oceans;

(i) Foreign Affairs and International Trade;

(j) Government Operations and Estimates;

(k) Health;

(l) Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities;

(m) Industry, Natural Resources, Science and Technology;

(n) Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness;

(o) National Defence and Veterans Affairs;

(p) Official Languages;

(q) Procedure and House Affairs;

(r) Public Accounts;

(s) Transport; and

(t) Status of Women; and

V. Notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, the Chair of each standing committee shall be a Member of the government party, the first Vice-Chair shall be a Member of the official Opposition Party and the second Vice-Chair shall be a Member of an opposition party other than the official Opposition party, except for the Standing Committees on Public Accounts, on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics and on Government Operations and Estimates, whose Chair shall be a Member of the official Opposition Party and the first Vice-Chair shall be a Member of the government party and the second Vice-Chair shall be a Member of an opposition party other than the official Opposition party, and, in the case of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations, the Joint Chair acting on behalf of this House shall be a Member of the official Opposition Party and the first Vice-Chair shall be a Member of the government party and the second Vice-Chair shall be a Member of an opposition party other than the official Opposition party;

VI. Notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, at the beginning of the first session of a new Parliament or whenever there is a vacancy for the position of Deputy Speaker of the House and Chair of Committees of the Whole, and, at the commencement of each session or whenever there is a vacancy for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole or Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole, the Speaker, after consultation with the leaders of each of the officially recognized parties, shall announce to the House the name of a Member he or she considers to be qualified for the position in question, shall deem a motion to appoint the said Member to have been moved and seconded by appropriate Members, and shall put the question without debate or amendment; and

VII. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be instructed to report to the House within twenty sitting days of the adoption of this Order the changes to the Standing Orders that are necessary to make sections III, IV, V and VI of this Order permanent.

*The Address*

(Motion agreed to)

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**COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE**

## APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

**The Speaker:** In anticipation of the adoption of this motion, the leaders of the recognized parties consulted with me following my election. I am now prepared to propose, for the ratification of the House, a candidate for the position of Deputy Speaker and chair of committees of the whole.

[*Translation*]

Consultation on the other two positions are ongoing. The chair will make suggestions to the House in the days to come.

● (1635)

[*English*]

Pursuant to order made earlier this day, I propose Mr. Chuck Strahl for the position of Deputy Speaker and chair of committees of the whole House.

Pursuant to order made earlier today, the motion is deemed moved and seconded. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Speaker:** I congratulate the hon. member.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, considering the member for Fraser Valley's recent promotion to high office, I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the membership on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, appointed earlier today, be amended by replacing the name of Chuck Strahl with the name of John Reynolds.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**SUPPLY**

**Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this House at its next sitting consider the business of supply.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to inform the House that six days in all shall be allotted to the business of supply for the period ending December 10, 2004.

**Hon. Tony Valeri:** I understand that you would find unanimous consent in the House to maintain the number of allotted days in the present period at seven.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the motion proposed by the hon. leader of the government. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I believe you would find agreement that on Thursday evening a take note debate will take place on the subject of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, and that this debate take place under the format established by Standing Order 53.1(1) except that the debate would begin at 7:00 p.m. and end no later than 12 midnight and that the Chair would not receive any quorum call during the debate.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and privileged to move the motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to pay my humble respects to Her Excellency the Governor General and thank Her Excellency for delivering the speech today.

[*English*]

I would also like to extend to the right hon. Prime Minister my gratitude for the honour he has given to me today and to the people of my riding of Davenport in asking that I move this motion.

I am also honoured, as the member for Davenport, to follow in the footsteps of two previous members, both outstanding parliamentarians: the Hon. Charles Caccia and the late Walter Gordon.

[*Translation*]

I commend the Prime Minister on his unfailing efforts on behalf of our wonderful country. To have courage means more than just not being afraid. It also means having faith.

Our Prime Minister has unwavering faith in his fellow Canadians and his country. The Speech from the Throne expresses his strong belief in the unlimited potential of Canadians.

*The Address**[English]*

As a Canadian and as the first member of Portuguese origin in the House of Commons, I am particularly aware of the profound responsibility we as members have to be role models. It is a great privilege to serve as a member of Parliament and with great privilege there is also great responsibility.

*[Translation]*

Over the past month, we have all had the opportunity to talk to people in our respective ridings. From coast to coast, all Canadians share some of the same concerns and priorities.

*[English]*

We live in a world that has become increasingly more complicated. As we survey the state of our planet, we see cause for deep concern. Wars that rob generations of the right to peaceful existence, inequities that cry out for justice and acts of incomprehensible inhumanity cascade across our various media with seemingly endless regularity, and yet there is always hope. There are people and nations who will answer the call for those of goodwill to stand up and be heard. Nations that stand for the best in human nature seek to cure this with compassion, humanity and fairness. Canada is such a country, a shining example, a light of hope of the ultimate boundaries to which humanity can strive when people of goodwill come together in common cause.

Today's throne speech calls on all Canadians to join together to protect and enhance the values that help us to be the country that so many others strive to be like.

*[Translation]*

Across Canada, Canadians have expressed their strong attachment to a universally accessible health care system. They recognize the importance, the vitality of families and the health of children, of having access to the services they need.

*[English]*

They want cities and communities that are vibrant and healthy places to live and they believe that like them, we must be fiscally responsible. Our house must certainly be in order. We owe this to the generations that have yet to come. To borrow a quotation from the Haida: "We do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children".

In my riding of Davenport I am pleased to speak regularly with my constituents to discuss their concerns and hear their views. They ask to be assured, like all Canadians, that should they need access to health care service, it will be available to them.

*[Translation]*

The Speech from the Throne expresses the government's continuing commitment to a well-structured health system, founded on one national standard of service for all Canadians.

The government has also proven that it is determined to improve the health care system that Canadians need and deserve.

Last month, the Prime Minister and representatives of the provinces and territories met and reached an agreement that will make the government's commitment to health care a tangible reality.

Today's throne speech clearly demonstrates that this commitment will become reality. The Prime Minister has stated many times that the government would set itself specific goals that the previous government was unable to attain.

As is the tradition, the throne speech addresses the health care issue in very general terms, but Canadians will certainly want to know what this really means for them. In practice, it will mean shorter wait times for key services, a national pharmaceutical strategy and better health care for aboriginal Canadians. These are the promises made at the first ministers' meeting on health care and these are the promises reiterated in today's Speech from the Throne.

There is no longer any doubt in our minds that Canadians will demand accountability. The government has committed \$41.2 billion over the next 10 years to reach its objectives. The government does not just make promises; it takes action.

• (1645)

*[English]*

The government has also honoured its commitment to our first nations, Metis and Inuit people by announcing \$500 million for medical equipment, and a further \$700 million over five years specifically dedicated to first nations people.

Each day, whether in my riding of Davenport or here in Ottawa, I pass elementary schools that are literally hives of activity. Children playing in the school yards before their learning day begins. Their laughter and their conversations are the sounds of our country's future. Into their hands we commend the hopes of tomorrow and the aspirations of a great nation.

In return they ask that we provide them with the tools they need to grow and the safety and protection they truly deserve. In this regard, and among other initiatives, the government will invest \$5 billion over the next five years toward a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care.

All great countries have thrived only when they realize that in the eyes of our youth is reflected the true value of our society. If they are to grow into healthy and productive citizens, it is essential that they receive the care and instruction they need in their early years.

The government will work to implement policies that will assist Canadian children to realize their full potential regardless of where they live or what resources their families have. It is imperative that all levels of government work together to achieve the honourable goals that have been put forward in the last year in terms of caring for our young people.

My riding of Davenport is not unlike thousands of communities across Canada. Each day families rise and begin with the promise of a new day. They go to their jobs, their schools or they volunteer their time in countless endeavours. Families of all kinds are the fabric of our country.

*The Address**[Translation]*

The government recognizes this reality and that is why it is confirming its intention today to help Canadian families to prosper and develop their full potential. As the government moves to implement the Speech from the Throne, helping families will remain at the heart of its agenda.

*[English]*

For over nine years I served my community in Toronto as a city councillor and at times acting mayor. I am proud of my work at Toronto city hall and I believe that at the core healthy cities and communities are the foundations upon which we build and sustain a healthy country.

It is with pride that I commend the government today on its renewed commitment to improving support for our local governments with initiatives like full relief from the goods and services tax and the municipal rural infrastructure fund.

This is a government with an agenda for change, true change that will help to ensure that our cities and communities are the places they ought to be.

The government has set a new tone in recognizing the need to support our cities and communities and today we have heard once again that these commitments will be transformed into action.

*[Translation]*

Also, today's throne speech demonstrates the government's continued leadership in the areas of the environment and sustainable development. The government has realized that it must play a leadership role in this regard.

*[English]*

Canada is a country of incredible beauty: forests as old as time, majestic rivers that flow over vast distances and mountains that reach seemingly beyond the sky. In protecting our environment we not only preserve this beauty for generations to come, we also confirm our understanding that the very sustainability of our society is contingent upon our success in this area.

The throne speech clearly illustrates this commitment to action with policies like the green procurement policy and an increased focus on wind power. This is a priority for the government and it is central to its mandate.

● (1650)

*[Translation]*

Historically, Canada has been perceived around the world as a fair and just country, one which fulfills its international obligations and understands the importance of building bridges rather than walls.

We are a people of peacekeepers and, as we know, our flag has flown proudly in the most troubled parts of the world. It is viewed as a symbol of equity, dignity and responsibility.

Today, the government has shown that Canada will continue to be a model of international cooperation in conducting its international affairs.

*[English]*

We as a government will not recoil from our responsibilities to all nations of the world and we will certainly uphold the principles for which we as a country are regarded around the world with respect.

The throne speech today is a reflection of the basic values that we as Canadians hold close to our hearts and the spirit of this commitment is reflected in the creation of a new Canada Corps which will bring the best of Canada's values to the world.

This is an agenda that is inclusive and respectful of the need to ensure that Canadians from coast to coast feel engaged and very much a part of the process of governing the country.

Today, the government, in its throne speech, once again invites Canadians to share in the opportunities that are before us to meet the challenges that may lie ahead and to recognize the greatness of this country.

We are a country that the world regards as a city upon a hill, a country of tolerance, opportunity, inclusiveness and fairness.

The throne speech delivers on the government's commitments to Canadians in the true spirit of our democracy. This throne speech invites us to embrace the future, certain in our resolve to improve the lives of Canadians regardless where they live and committed to lead Canada forward into the new century.

This is the government's vision and this is the vision of Canada set forth from the founding of our country. The throne speech confirms once again the very best of what Canada is about.

*[Translation]*

This is the government's vision and the true vision of Canada.

I have the honour and pleasure of moving, seconded by the hon. member for Gatineau, that the following Address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada.

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, a member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

May it please Your Excellency:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the House of Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised to hear a new member of Parliament read, somewhat foolishly, a canned speech that is totally contrary to the best interests of the provinces, and particularly the best interests of Quebec.

That speech no longer has anything to do with asymmetric federalism. It is totally silent on Quebec's specificity. This is a blatant encroachment on education, manpower and the environment.

*The Address*

There is nothing on employment insurance. Nor is there any confirmation that a vote will take place in the House of Commons on the missile defence shield issue, and there is nothing on the commitments made by the Liberals. This is a total lack of respect for everything that the public sought when it elected a minority government.

Today, this gentleman came up with this Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. He wants to propose these things to us, while claiming that this is precisely what the public wanted.

There is also nothing about agriculture, including supply management, which is such an important issue for Quebec. As for social housing, the government has totally given up. There is no follow up on the commitments made regarding parental leave. As for seniors, there is no guarantee of retroactivity.

I am asking the hon. member whether he realizes that his address goes totally against the best interests of the people who elected him.

• (1655)

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, but I will answer quite simply that I think he did not read the throne speech.

[*English*]

I believe the question that was asked is certainly addressed by the government. There is no question in my mind that the government very much cares about the well-being of Canadians and that is reflected clearly in today's throne speech.

**Hon. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Davenport.

I noticed that the Minister of the Environment was particularly pleased with his concern for the environment. I wonder if he has anything in mind in particular, given some of the issues that his constituency is facing on the border of the Great Lakes. Is there anything in particular that he wants to further elaborate on with regard to the environment and the importance to his constituency?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

I must say that during my time at Toronto City Hall I had an opportunity to be the president of an NGO located in Toronto called International Council for Local and Environmental Initiatives. It was actually started by Maurice Strong. It is an incredible organization. At the same time, when I was chair of Exhibition Place, one of the things we brought forward was the first wind turbine in a North American city. I am very proud of that record.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, seeing as the member for Davenport is new to the House of Commons, I will be rather gentle with my first question. On behalf of the New Democratic Party I want to congratulate him on his election win.

My question for him is quite clear. His predecessor was extremely strong. In fact, he was one of the leading advocates in this country on the labelling of genetically modified foods and also other aspects of the Kyoto accord, genetically modified frankenfish and products of that nature. He was an advocate who earned the respect of all

members of the House of Commons in his fight to protect the knowledge of citizens of this country to know what they are consuming.

Will we be able to at least be hopeful or suspect that he himself will follow in Mr. Caccia's footsteps in leading Parliament and the government to ensure that genetically modified foods, that are not presently labelled are labelled, and that all Canadians will have a right to know what they are consuming in their day to day lives?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

I will state that all of us have an important responsibility as parliamentarians and I take it very seriously. I am proud of the work that I have done over the years. I am proud to be the first Canadian of Portuguese origin to serve in Parliament and I also recognize that responsibility.

I must say that when it came to Mr. Caccia, I had a great respect for his work on the environment. I understand and very much appreciate the work he has done over the years. I, too, share many of his concerns. I also believe that the government is committed to Kyoto. That is a strong priority for the government.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I would like to congratulate the new member for Davenport. I might add that it is nice to see a young man who is proud of his Portuguese background. My congratulations to him.

[*English*]

The hon. member spoke about his experience on city council. It is clear from what we are hearing from some of the mayors across the country that the new deal for cities is coming in under what exactly they would like to see. In fact, they would like to see an increase in the amount of money going from the fuel taxes to the cities over the course of the next little while and speeding it up to 2007.

I would like to know, since he spent time on city council, why the deal that his former colleagues are speaking about now is not adequate and yet since becoming a member of the government, the deal that the government has outlined is good enough for the Liberals, but not good enough for his own colleagues? Perhaps he could comment on that new deal for cities.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, I guess there is no honeymoon for me today.

One of the things that the cities have been crying for is respect. I believe this government respects our cities and our communities. We have done this with the goods and services tax. We will also be doing that with the gasoline tax and we will work in partnership with our cities. That is the government's mandate. In fact, it has also promised to have further cooperation with all our cities and communities. That is the role, of course, that will be played by our excellent Minister of State for Infrastructure and Communities.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election to this House. I would like to know if he shares our concern.

*The Address*

All members in the House know that health care is one of the top concerns of our constituents. There was a consensus that the federal government should contribute 25% of health spending in the provinces. We realize that the September 15 agreement falls short of this goal.

Will my friend join the Bloc Québécois in urging the government to take heed of the provincial consensus and make an additional effort to support health care?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure I stated very clearly in my remarks the agenda of our government.

[*English*]

I would also like to state the fact that the government is moving forward with an agenda that very much puts the first and foremost priority on health care. That is what was discussed in the throne speech and that is what the government will deliver.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a new member, it seems to be a good thing to say one is the first of one thing or another. I take great pride in saying that I am the first woman elected for my party in my great region of the Outaouais.

It is a great honour for me to second the motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to take this opportunity as well to thank my predecessor, the former member for Gatineau and former colleague Mark Assad. He represented the riding from 1988 to 2004.

First of all, I would like to pay my respects to Her Excellency the Governor General, Madame Adrienne Clarkson, and to thank her for delivering the throne speech to both Houses.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate you on your recent re-election. I wish mine had been that easy. I have no doubt that you will do an exceptional job as Speaker of the House.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for having selected me to rise before the Parliament of Canada to second this motion.

What I appreciate particularly, although some might not, is that these are all my own words. I worked on my speech well into the night. And while I may get into hot water for saying so, not one single word of my text was dictated to me.

I did not expect to have an opportunity to speak so soon after graduating from last week's course for rookie MPs. This is a moment I shall cherish, and I thank the Prime Minister for giving me this opportunity so early in my career. As well as the obvious personal honour, it is above all an honour for the people of my riding and for Quebec.

Some may make a point of counting the number of times I repeat the word Gatineau during my speech. Well, the people of Gatineau are important to me. They are the people I represent and I want to thank them. The voters of Gatineau have entrusted me with the task,

and the immense honour, of representing them in the federal legislature. The confidence they have placed in me makes me feel both humble and privileged.

We are all well aware that it is a major challenge to represent a riding. I am certain, however, that we will all expend every effort to rise to that challenge, with diligence and respect for the institutions, while of course seeking to do our utmost for the people of Canada.

The riding of Gatineau, in Quebec, is home to Canadians of every origin: mostly francophones, but anglophones as well; Canadians of Lebanese, Portuguese, Colombian, Romanian, African, and Asian descent, to name just a few. Many of them are owners of or employees in small or medium size businesses, where their hard work is enabling the riding to grow at an extraordinary rate. Some constituents work for the government and are unstinting in their efforts to improve our community. I salute them and I thank them.

All of these people know that they can always count on me to listen to them and help them. They can rely on my 20 years of experience as a labour relations lawyer and my involvement in the community.

Gatineau is intrinsically linked to the national capital region, which can and must grow according to principles of fairness between the two sides of the river. This principle, often called the 75-25 rule for Ottawa and Gatineau, was instituted 35 years ago as a sign of respect for the francophone community living in the area. This government will protect and encourage that rule of fairness, both in government services and in the establishment of research centres, of that I am sure.

The riding of Gatineau has an incredible potential for development. Yes, Gatineau does have some enviable examples of infrastructure, such as the Maison de la Culture or the National Archives of Canada. We also have industrial parks ready to be more active.

The city of Gatineau is the fifth largest city in Quebec. Everyone in the Outaouais was happy to learn just recently that highway 50 has been included in the national highway network, which should simplify funding for its extension to Lachute.

Therefore, I would like to offer my special thanks to the hon. Minister of Transport who understood the importance of this highway to the riding of Gatineau and the entire Outaouais region. He took the time to listen to me and support me, and in particular he took the necessary action with our provincial partners. Who thought we were on vacation after the election? Certainly not this government.

In the riding of Gatineau there are many volunteers who work toward ensuring a better future for everyone. The volunteers are seniors, young people, Canadians from all walks of life; they have names like Charron, Strolenberg, Lacroix, Robinson, Vaive, Clermont, Lajeunesse, Thibault, Foy, Racicot, Lagacé, Durand, Daaboul and Londono. I could have provided a much longer list since I have 20 minutes. They are the ones who ensure that our priorities reflect their priorities. We are working for them and everything they represent. They are Canadian citizens like us and have equal status. They trust us to represent them well and to speak on their behalf.

*The Address*

For example, in my riding, a 19-year-old man named Alexandre Gingras, with help from high school students and teachers, developed a plan to promote peace in the Middle East. This is an excellent indication that our young people want to be involved as well. All they need is encouragement. You will be hearing about this project, which goes by the name of Liberté.

I am very proud and privileged to represent all those people here in this House.

My riding office is literally at the heart of the riding of Gatineau. The office is near a CLSC, the cultural centre, the National Archives, the city's administrative offices, a college campus and the future site of a sports complex that I am sure we will help build, since it is good for young people and public health.

The people in the riding of Gatineau want the government's priority to be health, education, the environment and economic development. The Speech from the Throne responds to these requests.

• (1710)

On the matter of education, I would like to point out that today is World Teachers' Day. I think that teachers do a terrific job. They are shaping the leaders of tomorrow and those who represent our future, and I salute them.

The people of the riding of Gatineau want to close the growing gap between the rich and the poor. The Speech from the Throne is meeting this demand.

The people of Gatineau also want a proactive approach to looking after our seniors, young people and women, to integrating our cultural communities, to aboriginal peoples, to international aid and peace missions fundamental demands for respect, justice and equity. The Speech from the Throne meets these demands.

The government's program is an ambitious one. It shows and proves beyond a doubt what the Prime Minister's vision is all about. I congratulate him on it and thank him for it. This program is also proof that this government does not shy away from challenges.

[*English*]

There are definitely no chickens on this side of the House.

[*Translation*]

I am particularly pleased to note in this Speech from the Throne that the government has heard Canadians across the country and reached out to all parties in this House so that, through the parliamentary process, they may advance those issues that are a priority for them.

We already have to our credit the significant achievement of the recent historical health accord between the Prime Minister of Canada and the provincial premiers. I am convinced that similar achievements will be possible in the case of our other priorities, including our new deal for Canada's cities and communities, and the national child care plan which, I am proud to say, will be modeled on what we have in my province of Quebec. Quality, universality, accessibility and development will be at the heart of the national plan for kindergarten and child care.

I support in particular the steps that will be taken to improve the tax based support for natural caregivers through higher medical expense tax credits or disability credits and a commitment to invest \$1 billion over the next five years for those natural caregivers who look after elder or disabled relatives at home. That is important.

I do not know whether hon. members did like I did during the election campaign and met with our seniors. These are people who often have great needs, but who do not express them very strongly. They are afraid they might bother others. This is why I am very pleased to see that the throne speech is looking out for our seniors. They, like me, will be pleased to see that the New Horizons Program, which is already a very popular initiative, will get \$8 million for 2004-05 and \$10 million thereafter. This is in addition to the 7% increase to the guaranteed income supplement. More important, a secretariat for seniors will be created.

The approach used by the government in its dealings with its partners from the provinces, municipalities and communities makes me very optimistic for the future of Gatineau, Quebec and Canada. They have huge needs, and these needs are a central concern for people in the riding of Gatineau and for all Canadians. We will strive to settle key issues such as urban redevelopment, immigrant integration, cooperative services and social housing, while respecting jurisdictions.

We will expand and improve existing programs such as the affordable housing strategy, the community action partnership initiative dealing with the issue of homelessness and the residential rehabilitation assistance program.

We will continue to invest more in people and we will develop Canada's ability to promote new ideas and to implement them. We will also facilitate trade for businesses in Canada. Moreover, we will encourage regional and sectoral development and we will promote trade and investments.

Above all, we will not forget the very important sector, namely social economy, which is a central concern for many communities, including the riding of Gatineau. The government will help create the conditions that are necessary to the success of organizations that do so much in this sector of the economy.

Canada has achieved levels of excellence that are the envy of many of its economic, social and cultural partners.

[*English*]

Seven consecutive budget surpluses have made Canada the envy of the G-7.

[*Translation*]

This kind of responsible management increases consumer and business confidence and enables us to invest in social programs.

Our attachment to values such as equality and diversity has also enabled us to reach levels of excellence. In Canada, not only do we live our differences, we make a difference. However, you can rest assured that our priorities will be addressed within a fiscal framework consistent with Canada's financial health and the rules of transparency.

*The Address*

• (1715)

[English]

I am proud to be a participant in a government that will be open to working with all parties to serve all Canadians and to make this session of Parliament as effective and productive as possible.

[Translation]

Now is the time for action. Now is the time to move ahead in the interest of people from the riding of Gatineau, from Quebec and from all across Canada.

This 38th Parliament will make discussions, compromise, consensus and solutions a priority to best serve the interests of Canadians. They want this Parliament to work for them and succeed. We must do things differently, always keeping in mind that our job is to represent our constituents in Ottawa, not the other way around.

[English]

There are 107 new members of Parliament. We shall be heard. We shall bring to all parties more action and less rhetoric.

We all know history has shown that minority governments can be quite effective. They have been responsible for some of this country's most important initiatives: universal health care in 1966, the government student loans program in 1964, old age pensions in 1927, and the Canadian flag in 1965.

[Translation]

It is not only the Liberals on this side of the House that the people have challenged, but each and everyone of us. The credibility of our institutions and our role as members of Parliament are being questioned and treated with cynicism by both the public and the media. We now have an excellent opportunity to show Canadians that a minority government reflecting the interests of every region of Canada and a wide range of opposing views can also make the best decisions in the interest of taxpayers.

On a more personal note, I simply want to dedicate this day—because it is an extraordinary day for me, even though the next 10 minutes will probably be less so—to my father, who died almost 15 years ago to the day, on October 6, 1989. He was and still is my greatest source of inspiration. He would certainly have appreciated the importance of this moment, knowing that I had been dreaming of it since I was ten years old.

It is with conviction and enthusiasm, as the new member for Gatineau, that I support the motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne proposed by my colleague from Davenport.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite on her first day in the House and her first speech.

I also would like to congratulate the member for Davenport. I have had an opportunity to visit the country he mentioned, Portugal, which is almost as beautiful as Canada.

I listened to the member give great praise for the throne speech. I would like to remind her of some things that have taken place in this country in the last number of years, one being that the agricultural

community in this country from coast to coast has gone through years of drought and has been left absolutely devastated.

As well, producers have suffered through decades of low commodity prices. The family farm is being eroded and is disappearing. Now we are mired in the worst crisis, arguably, that agriculture in this country has ever faced: the BSE crisis.

As a whole, the agriculture sector in this country lost money last year. When we add up all the revenues and all the problems in agriculture, we get an unbelievable statistic.

The member mentioned her family and people in her constituency, but people in my constituency are losing their livelihood. Some are even threatening to take their own lives because of the desperation the agricultural community is facing.

I have to give credit to the finance minister. In the budget he presented last year, he had at least a half a sentence on agriculture. In the throne speech today, there are only three letters on agriculture. It is unbelievable. I would ask the member to stand up and justify this throne speech when it comes to the agricultural community.

• (1720)

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, those are great comments and I think we wholeheartedly embrace what the member has said. This is my first day in the House, but if I understood correctly, I heard there would be a debate on Thursday on this specific issue. I think this shows our concern.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and congratulate her on her intervention. I listened carefully to her praise for this Speech from the Throne, which legitimizes encroachment in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces in health, education, job training and the environment. I could not help but be troubled by the fact that a Quebec member of Parliament could make such comments in the House.

This Speech from the Throne also talks about unity. I had the pleasure of sitting with the member for Gatineau on the Commission de l'Outaouais sur l'avenir du Québec, of which she was one of the proud signatories. At the time, she recognized the possibility of Quebec's becoming a sovereign state, and she also said that the Outaouais is part of Quebec and that, if Quebec became sovereign, the Outaouais would be part of a sovereign Quebec.

How does the member for Gatineau reconcile her previous positions with those contained in the Speech from the Throne?

I would also like to ask her, since she made some comments on the missile defence shield that attracted a lot of attention, what she thinks about the fact that the Speech from the Throne is purely and simply silent on this missile defence shield and the fact that parliamentarians may be consulted on this project put forward by the United States.

And while we are on the subject, the member for Gatineau cited the extraordinary work done by federal civil servants. What does she think about the cowardly and wrongful dismissal of federal civil servants, such as Édith Gendron, on the basis of their political opinions?



*The Address*

While I am at it, does the member for Gatineau not find it a little troubling that this speech from the Throne is totally silent about the concept of asymmetrical federalism so dear to her counterpart from Chapleau in the National Assembly?

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, this feels like my election campaign all over again. It is the same old tune. They lost in my riding, period.

On this side of the House, when we say that we do not need to write long sentences or long agreements or constitutions to know where we are going, it means that we will have ample opportunity to address a number of the issues raised by my hon. colleague.

Clearly, and as the members who carefully listened to my speech have realized—and for those who did not, I would be more than willing to repeat the whole thing since I am starting to develop a taste for this—at the heart of my remarks is the fact that we will be addressing a lot of issues in committee. For instance, we will be looking at the missile defence shield, and I am sure this will not be the last time I hear this expression in the House. We will also talk about sovereignty.

The member mentioned the commission on which we both sat, but I will not even go there, since he knows where I stand on that issue.

About the civil servant the hon. member referred to, again, it is déjà vu, since I was asked about this during the election campaign. As a former labour lawyer, I never publicly comment on a specific case. Since there are cameras in here, I think we should take up this issue at some other time.

I want to thank my hon. colleague who is as eloquent as ever. I think we are in for some very interesting debates.

[*English*]

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the House the new member for Gatineau as well as the member for Davenport. I would like to say to the member for Gatineau that it is very good to have another woman present in the House because there are not enough women in the House of Commons. I am sure I am speaking for all of us.

I would point out to her that we in the NDP have always played a very critical role in minority parliaments. Some of the issues that she mentioned have come about as a result of minority parliaments. Social housing, medicare, and a national energy policy happened as a result of the role that the NDP played and the work that the NDP did in other minority parliaments. I would certainly let her and other members know that we intend to play that very central and critical role in this Parliament.

I listened to the throne speech today and her response to the throne speech. They are very good commitments and promises but they are things that we have heard many times before. Thirteen budgets have gone by and we still do not have a national child care program. Many budgets have gone by and we still do not have a national housing program. The member spoke about the need for social housing in her own riding.

I would like to ask the member if she sees a bit of a contradiction here. Does she believe that the government is actually going to live

up to its commitment to the promises it made and which it never delivered on over the many years when the Prime Minister was finance minister? Does she believe that in this minority Parliament there will now be an opportunity to deliver on those promises because the NDP is here?

● (1725)

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, that was a great comment and question. All of us in the House have to believe in the parliamentary process. Every member here in this Parliament will have something of value to say.

As for past parliaments, I was not here. However I know what I am going to do. I know what the government is going to do. I have total faith in my government and in the members.

**Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for an excellent reply to the Speech from the Throne. I welcome her to the House. Gatineau has an excellent representative here and her constituents can be very proud of the work that she has presented here today.

In our last budget we paid particular respect to the needs of cities by speaking of the GST portion that would be refunded to them. In the throne speech we have also indicated that municipalities and cities will get money back in terms of the gasoline tax. I know Gatineau will be affected by that.

Could the member please comment in terms of the attitude of the people in her riding toward the House and the government in offering greater assistance to our cities and smaller communities?

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, what a great question.

Gatineau is no different from anywhere else. This morning I was reading in our local paper, *Le Droit*, that the city of Gatineau is waiting to see how the deal with the cities is going to come out. Of course we realize it is going to be through negotiation with the provinces because we are very respectful of the jurisdiction of the provinces. All the cities are waiting desperately for this deal and Gatineau is no different. Repairs are needed to roads and waterworks. There are other types of repairs that are desperately needed before those cities crumble. We cannot play politics on this issue. It is crucial.

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate the members who spoke. I heard some enlightening speeches from the other side. Unfortunately I heard some even more penetrating questions from this side. I am sure that pattern will continue.

Therefore, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

(On motion of Mr. Harper the debate was adjourned)

● (1730)

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

*The Address*

That the House do now adjourn.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.)

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