



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, February 29, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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CORRIGENDUM

In the second paragraph under the time reference (1640) at page 55 of Hansard, February 28, 1996, the third sentence under [Translation] should have read:

I will be appealing to businesses large and small to invest in jobs for young Canadians.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 29, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I wish to table, in both official languages, copies of Order in Council appointments made by the government.

I also have the honour to table, in both official languages, a nomination made recently by the government.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions presented during the first session.

* * *

[Translation]

REPORT OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF CANADA

The Deputy Speaker: Dear colleagues, I have the honour of tabling an annex to the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada's report on the 35th general election, entitled "Canada's Electoral System: Strengthening the Foundation".

• (1005)

[English]

This document is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian chapter of the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians, as well as the financial report of the meeting of the IAFSP office held in Hanoi, Vietnam on February 4 and 5, 1996.

* * *

[English]

JUDGES ACT

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-2, an act to amend the Judges Act.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-201, an act to amend the Criminal Code (operation while impaired).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce this private member's bill which would see the Criminal Code amended to provide for a minimum sentence of seven years for convictions of impaired driving causing death.

At present the Criminal Code provides a 14-year maximum sentence for this conviction. However, statistics show that sentences range in the average of only one to four years for this serious crime. In a recent case in my riding involving the death of three family members, the convicted person, who had two prior impaired charges and convictions, received only a three and a half year sentence, hardly consistent with the tragic consequences of this crime.

The amendment I propose will ensure that sentencing reflects the severity of the crime and sends out a strong message of deterrence.

Routine Proceedings

I am pleased to advise the House that this measure has received the support of many of my fellow MPs—

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask all members please to be brief when they are making their introduction of bills. I know we could all speak for a long time about our bills.

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

* * *

NATIONAL ORGAN DONOR DAY ACT

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-202, an act respecting a national organ donor day in Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing this private member's bill which was previously introduced in the House on October 19, 1995.

The bill recognizes the efforts of a constituent of mine, Mrs. Linda Rumble of Whitby, Ontario and the ultimate gift her nephew, two-year-old Stuart Alan Herriott, gave to others whom he never knew.

This bill assists in providing more public education and awareness in organ donation by making every April 21 known as national organ donor day across Canada. April 21 marks the anniversary of young Stuart's death.

By establishing a national organ donor day it is hoped that more Canadians will be encouraged to make a pledge to organ donation. In doing so, Stuart's supreme gift will be remembered so that his act of kindness can be repeated by many other Canadians.

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

* * *

• (1010)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-202, an act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal organization).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a bill to amend the Criminal Code, which will essentially provide Canada with anti-gang legislation. The main purpose of this bill is to set a new policy condemning those who live off the proceeds of crime.

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

* * *

[English]

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-203, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act (qualifications of directors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to reintroduce this bill concerning an amendment to the Canada Business Corporations Act, specifically to do with limiting the number of concurrent corporate directorships that anyone can hold where that person holds less than 5 per cent of the voting shares of the corporation.

The nature of the bill has to do with the importance of directors' liability and that there is a point at which one person could hold more directorships than they could discharge their responsibilities fully.

Therefore, this bill seeks to limit the number of directorships so that the interests of shareholders, the employees and the corporation can be safeguarded.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-205, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Copyright Act (profit from authorship respecting a crime).

He said: Mr. Speaker, my reintroduced bill would amend the Criminal Code and the Copyright Act to prohibit a criminal from profiting by selling, authorizing or authoring the story of a crime. If a person is convicted of an indictable offence under the Criminal Code, any moneys he or she may have made or may make in the future from the creation of a work based on the crime would be deemed proceeds of crime subject to seizure by the crown.

The bill further amends the Copyright Act to provide that the copyright in any work principally based on the crime, where the work is created, prepared or published by or in collaboration with the convicted person, becomes the property of the crown. This would permit Canada, in countries which have signed the Berne Copyright Convention, to enforce its copyright.

The bottom line is that no one should receive a dime for committing a crime.

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

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-206, an act to amend the Criminal Code (offence committed outside Canada).

He said: Mr. Speaker, section 6.2 of the Criminal Code specifies that persons are not to be convicted of offences committed outside Canada. However, there are a few exceptions such as war crimes, hostage taking, hijacking, international terrorism, et cetera.

• (1015)

My bill amends section 7 of the Criminal Code and provides that everyone who commits an act or omission outside Canada that, if committed in Canada, would constitute an offence under the Criminal Code, shall be deemed to have committed the act in Canada, if he or she is a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, or present in Canada after the commission of the act.

The tragic inspiration for this bill is the true case of two Canadians who sexually assaulted a Canadian child while on holiday in the Caribbean. At present, there is no way of prosecuting those criminals in Canada. My bill would close this loophole and allow us to bring people like them to justice.

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

* * *

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE ACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-207, an act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act (recommendations of the Review Committee).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a very specific bill that I am reintroducing to amend a particular section, section 52 of the Canadian Intelligence Service Act.

It would provide that recommendations of the Security Intelligence Review Committee are to be implemented unless overruled by the minister concerned. In that event the minister would be required to report to Parliament the reasons for overruling the decision of the committee. If the reasons were secret the minister would be required to report to Parliament why they were deemed to be secret.

The principle of this bill has been recommended to successive governments by the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

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

*Routine Proceedings***CRIMINAL CODE**

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-208, an act to amend the Criminal Code (human being).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to add a definition of the term human being to the Criminal Code. The purpose of the definition is to extend the same protection to the unborn child as we extend currently to the born child and to focus the debate on the vexing issue of abortion and the question that has heretofore not been addressed, whether society wishes to extend protection to the unborn child.

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

* * *

CONSUMER PACKAGING AND LABELLING ACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-209, an act to amend the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act (nutritional value of food).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose this bill which is being reintroduced is to amend the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act to provide that foods sold to consumers across Canada have certain nutritional information stated on the label, including the vitamin content, carbohydrate content, fat content and the caloric amount per portion. This information is very common in the United States but is voluntary in Canada. This bill would make it mandatory.

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

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-210, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (review of nomination papers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, section 82.1 of the Canada Elections Act requires that each person seeking election have their nomination papers signed by 100 electors resident in the riding in which they seek to be elected. We all know this.

In the last federal election, in my riding of Scarborough West there were eight people on the ballot. At least four of those people had not complied with section 82.1 and had not had their nomination papers signed by 100 electors resident in the riding of Scarborough West. There was absolutely no mechanism to deal with this flagrant abuse of the Canada Elections Act.

Routine Proceedings

• (1020)

Accordingly, I have proposed a bill which would amend the Canada Elections Act. It would allow an elector of an electoral district to request the review of a nomination paper when the elector has reasonable grounds to believe that one or more persons who signed the nomination paper are not qualified electors resident in the electoral district. A nomination paper that had not been signed by the required number of electors resident in the electoral district provided for by the Canada Elections Act would be declared invalid.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to introduce in the House concerning gasoline prices and the concern about the possibility of introducing a gasoline tax. My constituents are concerned about this possibility and they wanted the House of Commons to ask the government to ensure that a gasoline tax would not be introduced.

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition that reads as follows: "We citizens residing in Quebec wish to point out to the House of Commons:

That it is innocent and defenceless people who pay the price, like 11-year old Daniel Desrochers who died in Montreal on August 13, 1995 as a result of a bombing in the Hochelaga—Maisonnette area, an attack aimed specifically at an alleged member of a criminal organization. That police forces do not have the tools and legislation they need to fight organized crime. That the Communauté urbaine de Montréal, the city of Montreal and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, among others, have called for the urgent adoption of anti-gang legislation by Canada. That organized crime threatens democracy, our individual freedoms and the safety of the population, including innocent people, as demonstrated in the August 9 attack. The petitioners therefore pray and call upon Parliament to adopt anti-gang legislation and agree to this demand".

This petition is signed by 60,000 people, and I support it.

[*English*]

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this petition signed by hundreds of members from my riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley. They wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that there

are profound inadequacies in the sentencing practices concerning individuals convicted of impaired driving, also that Canada must embrace a philosophy of zero tolerance toward individuals who drive while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Therefore, the petitioners humbly pray that the Parliament of Canada proceed immediately with amendments to the Criminal Code that will ensure that the sentence given to anyone convicted of driving while impaired or causing injury or death while impaired does reflect both the severity of the crime and the zero tolerance by Canada toward this crime.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present three petitions.

The first has been signed by a number of Canadians from Petawawa, Ontario. The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society. They also state that the income tax act discriminates against families who make the choice to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

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

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the labelling of alcoholic beverages.

The petitioners who are from Sarnia, Ontario would like to bring to the attention of the House that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems or impair ones ability to operate machinery and/or equipment. Specifically, fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol related birth defects are 100 per cent preventable by avoiding alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The petitioners therefore pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation to require health warning labels to be placed on the containers of all alcoholic beverages and to caution expectant mothers and others of the risks associated with alcohol consumption.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition has to do with the rights of the unborn.

The petitioners from Bancroft state that whereas the majority of Canadians respect the sanctity of human life and that human life at the preborn stage is not protected in Canadian society, they pray and call upon Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the

same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings. [Translation]

• (1025)

JUSTICE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition with 777 signatures asking for legislation from this House to reform the justice system and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. The principles to be observed here are: to have a just and safe society; to protect victims and not criminals; to eliminate drunk and drug defences; and in the case of third time young offenders, to give consideration to a military style bootcamp as suggested by the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see you in the chair again.

I would like to present, pursuant to Standing Order 36, a petition signed by several members of the constituency of Beaver River and the Grand Centre and Cold Lake area. Knowing of course that the budget is coming down very soon, they want to make sure that the government knows that any ill-advised tax on health and dental benefits would have an adverse effect on the oral health and overall health of Canadians.

The petitioners point out that dental care in Canada has been focused on prevention and family affordability for a generation. They also state that Canada's prevention directed system of oral health care combined with a tax free status and a past Parliament granted dental premiums have contributed to Canadians enjoying one of the highest standards of oral health in the world.

The petitioners also state that—and this is the important one—Canadians are taxed to the limit. Canadians find any new tax embarrassing and offensive and they just simply cannot afford it any more. They are calling on Parliament to refrain from implementing a tax on health and dental benefits and to put on hold any future consideration of such a tax until a complete review of the tax system and how it impacts on the health of Canadians has been undertaken.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed primarily by residents of the city of Calgary, Alberta praying that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no change in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

The Address

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS

The House resumed from February 28 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 and sub-amendment; and of the amendment and the amendment to the amendment.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about a country which has a wealth of young people. This country was born of a common will to populate one of the largest territories in the world. It was born of this sense women and men had of belonging to this fertile land.

This country was born of an ideal, the same ideal of freedom that inspired the first settlers and continues to inspire newcomers; an ideal based on civic-mindedness and rooted in democracy, an ideal that produces a peace-loving society whose most dynamic force is the principle of individual equality. This country has a name: Canada. This country is part of the New World, as explorers of times gone by called it; it is also a country ready for a new world.

Our friend opposite is shouting that he is waiting for the tears. What is somewhat regrettable is that the separatists, who are so concerned with having the country they love passionately, are denying us ours.

[English]

Our heritage, our culture, our shared struggles, shared joy, these help define what it means to be a Canadian. All the voices of Canada must be heard. Whatever their pitch, wherever they are, it is when our voices can be heard that we have a country moving forward. It is when the people of one community can have an emotional and lasting impact on someone from another community that we have a country that is moving forward. It is when the problems of one are the problems of all, when the joys of one can be the joy of many that we have a country moving forward. Our voices must be heard and they must be nurtured.

• (1030)

[Translation]

Canada is our greatest heritage, for us, for our children and for those who will come after them. It is the duty of every Canadian to keep alive our faith in our country and keep on nurturing it.

Ours is a country too often taken for granted, a country where women, men, children, First Nations, Acadians, Franco-Saskatche-

The Address

wanians, Quebecers, the people of Hamilton as well as those of Vancouver, and immigrants of all backgrounds feel at home.

Canada has not said its last word. In fact, Canada is just beginning to speak out. We Canadians are not in the habit of boasting about our feats, but modesty does not preclude pride. Our flag, which is only 31 years old, is one which, albeit young, commands respect around the world, a flag that represents one of the most envied people on this earth. Let us honour it. I invite all Canadians to take part in the one in a million flag project. This is quite a challenge.

[*English*]

The one in a million flag project launched on Signal Hill, the eastern most point of the North American continent overlooking St. John's harbour, challenges Canadians by this time next year to have one million more flags flying across the country. We challenge businesses. Yes, we challenge businesses and we challenge companies, school boards, municipalities and Canadians to help sponsor this mission to put one million more maple leaves on the porches, the balconies, the parks and the school desks of Canada.

In the coming days Canadians from coast to coast will be able to call 1-888-Fly Flag or—

[*Translation*]

—in French, 1-888-DRAPEAU, toll free, to show their pride in Canada or to obtain any information they may be looking for in order to promote the Canadian flag.

Mr. Lebel: Propaganda!

Ms. Coppins: The member calls it propaganda. As Canadians, it is our right and our duty to take pride in our flag. Indeed, it is not only our right but also our duty to make our country, which is called Canada, better known.

[*English*]

We must show our pride in the linguistic duality of this land. I challenge every community across the country to make Saint-Jean Baptiste day an integral part, not a separate part, of celebrating Canada.

[*Translation*]

You may not be aware of the fact that, in our riding of Hamilton East, the Cercle français has been celebrating Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day for 20 years. That day must be celebrated in every province and in every community across the country, from Sherbrooke to St. Boniface, from Moncton to Maillardville. We will honour our country by celebrating Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, a day for all Canadians.

[*English*]

We should also take the days leading up to Canada Day to honour the diversity of this great country.

I know my colleague, the Minister for Indian Affairs and Northern Development, is committed to seeing us recognize the first ever national aboriginal day, and to make this an integral part of the celebration of what we are as a nation. We need more contact and cultural exchange community to community, person to person. We need to recapture the spirit of 1967.

My community this summer is celebrating our 150th birthday.

[*Translation*]

And I know that there will also be a celebration in Rimouski.

• (1035)

I was very touched when the hon. member for Rimouski invited me to come to her home town. I can assure her that I will be there to celebrate Rimouski's anniversary, and I also want to invite her to Hamilton, for our city's 150th anniversary.

[*English*]

This summer 150 families from Hamilton and Shawinigan will be twinned.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guimond: Shawinigan!

Ms. Coppins: The hon. member says Shawinigan. He makes fun of the name Shawinigan. There are a lot of people from Shawinigan who like that name.

The 150 families from Shawinigan that will come to Hamilton will be welcomed by Hamilton residents who will help them discover our region.

[*English*]

I see the level of understanding between our communities growing. It is a great idea and we must do more. We need to help Canadians rediscover this great country and make it easier on people to visit Montreal instead of Miami, Port Alberni instead of San Francisco, Cape Breton instead of Cape Cod.

We must work with the airlines, the bus companies and the railways to put Canadians on the road to rediscovering the greatness of their own country. The world lives in an age in which knowledge is power. We need to know ourselves better as Canadians because that will give us more power as Canadians and more power as a country.

We are committed to providing Canadians, particularly young Canadians, from every corner of the country an opportunity to experience the whole of what Canada has to offer.

We will also launch the Terra Nova project to allow Canadians to talk to each other not just face to face but through cyberspace. We will bring together the public and private sectors in a unique CD-ROM project which will tell the Canadian story in a new and exciting way.

We also intend to build on the Youth Link project which was launched recently by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and by me at a school in Winnipeg. We hooked up students speaking in French—

[*Translation*]

—with students attending Hamilton's Delta High School, students from a school in Hull, and students from a school in Dorval. They talked to each other. They did not talk about the Constitution or politics. They talked about music. They asked each other what they thought of such and such a musician, or they inquired about their favourite hockey team. They talked and were starting to get to know one another.

Quebec francophones did not know that there were students in Winnipeg who did all their school work in French, even though they were anglophones. English speaking students attending Hamilton's Delta High School were not aware of the fact that students in Dorval could go to an

[*English*]

Youth Link will give students a chance to exchange ideas with not only other students across the country but with young people around the world. The more we know about where we have come from as a nation, who we are as a people and what we have accomplished together, the more confident we can all be that we will make the right decisions about our future.

[*Translation*]

We have every reason to walk hand in hand on the road to Canada's future. We were always able to overcome every obstacle and we are now the society that is best equipped to face the next millennium.

Our strength lies in our diversity. In the context of an increasingly greater worldwide economic integration, Canada offers to the world community the image of a modern, bilingual and openly multicultural society, a society reflecting the world itself.

The francophonie is a significant feature of the Canadian diversity. I recently met with provincial premiers in Winnipeg and we discussed how such a great asset it is to have people speaking French in every province.

• (1040)

[*English*]

Ten years ago we probably would not have had the kind of meeting we had in Winnipeg. Ministers from across the country came together and said that being able to speak in both languages in their province was not an economic drag but an economic plus. They were positioned to bid for international contracts and bring

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people together because they could offer the kind of linguistic capacity the world is looking for.

[*Translation*]

This major economic asset is just now beginning to be recognized throughout the country, which was not the case when we adopted bilingualism policies during the 1970s.

People want to take active charge of their own development, and this is why we will be organizing an economic forum of the francophone communities throughout this country which will take place this summer in the Beauce region.

This economic forum will foster the economic development of Canada's francophone communities, making every possible competitive opportunity available. Indeed the federal government will need to meet our commitments to help these communities to develop and grow. To show you how serious we are, both the President of Treasury Board and I as Minister of Canadian Heritage, are committed to delivering the goods relating to the Official Languages Act. I shall be working in close conjunction with the President of Treasury Board to ensure that we as a government meet our obligations.

[*English*]

Canada is about building hope and a dream for people around the world who look to us for inspiration and who look to us to make our differences work. Canada is bigger than the sum of its parts. We have come to learn through our own experiences and our history that even if culture and tradition distinguish people from each other, the bonds between us can be strong and unbreakable when we work together to build each other up instead of tearing each other down.

Canada is about people. It is also about land. We are proud to be the second largest country in the world. We are proud to be the country that holds 20 per cent of the world's fresh water, fresh water that will be an important instrument into the 21st century.

We are the first country to have established a national parks service. The government is proud to have a Prime Minister who created more national parks than any other Canadian. That is why we are committed to giving all of Canada's natural regions a national park by the year 2000.

Our ancestors left us a tremendous natural legacy. It is now our duty to build on that legacy for our children and our grandchildren.

[*Translation*]

Canada is both a geographical and a cultural space, and a number of our artists have gone beyond our borders to conquer the world, as we were delighted to see last night in Los Angeles. Our artists must be assured of pride of place in their own markets and their work must be made accessible to the entire population. As well, our

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artists must have exclusive ownership of what they produce. We must bring our copyright law up to date, so that there is a proper balance between the needs of creators and the needs of consumers.

[*English*]

Last night in Los Angeles Canadians were honoured when some of the largest recognized entertainment awards in the world went to Canadians. Canadians also know that more than 20 years ago governments through policy had the courage to make sure Canadian lyrics and Canadian music would have a chance to be heard in Canada and around the world.

When Canadian content rules were introduced there were nay-sayers, downplayers, the negatives and the nos, but the results of those policies are coming to fruition in what we saw last night. Joni Mitchell, Charles Dutoit, Shania Twain, Alanis Morissette, Daniel Lanois and Rob McConnell are Grammy winners not just because of their incredible talent but because their country's cultural policies supported them at a time when it was needed.

• (1045)

We must continue to stand up for our singers, our songwriters and all our artists. Cultural institutions like the CBC, the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada are essential in understanding Canadians and in telling Canadian stories. We will maintain the vitality of these institutions.

The Juneau committee report calls for more distinctively Canadian programming in quality and quantity. Let me assure Canadians we have heard that message loud and clear.

[*Translation*]

As a country, Canada is by far the most open to foreign cultures. This openness is a source of enrichment, but the Government of Canada must ensure that Canadian culture is promoted and developed.

Proud of our past, we are a people that looks to the future.

An hon. member just mentioned ADISQ. Mr. Speaker, I happened to meet some representatives of ADISQ the other day in Montreal. What struck me was that ADISQ works with all the other record companies in Canada—in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal—because they realize that when you are in that kind of small business, there is strength in numbers. We have a music culture in Canada today, thanks to the policies we set as Canadians. Canadian content rules guarantee that Canadians can listen to their own songs, not just to what comes from the United States.

Above all, we are a nation of builders. We were when we built a new world. We will be again as we start a new millennium. Let us all work together. Let the courage and pride of each Canadian be an inspiration to his or her fellow citizens.

Why do we have universal health care in Canada?

Mr. Lebel: Because we are all sick.

Ms. Coppins: The hon. member says because we are all sick. You may be, but I am not.

Why do we have a health care system? Because in the forties and fifties, some farmers in Saskatchewan got together and decided to create a shared-risk system, which was eventually endorsed by Canada. It all goes back to the principle of collective responsibility which we inherited from the francophones in this country. Thanks to this expression of shared responsibility, which recognizes the individual, we have a country that shares the wealth with the people of Newfoundland, at a time when they are in need. Five or ten years from now, when Newfoundland experiences economic growth, it will be their turn to give, because that is how Canada works.

[*English*]

In the past, we have noted that provinces have needed each other. The system of shared responsibility that has been established has permitted us to help when help is needed. Newfoundland needs our help right now but in 10 years' time perhaps Newfoundland will be helping its neighbours.

It is that spirit of shared and collective responsibility that gave us national health care and the uniqueness that makes us Canadian.

[*Translation*]

It is the strength of our common collective experience that will make us succeed in the 21st century. I am convinced that Canadians across the country want to build a better country: Canada.

• (1050)

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister. This morning she spared us the tears and the story of the woman in the wheelchair, who went to Montreal on October 27. Her awkward sincerity was entirely justified this morning.

She speaks of a Canada, a Canada I have long travelled and which I fail to recognize in the words of the minister.

In 1965, I joined the army. That was the time I decided to give Canada one last chance. There were seven Quebecois in three platoons at Borden, in Ontario. The member, now retired from the armed forces, with whom I had the privilege of discussing this in the past, acknowledged that this was in fact the case. There were seven Quebecers who joined at Borden in January 1965 in three platoons—90 men. After five months, the first test, six of the seven Quebecers were dropped; three English Canadians of the eighty-three were dropped. Note the proportions.

Someone came to my office the other day. In 1965, in those same years, the Department of External Affairs was preparing future ambassadors. From the class of ambassadors, of the 38 Quebecers

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who entered in 1964 or 1965, three remain with the department. Of the 12 English Canadians, 11 are still there.

That is career equality, equality of opportunity in this fine country.

In 1965, I was one of the six who left the army. It really upset me, but it led to my becoming a separatist. There, I used the word the Deputy Prime Minister wants to hear. I am a staunch sovereignist with an unshakable faith in his cause.

She talks about drastic budget cuts at a time of economic difficulties for everyone, including the unemployed. How many millions of dollars will they now spend on bringing little English-speaking Canadians from the West over to Quebec for Canada Day or Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day? Probably almost as many millions as they spent so little Quebecers could enjoy their summer vacations in the rest of Canada, at taxpayers' expense.

The Deputy Prime Minister described this country as the most beautiful, the greatest, the most noble, the one that welcomes and accepts everyone. What they should have done first is have accepted Quebecers in the land and given them the place and consideration they deserved. That, however, is something they were not able to do. They tried to assimilate us.

She talks about Winnipeg. I was in Winnipeg last summer; I visited Louis Riel's grave and, just beside it, that of his lieutenant, Ambroise Lépine, whose tombstone has fallen over and broken in two. For five days, I walked all over the streets of Winnipeg, St. Boniface, St. Adolphe, St. Norbert, but I heard fewer than 10 people spontaneously speak French among themselves.

She talks to me about a Canada I do not know, a Canada that is disappearing. And they will not be able to save it because they already have a \$600 billion debt, a good part of which was chalked up keeping the country together. They cobbled this country together with money. It did not happen spontaneously. They bought it with special legislation and massive spending. They spent billions on keeping the country together and today they realize that our debt has reached \$600 billion but that the country is no stronger than at the beginning.

I say that they should spend the billions or hundreds of millions of dollars they are about to spend on trying to reduce poverty in Montreal. She did not boast about that. She overlooked this little detail. Montreal is the poorest city in Canada. She did not brag about that in her speech. They might throttle an unemployed person now and then, but there are thousands of unemployed in Canada. What regard does she have for these people? She did not say anything at all about them, not a word.

And what about the UI bill? We can reply to the Deputy Prime Minister that her Canada is a utopia, an illusion, and that she may be the only one dreaming about it.

• (1055)

She and her boss, the Prime Minister, are among the last believers in that kind of Canada. They should sit down and discuss with the provinces, especially Quebec, and they might eventually be able to achieve a more acceptable partnership.

In this regard, I ask again—and now I might get a show of tears, the wheelchair story, the events of last October. I, for one, do not believe at all in the Canada described to me by the Deputy Prime Minister.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that the hon. member feels the need, as it is, to refer to how things were in the mid-sixties.

Mr. Lebel: Things have changed now.

Ms. Copps: He says that things have changed. In 1965, women could not join the army, period. Women were not allowed in and, in many cases, they were excluded the same way that francophones were.

That is why, in 1977, we put forward policies to promote the development of francophones. Does anyone know who Roméo Dallaire is? Dallaire is known around the world as this person who came from Canada, a French-speaking serviceman selected by the United Nations to lead the battle. Roméo Dallaire is a Franco-Canadian, a Franco-Ontarian, because he was born in Ontario. There are francophones in Canada. The Bloc member was born in Ontario. The fact that his fellow member comes from Peterborough, Ontario, goes to show that there are indeed francophones. The fact that Roméo Dallaire is a francophone, who has led a battle for the UN proves that the French fact is recognized at the highest levels in our government. The Prime Minister, a francophone, did not speak English before being elected to the House of Commons. The Minister of Finance, and some of the most seniors government members happen to be of French background.

It is true that, in 1965, women were underrepresented. How many women sat in the House of Commons in 1965? But we are turning things around and making changes happen in our country. I am not living in 1965, but in 1996, and I figure that we are able to work together to build something better.

Take this morning's newspaper, Mr. Speaker. There are reports about Canada and the Filipinos; we have our problems, I agree.

What does Montreal want? I have a brother in Montreal, an anglophone who did not speak a word of French before the age of 12 or 13, but who now lives in French, with his daughter Béatrice and his son Gabriel. An anglophone. I am not alone. There are hundreds of thousands of people across this country who want to build. But what do the people in Montreal want? They want us to set aside our quarrels about the Constitution and separation, which

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are draining the energy and strength of this beautiful country, Canada.

If you really want to work toward economic recovery, let us seek political stability and recognition together. Together, we can work wonders for this country, Canada. The tears I have shed for this woman from Alberta, thousands and thousands of Canadians also shed. Notwithstanding the comments made by the Premier of Quebec, they know full well that we form a country and that we will remain a country, Canada, a country in a good position to meet challenges. Let us stick together.

[English]

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. I want to respond to the throne speech and to some of the comments that the Prime Minister made yesterday when he addressed the House.

● (1100)

He talked about the government's having done its job already and that now it was time for business to do its job to fulfil its obligations.

Those are very bizarre comments from the Prime Minister because I do not think the Prime Minister and the government have fulfilled their obligations at all. I see the obligations of the government with respect to business, job creation and those sorts of things as creating an environment in which jobs can grow, businesses can be prosperous and people can look forward to the future with some hope. The government has failed miserably in its attempt to create an environment like that.

This fall a poll suggested Canadians could not list a single thing of significance that the government had done over the two years it had been in power. We have a pall over the country today, a shroud, a pessimism because the government has failed to show any leadership on the issues that Canadians are very concerned about.

I will talk specifically about some of the things the government could address but has failed to. The Prime Minister said that when talking about jobs the government has done what it could do and it is up to business. I reject that. I point to the debt, probably the single most important underlying problem we have which affects not only jobs but the sustainability of social programs, the prosperity of the country as a whole.

Today we have a debt of \$570 billion. The Prime Minister has been in government for a long time and perhaps has started to take billions for granted.

For the benefit of the government, when I go to high school classes and talk about the size of the debt, I remind them of how

much money \$1 billion is. If I had a stack of hundred dollar bills about two metres high that is \$1 million. If I stacked our debt of \$570 billion it would be over 1,100 kilometres high. That is a tremendous amount of money and the government over the course of its mandate is adding \$110 billion.

Business cannot balance the budget for the Prime Minister, only the Prime Minister and the government can do that. How can he say he has done all he can do? That is absolutely false. They have not balanced the budget and they have not begun the process of paying down the debt which is also critical to the long term fiscal and economic health of the country.

If we do not balance the budget we cannot begin to lower taxes. There is tremendous weariness in the country today with respect to the heavy burden of taxes that people bear. It is unbelievable. Under the previous government we had something in the order of 32 tax increases. In both budgets that have come down under the Liberal government to date we have had more tax increases. Over the last several weeks starting with the finance committee, a report in January, and ending up with the Deputy Prime Minister, we have had more talk of taxes.

The finance committee was talking about tax increases for fuel, lotteries and tobacco. The Deputy Prime Minister was talking about a tax for the CBC. Despite the fine words of the Deputy Prime Minister a few minutes ago about Canadian culture and how the government creates Canadian culture, 61 per cent of Canadians want to see the CBC privatized. The Deputy Prime Minister, the finance minister and the Prime Minister have ignored what Canadians are saying on those issues, saying they want a tax to support the CBC. That is outrageous. That is ridiculous.

The government has not done all it can do to deal with the issues Canadians are concerned about. It certainly has not created an environment that leads to job growth. When it does that I can guarantee businesses will more than pick up the slack. They need to have the chance and the government is the only one that can give it to them.

● (1105)

There are many other areas in which the government has not fulfilled its moral obligations or even the promises it made during the election campaign. I guarantee if the government fulfils its obligation, its promise, to get rid of the GST, that would be something Canadians would cheer. They would respond very well to that. Business would respond well to that. It is a regulatory burden. In the election campaign government members made a very irresponsible promise, saying they would abolish the GST.

They said it again last week. However, the only responsible way to abolish the GST is to balance the budget and then begin to lower the rate of the GST. We cannot just get rid of it because we would

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then be out \$17 billion. We already have a huge debt and a deficit we have to deal with. They made a very irresponsible promise.

Liberal backbenchers are very concerned. They put their integrity on the line when they went door to door during the election campaign, promising to get rid of the GST. Now they are very concerned their government cannot fulfill that promise. They should be holding the government to account on that issue.

Despite the Prime Minister's words, the government has not done all it could have done to create an environment in which business could create jobs, in which there could be prosperity, in which people could look to the future with some hope. It has not done what it needs to do.

Tax reform is another area in which the government could have done something but has not so far. Our party has talked about the prospect of a flat tax. Even some of the Liberal members across the way have talked about a flat tax. In the United States today it is one of the major issues.

People are very interested in making their tax system understandable, which must be one of the most important aspects of a tax system. In a democracy people have the right to understand how their tax system works. It would also be fairer. There would be only one rate. The more money one made, the more one would pay, but it would be one rate. Therefore it would cost people on the basis of their ability to pay.

We would not need so much help to fill out tax forms. Therefore it would be much less of a drain on Canadian taxpayers. There are many other aspects of a flat tax that make it good, something to help create jobs, not the least of which is the removal of disincentives to be more productive. However, the government has rejected this. The finance department has said no way, it does not want this. Again, the Prime Minister is dead wrong. The government has not done all it can to create an environment for jobs and for growth in the economy.

Last spring in the House we debated internal trade barriers. The government brought down legislation, if I remember correctly, Bill C-88. The Reform Party argued at that time that the changes the government was advocating were simply not adequate. The industry minister assured us the changes were an important first step. We said we still do not have the mechanisms in place to ensure we do not have those disputes.

Now we see in the throne speech the minister is eating his words, saying we need a better trade deal. I remind Canadians and members across the way that according to studies, internal trade barriers cost anywhere between \$5 billion and \$44 billion a year to Canadians. Again, the Prime Minister and the government have not done the things they need to in order to create an environment for business.

Group after group told the finance committee over the course of the prebudget hearings in the fall that they do not want the

government involved in business anymore. The nine words Canadian entrepreneurs fear the most are: "I'm here from the government, I'm here to help". People are tired of seeing the government interfere in business.

• (1110)

Many business groups told us not to interfere in, subsidize or pour billions into businesses. What is in the throne speech? The government is stating it will get involved in envirotechnology and biotechnology industries. It wants to be involved in the aerospace industry and the high tech industry. Does that mean we will be subsidizing Bell Canada? What does that mean? It is ridiculous. Let us get away from that, from pouring money into business. Let business look after business and then we will create jobs.

The government has also failed to give people some hope that in the future the Canada pension plan, old age security and health care will be available for everybody. Because of that and because it is talking about more payroll taxes, which are job killers, there is a shroud of pessimism across the country which hurts the ability of the economy to create jobs.

Therefore I argue the Prime Minister is wrong. The government has not done all it could to create an environment for growth and jobs. It should rethink the approach it has taken in the throne speech and get at the fundamentals which include the debt and deficit problem. If we can wipe that out we can have lower taxes. If we have lower taxes we will have jobs for Canadians, which is what the Prime Minister should be working on.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is so easy to criticize, which truly seems to be what is happening, but the government is trying to find concrete answers.

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps we have all forgotten some of these things, but the member has to be in her seat when she asks a question or makes a comment. Unless I misread my sheet, I do not believe the member is in her seat. If the member would be kind enough to go back to her seat we will stall for time while she is doing that.

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, I hated to do that because I was able to sit beside a Reformer and I hate to have the camera off him.

It is easy to criticize. I worry about that because the Reform member did not talk about some of the really positive things, for example, the youth initiatives the throne speech announced.

However, I will talk a bit about the balanced budget the hon. member made reference to. We have continually over the last two and a half years been hitting our budget targets. As much as the Reform Party does not want to acknowledge that, we are the first

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government in 20 years to do so. It is important for all Canadians to know that.

It is much more important to hit our targets than to say we will balance the budget and never do it and perhaps even accumulate debt. Most of the Reform members came from the Conservative Party which accumulated debt for years and years. I draw that to the member's attention. Concerning the GST, I as a Liberal backbencher promised to replace it. That will be done.

I ask the hon. member if he found anything in the throne speech that pleased him at all, particularly the youth issue which is a wonderful thing for our communities to help our youth find jobs.

Mr. Solberg: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised a number of things. I was pleased to see you put her in her place, literally not figuratively.

With respect to budget targets, the only budget target that really matters is a balanced budget. One can set arbitrary figures and meet them, but at the end of the day the one that really matters is the one that gets us to zero so that we can start having surpluses and start offering people tax relief, sustainable social programs or whatever.

• (1115)

She mentioned that we were members of the Conservative Party. I would argue that the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party have been peas in a pod in this place for 125 years. We are a breath of fresh air. We are introducing some new ideas. The people across the way are recycling the old ideas that got us into the mess we are in today.

With respect to the GST, what Canadians want is lower taxes, not different taxes. They do not want the son of GST. They do not want a different name.

With respect to the youth initiative, what Canadians want are not band-aid, short term solutions. What they really want is an economy that creates long term employment for all Canadians and of course, for young Canadians as well, but that cannot always come from the government. That is how we got into the mess in the first place. That is why we have a debt of \$570 billion. It is because the government has gone out and thought it could fix all these problems by throwing money at them.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, long on wind and short on constructive solutions to Canada's deepening problems, the government's throne speech was a huge disappointment.

By footing up this path, the government has done a huge disservice to all Canadians. Never more in the last 50 years has Canada needed strong leadership and a vision to lead us out of the problems that affect all of us. We need effective solutions to solve these problems and we need them now, yet the throne speech had only comments like: an openness to explore, wanting fresh

approaches, a desire to consult and have meetings. This government has been in power two years. The people of this country want and demand more than some vague desire to study, meet, consult or heaven forbid, have another royal commission.

There are few solutions in the throne speech yet solutions are what we want. Solutions are what Canadians demand. Our problems are not insurmountable despite what the public thinks. There are solutions out there but we must have the courage to enact them today.

I will not spend my precious time trashing the government. That is going to be fruitless. Rather, what I will try to do is put forth some of the constructive ideas that we have. I hope the government will work with us or better yet, take these solutions and implement them for the benefit of all Canadians.

The biggest threat to Canadians as my hon. colleague has mentioned is the debt, the deficit and government overspending. It is not commonly understood despite what we have said as to why that is so.

Continued overspending adds to the debt, driving interest payments up which decreases the ability of this or any government to provide for government programs to help Canadians. It also drives up taxes. That of course is crushing to the economy and drives businesses either into bankruptcy or down south.

Despite what the Minister of Finance has said, the International Monetary Fund told us a few months ago that the projections of the Minister of Finance are wholly inadequate if we are to get back on our feet economically. Yet we do not see any action by the Minister of Finance on this.

We are going to put forth a budget next week that is going to tell the government specifically how we can get the deficit to zero and attack this problem in a meaningful fashion. This issue of course is biggest for our youth. What did the government serve up in its budget plan? A lot of motherhood statements, a lot of feel good statements. As we know, that does nothing to get someone a job. It does nothing to provide solid funding for post-secondary education for our youth. Furthermore, those promises were vague promises, somewhat grandiose and not backed up with any ability of how those things are going to be done.

The other big issue today is national unity. I would say this to the Prime Minister: The action that the government is taking on this issue rather than leading to national unity is going to lead to national disunity.

• (1120)

The Prime Minister's efforts to give Quebec a regional veto and put distinct society clauses in the Constitution are not going to bring Quebec into Canada. The separatist leadership wants one thing and one thing alone and that is a sovereign country called Quebec.

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The Prime Minister can stand on his head and do gymnastics, promise anything under the sun and it is simply not going to keep this country together. He has to take some decisive actions. He must first give offers that do not smack of inequality and unfairness to Canadians. He must give solutions which are going to bring Canadians together.

First, he has to stop bribing separatist politicians to stay in. Second, he must decentralize appropriately: allow the feds to do what the feds do well and allow the provinces to do what the provinces do well. He must offer all Canadians exactly the same deal. Equality and fairness must be the basis of any proposal which the government puts forth, not one province unequal with any other.

The second point which was brought forth in the Deputy Prime Minister's speech interestingly enough in the words that she used, is that we have to stop referring to Canadians in some hyphenated fashion. We must get away from the hyphenated Canadianism that has been entrenched in our verbiage over the last 15 years. We must stop referring to ourselves as anglo-Canadians, franco-Canadians, Ontarians, British Columbians, New Brunswickers. Simply we must refer to ourselves first as Canadians.

That is one of the first things the government can do. The Deputy Prime Minister referred to one of Canada's greatest heroes of recent memory, Major-General Roméo Dallaire. Major-General Dallaire as we all know is first and foremost simply a Canadian.

This country has big problems. Solutions do exist to solve them. Canadians from coast to coast in every province demand, need and desperately want hope. The government's throne speech does not give them that. The government has a window of opportunity now to bring forth constructive solutions to address the problems that affect us all. Give people the hope that they demand. Give people the hope that they need. Put Canada on the course to the destiny that it can have.

I believe, as I am sure almost every member in this House does, that we in Canada share not only a great past and a present, but also a superb future. It is our destiny to lead in some ways the world we live in today. Not many countries have that opportunity. Not many countries have that ability.

Canada and Canadians have that ability. We have the strength, we have the knowledge, we have the ability and we have the international respect and recognition to be able to do this. Not only is it our destiny but it is also our responsibility. As Canadians, that is part of our destiny.

One of the beauties of the country to which I emigrated from England is that we in this country have managed to bring together over 178 different ethnic groups to live in relative peace. There are many differences which separate us or that exist within us. These

differences need not separate us. These differences, rather than pulling us apart, can bring us together.

We can look at differences in two ways: as a them versus us mentality, or as the differences that we have which bring us together and make us all stronger as individuals and as a group. We must use our differences in this country to make ourselves stronger because that also is part of our future as Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his comments. It is refreshing to hear comments such as those made by the Reform member, particularly given the fact that, in the last few minutes, we had to listen to the whining of the Deputy Prime Minister, who keeps harping about the same old things when giving her vision of Canada's future, but mostly its past.

• (1125)

I would rather hear comments such as those just made by the Reform Party member. It goes without saying that I do not share his view on Canada's future, but we, sovereignists, recognize the greatness of Canada and of the Canadian people. Our views differ in that we also recognize ourselves, Quebecers, as a people, and feel that we have the right to control our destiny and have our own country.

It is my belief that, once both Canadians and Quebecers have established themselves as peoples, it will be easier to create links that will unite us instead of dividing us.

This is what I understood from the hon. member's comments, and again I want to congratulate him on his speech.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, we love Quebec, we love the Francophonie and we love the French language.

[*English*]

However we love Quebecers, we love Quebec and we love the French people and the French language as equals. That again is the basis upon which we have to have a discourse with the people of Quebec. I believe that myths have been put forward to the people of Quebec for decades. It is up to the government and all of us to dispel those myths, distortions and half truths which have been advanced for so long.

The only way to do that in my estimation is for us to go into Quebec, listen to the people there and for them to listen to us as to where we stand and where we come from, in order to dispel these myths and distortions which have been put forth by both sides. If we can do that, then a reasonable question and a reasonable answer can come on the unity issue.

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Speaking as a British Columbian and a Canadian, I will say that this Chinese water torture that Canada has been subjected to for the last 20 years with the referendum issue hanging over our heads has to end. Canadians are simply fed up with it and they want it to end once and for all. It will be up to the government to do this and it must be done soon so we can get on with our lives.

Again, for the people of Quebec to make a reasonable decision on unity they must understand what Canada is offering them, what the true history of Canada is and what is taking place right now. If we rely on the separatist media to do this, the people of Quebec will not get the correct appreciation of what is taking place in this country. The only way to get the correct message across is for this to be done eyeball to eyeball in Quebec between all Canadians.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the honourable member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis.

Our government has a reason to be proud of its record over the past 28 months. During that time we have focused on the government's jobs and growth agenda and there are now half a million more new jobs in the country. Canada has the highest growth rate in the G-7. Those are very important accomplishments and they are something to be proud of.

At the same time, we still have problems. We still have unemployment. People in my riding come to me looking for ideas. They ask me where they can find jobs. They still need jobs. We are lucky in the Halifax area that we have a relatively low unemployment rate compared to the rest of Atlantic Canada, but we still have our problems and so does the rest of the country.

We have more work to do as a government, but we must focus. We cannot do everything. That is the idea here of the throne speech. The idea of the throne speech is to set out the priorities and the focus of the government.

• (1130)

The government has set out three main priorities in the throne speech. The first is to maintain its efforts on jobs and growth and even to strengthen those efforts.

The second is to pursue security for Canadians in a number of areas.

A very important third is to modernize our federation to ensure the unity of our country.

Let me talk first about the issue of jobs and growth. It is very important that the government continue to pursue deficit reduction. It has met its deficit targets and is going to continue to meet them. It is very important that it do so. It is important to support a healthy economic climate. The government has to meet those targets but it can also do more.

For example, there is the problem of sales taxes across the country: the GST and provincial sales taxes. In the province of Nova Scotia there is a tax on a tax and we are paying very high levels of tax. A lot of people in my area have complained about the way it works. They are constantly hit with that tax which they see all the time, especially when the goods have one price on the shelf and then they are hit with another price. It is difficult to accept.

The government is now saying, let us harmonize these taxes. Let us work together with the provinces and have one system of sales tax. Then there would be one form for people in small business to report on and a simpler system for Canadians. It is very important to support a healthy economic climate for Canada and also create jobs and growth.

However, growth alone is not enough. There has been growth over the past two years, the highest rate in the G-7 as I mentioned. However it is not creating enough new jobs. That is the concern of my constituents.

The Prime Minister is right to challenge the private sector. It is time to challenge them to do more to create new jobs. What are the big companies and the big banks doing for Canada? They receive tremendous profits from Canada, in some cases bigger profits than ever before. What are they giving back? Big layoffs. Large numbers of people are being cut from these companies.

I heard yesterday on television that the big banks are having a study done to determine whether they have a moral obligation to not lay off people, but to employ them. It is remarkable that someone should have a study done in order to decide whether they have a moral obligation.

I could pick almost anyone in my riding to do the study and answer the question and it would probably be a lot cheaper than they are going to pay for this fancy study about their moral obligation to give people jobs when they are making such incredible profits. Or can they continue to make these huge profits and continue to cut jobs at a tremendous rate?

The answer should be obvious to the big banks and corporations. I hope they will join what the Prime Minister proposed as a Team Canada partnership to create jobs, especially for young Canadians. Young Canadians are our greatest resource and are so important to our future. At the present time the rate of unemployment among young Canadians is 16 per cent. That is an atrocious rate. The government has a responsibility to deal with that. However, we must also challenge the private sector which has the main job of creating jobs for people, especially our young people.

Yes, the private sector must be challenged but the government also has a role here. It is good that the government is going to double the number of summer jobs for students this year. That is very important because students and their families in my area and across the country are concerned about their futures, the cost of education and other problems they are facing. They need help from the government and I am glad to hear it is coming.

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Another area that the government is focusing on is trade. Trade has been the single most important factor in creating jobs and growth over the last two years. It is interesting to note that 20 per cent of the jobs in my riding of Halifax West depend on trade. It is not surprising considering the fact that Halifax is a port city. There is also manufacturing in Halifax that must be sold around the world. Trade is very important to us and that is why it important to continue the Team Canada trade missions the Prime Minister has attended around the world. Those missions have brought \$20 billion in new deals over the past 14 months. That is not singing in the dark. Those are important numbers. They are important because they mean jobs for Canadians, including those jobs in my riding.

• (1135)

A moment ago I mentioned the port of Halifax. The port of Halifax is a key national entry point for trade. It has grown tremendously in the past few years. It has great potential for the future but it has to compete with American ports. Those are its main competitors especially for container traffic.

I have a great concern about the issue of marine service fees. I have expressed my concerns very strongly to the new Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, his department and the commissioner of the coast guard about the need to ensure that whatever fee structure for marine services is brought in, it must be fair and must allow eastern Atlantic ports such as the port of Halifax to compete with its main competitors in the U.S. That is very important for the economic future in our region. It is very important for trade for this country too.

I was pleased to see that the government plans to focus also on rural areas because rural areas have special challenges. I come from an urban-rural riding. I have a mix of mostly suburban but also quite a large rural area.

In those areas some of the things that are important, as they are across Atlantic Canada, are things like access to capital, human resources development, infrastructure and access to the information highway. These are all things the government is going to pursue over the next year. Those rural areas need a special focus and we are going to give that focus.

The throne speech also talked about security for Canadians. That is very important in many ways. The throne speech is really about values and that is what it should be about. We should be talking about the shared values of Canadians because those shared values are what make us Canadian. Values such as freedom, peace, tolerance, sharing and generosity are what set us apart from other countries and peoples in the world,

Those are values that are very strongly shared across this country by all Canadians no matter what background, no matter what

province, no matter what language. Those values make us Canadians.

The throne speech set out those values and why they are important to us. Economic growth is important to pursue, but it is not enough by itself. It is not an end in itself as the Prime Minister has said.

The government must pursue it for jobs and wealth creation for our country. At the same time the government must create opportunity. That is very important. We have been trying to do that over the past years and we must focus on that more. We must ensure that all Canadians can benefit when there is growth in our country, not just the big companies, big banks, for example. All Canadians have to take part.

An important part of the distribution of the success of our country is that a secure social safety net is maintained. It is very important to Canadians. It is a very important value.

Canadians are worried, in my riding and I am sure in other ridings, about the future of medicare. The government is committed to maintaining the five principles of the Canada Health Act. That is a very important commitment, and one that I endorse heartily.

I was very pleased to hear that the government will put a floor under the cash component of the Canada health and social transfer. That is an important guarantee of continuing federal cash transfers to the provinces which, especially in Atlantic Canada, is very important. It is important for a strong nation. It is important for strong national standards. It is important for our future and for our values as Canadians.

I have had many calls on the issue of pensions over the past while. With all the talk in the media about the future of the Canada pension system, the OAS and the GIS, Canadians are worried about this. While I am glad the Prime Minister has reaffirmed his commitment that we must protect current seniors and the pensions they receive, at the same time the system has to be examined to find ways to make the pension system sustainable for the long run for younger Canadians. For instance, when those our age retire the system should be there for us and others across this country.

One of the things I was delighted to hear in the speech from the throne is the traditional Liberal and Canadian value of equality of opportunity. This value is very dear to the hearts of Canadians. It is a basic Canadian value.

Equality of opportunity begins with children. The government has said it will make children a priority. That is no empty statement. It is a very important commitment that members in this party have been working on for a long time. We have worked hard to see that the government does more on the issue of child poverty.

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I am delighted to hear the government say that it wants to move in that direction and I am looking forward to hearing more about that.

• (1140)

The government says that it will improve the child support system to help single parents and low income working families, the working poor who have always been a big concern of mine especially when I was involved with food banks in the Halifax area. We found people coming to us who had jobs but who were working on minimum wage, for example, and could not put enough money together to feed their families for the whole month. They had to end up going through the degradation of standing in line at food banks. It is an awful thing to have to do.

Food banks are certainly not the answer for our country. I am glad that the government is going to focus on this issue. I look forward to seeing measures in the budget in relation to poor children and young working families.

Equal opportunity is also important for small communities and rural communities. For example, it is important for the black communities. In my riding are several small black communities that just finished celebrating Black History Month, which was a great success.

It is important to recognize the black Canadians who have made an important contribution to making the road a little easier for others who followed them. Dr. Pearleen Oliver has recently written the book called *The Song of the Spirit*. It is a history of the Beachville United Baptist Church. In it she gives a record of people who have worked to build their community and to overcome prejudice and disadvantages in those kinds of communities. It is very important that she has recorded this kind of work and paid tribute to those people.

It is also important that we implement the new employment insurance system but that we not do it hastily. The minister has committed us to review it. This plan has to be adjusted. He has to do that to make it fairer for all workers.

We know that the system has not been fair enough in the past. It has to be made fairer for all workers across the country. At the same time we must ensure that we do not hurt unfairly those people who cannot afford it, those who need the system the very most. I am glad to see that it is in the throne speech and that we are going to see more of it. These are very important messages in the throne speech.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in all debates very often the most realistic judges are the ones who watch from the outside and who do not take part. Their view is far more objective and realistic.

In my own background, because I was born in a small British colony, I remember the time when we could not go to university there. There was no university. All of us young people had to exile ourselves and go far away to study here and there. Thus it is that my family is scattered. My brothers and sisters are all over the place. I have a brother in England, two in France. I have a sister and other brothers in Africa. I have cousins and family members in Ireland, in England, in the United States and as far as Australia.

• (1145)

Speak to anyone outside of our country. Speak to Germans, parlez aux Français, speak to people from Niger or Nigeria, speak to Indonesians, speak to people in Hong Kong or China and they will always say the same thing: They view Canada with immense respect, as a country that is friendly, moderate in tone and action, peaceful and that is always attentive and helpful to people around the world who need support and help. Unfortunately at home we do not see Canada the same way.

[Translation]

Some among us would like to undo the Canadian experience. Some among us, regrettably, would like to break asunder the ties that bind Quebec to Canada. They would like to break apart this country of moderation, of tolerance, of peace and social justice, a country greatly respected everywhere in the world.

Outside observers, whether my relatives abroad, whom I see often, my friends outside the country, or people I meet when representing Canada at various conferences, always ask me the same thing: "What kind of spoiled brats are you in Canada? What is going on? You have so much, resources beyond value, a country in full flower of its growth, a country that is in some ways a model for others in the world, how can you want to put an end to that remarkable experiment?"

Today I feel terribly bad when I hear my colleagues in the official opposition referring so often to Quebec and English Canada, never Canada. It is always Quebec and English Canada, as if they were saying that people like Fernand Robichaud, Raymond Bonin and Don Boudria were not real francophones. Those millions of francophones living outside Quebec make up part of English Canada. This polarization by camps, by language, by culture is what is hard to explain to outside observers, what they find so sterile.

If we have so many resources, if our country is so rich, with everything it could possibly need for success, can we not reach agreement, they wonder.

Mrs. Tremblay: A bankrupt country.

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Mr. Lincoln: Madam, would you give me the chance to speak without interruption, please? Might I have that courtesy? Thank you.

If we here with so many resources, with so much going for us, cannot get along because on the one side we are Quebec francophones and on the other we are supposedly the people of English Canada, what chance does a country with 24, 15, 30, maybe 80 different ethnic groups have? What chance do the smaller countries without any resources have? What chance do countries with more than one language or more than one religion have, when we who share the same historical tradition, whose roots lie in two European peoples with the same general culture and the same religion, cannot agree? What chance do other countries in the world have, when they have several ethnic backgrounds, several religions, several languages?

It is unfortunate that we are quarrelling in this way, because the unemployed, the little guys looking for work or receiving welfare, do not read *Le Devoir*, do not read *La Presse*, do not read the *Globe and Mail*. Nor do they attend the congresses of the Liberal Party of Canada, the Bloc Québécois, or the Reform Party. What they are telling us is that they are fed up, they have had enough of our empty rhetoric, they want to hear no more of it.

• (1150)

The throne speech is particularly relevant where it says that we must get together and reconcile our differences, set our sights higher and look ahead to the future. We must be able to work undisturbed. We must restore the stability we had before.

Look at what is happening today in Montreal, what political instability is causing all around us. There are too many examples to mention. Recently I met some business people involved in communications, aerospace, pharmaceuticals and computers. Today scientists are leaving and people are postponing investments because of the political instability all around us. I know some people will say they have heard it all before or that this is political terrorism.

In fact, the premier of Quebec himself admitted there was a problem when he put one of his top ministers in charge of the renewal of Montreal. But to get the economy going again and have a genuine renewal, we must set aside this useless debate which is killing us, slowly but surely.

I want to ask my Bloc Québécois colleagues most sincerely, today, now that we have a window of opportunity with a new premier in Quebec and a new Leader of the Official Opposition, whether they are prepared to say: "Let us postpone all our plans for separation for four or five years, to give us all a chance to work together in a spirit of conciliation on projects that will put people back to work and give them back their dignity".

[English]

That is what all Canadians want. Whether they live in Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia or P.E.I., what people want first of all is for us to stop our quarrels. They are tired of that. They do not want it anymore. What they want is a dignity of life and work. This is what I hear from the speech from the throne. I hope all parties will join in to ensure that this will be our main objective in the years ahead.

[Translation]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with considerable interest to my colleague for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis. I know that my colleague is knowledgeable about various countries, as he has mentioned. I know he lived a long time in South Africa or in Rhodesia, as someone in my riding told me. He was therefore able to get a close look at apartheid and such regimes. I trust him absolutely on the subject of respect for democracy. It took him 15 years to understand it, but he did.

The gentleman is talking about pointless debate. The new premier of Quebec, who was the Leader of the Opposition here until Christmastime, said, in taking up his duties in Quebec City, that the accent would be on economic growth, on economic renewal, that constitutional debate would be put on the back burner for a while and that the state of public finances would be improved and the province managed as it ought to be.

I am proud of that and I know that members of Parliament and that those in the party opposite us were proud as well. However, with the throne speech, they are the ones rekindling the debate the member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis has just rightly complained of.

There was no more discussion on this side about the referendum. We lost it. The winners, however, are behaving like losers. They are poor winners. We are good losers, we accepted it. In his response to the speech from the throne, my leader said that we would respect the institution of the federal Parliament; we would not kick over the traces, as they say; we would respect the democratic process.

I find it odd that the winners are the ones complaining. I find poor winners funny. I think they are just as rare as good losers. That is what Maurice Richard used to say.

Still, it is the member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis who is talking about pointless debate. You are the one who started the debate. You are the one who raised it. We want to talk about improving the economy in Quebec and in the other provinces as well.

• (1155)

We want you to come to the defence of the unemployed you are relentlessly pounding these days. This is what the speech should

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have been about. Your philosophical debates on the perfect society are all well and good, in their place. I remind my honourable colleague for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis that the referendum has been over since October 30. Move on to something else. Put your knowledge to use. You are an expert in environmental matters, talk to us about the environment. Talk to us about whatever you like, but do not accuse us of rekindling the debate, which is what you did yourself this morning.

The Deputy Speaker: Dear colleagues, since we are all back, could you please address your remarks to the Chair; it will be less complicated next time.

Mr. Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for his comments. However, I did not come to the same conclusion as he did after reading the throne speech. I read this speech very carefully. I saw very positive measures. There is no mention of a referendum. We said that, should it ever happen, we would seek Canadians' views on their country. I think this makes perfect sense. At the same time, what we said on most pages of this throne speech is that we would take concrete action to promote employment among young people, double the number of summer jobs, and avoid introducing programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction without first holding extensive consultations with the provinces and obtaining their consent.

The Prime Minister has invited all the premiers to meet with him to try to set an agenda for the future, to put Canada back to work. The throne speech touched on science and technology, the environment, employment, on putting Canada back to work. In fact, this was the central theme of the throne speech.

I urge all my colleagues to get together and focus on the positive effects of the throne speech. The upcoming budget will indeed focus on the economy. There are so many things we can do together to revitalize Montreal, to revitalize the economy. I fully agree with the hon. Bloc member for Chambly that, if we put the Quebec referendum behind us and declare a moratorium on all this, all of us will benefit, especially those who need it the most, that is to say, those who will be looking for work tomorrow morning.

Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): Could you tell me how much time if any I have remaining, Mr. Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: If I am not mistaken, we are through with questions and comments. This leaves just five minutes.

Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): We are through?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, as far as questions and comments are concerned. Is there unanimous consent to extend?

Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): I would have liked to ask a few questions but, if we ran out of time, so be it.

The Deputy Speaker: Very well, then. Resuming debate. I give the floor to the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to set the record straight in relation to what the Deputy Prime Minister said earlier in responding to one of my colleagues and have her know that we in Quebec are so much a distinct society that our legislative assembly is called the National Assembly.

This decision was made by federalists who agreed unanimously to change the name of our legislative assembly to National Assembly. Mr. Johnson Sr. was the premier at the time and he had the unanimous consent of the House to do so, which means that Jean Lesage agreed. The separatist PQ party did not even exist back then. This is a matter of tradition that I hope the Deputy Prime Minister will recognize.

• (1200)

There is also the issue of June 24. All over the world, people celebrate midsummer day on June 24. It comes from an old aboriginal custom that we all share; it was being celebrated in countries as far away as Peru, in Machu Picchu, thousands of years ago. So, there is nothing new about celebrating the summer solstice on June 24.

Now, this day is celebrated in many countries around the world in a similar manner; people sing folk songs, dance traditional dances and have fireworks or light bonfires on the beach or in an open field, where there is no beach.

That said, June 24 is also the feast of St. John the Baptist. It is in the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church, which is almost 2,000 years old, and St. John the Baptist is the saint to whom we pay tribute on that day. However, there is a difference in Quebec's case. Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is Quebecers' national holiday, regardless of their origin.

So, in Quebec, we celebrate the 24th of June. It goes without saying that we do not object to French Canadians outside Quebec celebrating the 24th of June in their own way and in accordance with their culture. We certainly do not object to that. We do not even object to having English Canadians come to Montreal, paying the full fare this time, and celebrate June 24 with us, if they so wish. We have no objection to that.

They can do like I did last year when, for the first time in my 58 years, I came to see for myself what Canada Day means to Canadians. I must say I learned a good lesson in that I truly felt it was English Canada's holiday. I did not feel at home; I did not think it was my holiday. I also found it amusing that, when speakers spoke French and made jokes, nobody laughed. People had to wait for the English version to laugh. I realized that I was

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one of the few who could understand jokes in both languages and that people had to wait for the English version to laugh.

What I find even more surprising in the deputy Prime Minister's speech is that, all of a sudden, she starts raving about Canada's francophones and wants to protect them. Let me remind her of some recent events.

It is true that she was just recently appointed Minister of Canadian Heritage and that she may not have had the time yet to become familiar with all the issues and to go through all the documents that could enlighten her about the situation of francophones outside Quebec, among other things. The commissioner of official languages released his report in February 1996, which is rather recent, and he once again came to the conclusion that Canada's official languages policy does not work. The commissioner reminded us that sections 41 and 42, in Part VII of the Official Languages Act, were a dismal failure.

Yet, the heritage minister attended with great pomp the world congress held by Acadians on the Acadian peninsula. She stated loud and clear that the masterpiece of her department and government was an act that was passed when Mr. Bouchard, Quebec's premier, was secretary of State. Yet, the commissioner talks about a dismal failure.

He says that, according to his study, nothing indicates the existence, even after August 1994, of a systematic effort to ensure compliance with section 41 in the restructuring process of the government's institutions and programs, including through a transfer of responsibilities to the provinces or to volunteer organizations.

The commissioner points out that, in fact, this restructuring was sometimes done in a way that reduced, instead of increasing, support to the development of minority official language communities, or recognition of the status and use of French and English.

The commissioner says that the heritage minister's appeal to his colleagues to do their homework as regards sections 41 and 42 of Part VII of the act was made in vain.

• (1205)

So it seems the policy is a failure, at the very moment the Deputy Prime Minister is about to make a 50 per cent cut in subsidies for francophones in Saskatchewan, in the agreement between the francophone community of Saskatchewan and Canada, and also at the very moment the assimilation rate ranges from 10 to 70 per cent. I think that instead of getting emotional and defending francophones or the francophonie or anything that is the slightest bit French, the Minister of Canadian Heritage should sit down at her desk, sign some decent documents and make sure her colleagues promote sections 41 and 42 of the policy I mentioned earlier, a policy that goes back to when the new premier of Quebec

was secretary of state under the Mulroney government. Laws may be passed in this Parliament, but people do not care whether they are enforced or not.

To get down to the throne speech, the centrepiece of this government's second session, earlier the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis was terribly depressed to see that we in the Bloc Québécois did not understand.

In this document, which is about fifteen pages long—twice as long as the first one, which does not mean it will be more effective—the speech is divided into three parts. Part I is about ensuring opportunity and refers to a strong society, a strong economy. In the next four pages, the government tells us how it intends to make the Canadian economy strong. It says, for instance, that it will double the number of federal summer student jobs. So while the government is laying off 45,000 public servants, all of a sudden it can double the number of student summer jobs. Why? To make sure these students get a cheque with a maple leaf and remember that in the next referendum.

Science and technology. The government promises to take care of that, but it will have to be a quick study, because the Canadian government is way behind. For instance, it has done nothing to protect Canadian culture during the two years it has been in power. I wonder how it will be able to catch up in science and technology, especially where the information highway is concerned.

As for trade, I would love to see how specific the government will be about dealing with the threats aimed by the Americans at all those who trade with Cuba, because this will affect thousands of jobs in Canada.

Finally, several measures have been announced to strengthen our economic framework, including the 1 per cent. The Prime Minister thinks he can, well, not force but at least encourage businesses to spend 1 per cent of their payroll on jobs for young Canadians. That remains to be seen.

As for the second part of the throne speech, which is called ensuring opportunity: security for Canadians, this is a prime example of not practising what you preach. There is all this wonderful stuff down on paper, but you wonder what the government is actually doing to protect the environment. For two years, all the talk about the environment has centred on the *Irving Whale*, which is still at the bottom of the ocean, off the coast of the Magdalen Islands, and it is still a threat to the ecology and environment of Quebec and Canada.

So what does a government that managed to do nothing for the past two years think it can do in the next two years, when there is an election down the road? It makes you wonder.

As far as personal security is concerned, that is quite an incentive the Canadian government is prepared to provide, when

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you realize it is cutting transfer payments and the government says it wants old age pensions based on family income. As for unemployment insurance reform, which everyone objects to, the minister told us yesterday that he would table the same legislation again, with the former minister's promises to amend some very minor clauses that will in no way change the principle of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Finally, Part III is the most interesting one and also the longest, notwithstanding the hon. member opposite, who said earlier that my colleague was right to remind him it was the present Canadian government that was elected because it said: "Vote for me, and I will never mention the Constitution". It has been doing just that for two years. A bit more than a third of its second throne speech is about just that and, since the cabinet shuffle, the ministers have been heading off in all directions and we are not even able to figure out any more where the government stands on the future of Canada.

• (1210)

However, one thing is that it has acknowledged the 50.4 per cent win, which means it would be prepared to acknowledge a yes victory of 50.1, as we have always said it must. Perhaps the figure could be 50.5, maybe even more. But, and perhaps this is the most interesting aspect of this speech, we might be led to conclude that the Prime Minister could reverse his antidemocratic stand and perhaps accept any outcome in excess of fifty plus one.

It is hard for us to swallow, in the post-referendum context, that the government is informing us that it will be restricting its spending power to some extent with the consent of the majority of the provinces, while diverting—I do not wish to make accusations of fraud, which might be a little too strong—but I do not know what label one can use for taking five billion dollars from someone else's pocket, money that does not belong to you and to which you have not contributed a red cent, appropriating that money and saying: "These five billion dollars belong to me".

That is more or less what they are doing with the unemployment insurance fund. They never put a penny into it, having arranged things so that workers and employers were the ones to contribute to it, and now they are saying: "Thanks so much for having contributed so generously. You have been such good little workers and good little employers that now I am going to take off with the surplus as if it were my own. I am going to reduce my deficit, and it will not show too much". In the meantime, it thinks we are not aware of it and that the people do not know about it.

We are tired of expenditures. In the speech from the throne the government says it is still going to spend on programs; it is going to double things, but for that it will need the approval of the majority of the provinces. Those that do not want to take part can choose the

famous course of opting out, so long as they meet the standards. We can see what it means in the case of the transfer payments at the moment, in having to meet health standards with cuts in transfers. The provinces are having to cut back in post-secondary education and in welfare in an effort to meet, with less money, requirements in the area of health first, because they are subject to standards set by someone paying less and less of the bill.

There is another interesting point here, where it reads—I cannot tell you the page number, because it was probably printed quite quickly and they forgot to number the pages, but it is on the second last page of the French version, top paragraph—and I quote:

But as long as the prospect of another Quebec referendum exists, the Government will exercise its responsibility to ensure that the debate is conducted with all the facts on the table, that the rules of the process are fair, that the consequences are clear, and that Canadians, no matter where they live, will have their say in the future of their country.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition tried to find out what the government meant. One minister says it means a cross-Canada referendum, another says it means no such thing. I really wonder what else the government should do to make sure all the cards are on the table, the rules are fair, and the consequences clear.

What did the federal government do during the last two referendums, in 1980 and 1995? It spent many millions; we do not know exactly how much it spent on these two referendums, and we have never been able to find out. As far as clearly outlining the consequences, the federal government told fibs to the people of Quebec, and used scare tactics; first, there was the Brink's episode; then, the elderly were going to lose their pension; troops would leave for God knows where; health care would be jeopardized. The federal government used every trick in the book.

• (1215)

In 1980, all departments joined in a vast propaganda campaign. We were deluged under tons of propaganda extolling Canada, its beauty, greatness, grandeur, wealth, etc.

In 1995, the government went so far as to appoint a minister in charge of the referendum. Many toured Quebec. In 1980, there was the Centre Paul-Sauvé. It could not be used again in 1995 as it had been demolished in the meantime. So instead, they went to Verdun. One must wonder if there is not some hidden symbolism in the fact that Verdun was chosen as the site for a memorable gathering. But that was not enough. A great outpouring of love was organized; from sea to sea, Canadians came to show their love, taking advantage of extremely low fares which were never accounted for by the no committee as election expenses.

Regarding the next referendum, when the government talks about putting all the cards on the table and making sure that the

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consequences are known and the rules are fair, one has every right to wonder whether the House will vote a \$50 billion budget for the no committee to ensure a victory this time, and give each Quebecer a little something so that, when the time comes to vote, they will remember where the cheque is coming from.

When we witness such things, it is extremely hard to know where the government is going and where it wants to take us. It makes promises and, the very next day, gives us a distinct society which is distinct from nothing at all and is not negotiable, and grants us a veto that gives us very little rights. They speak of a modern and united country. We certainly have a long way to go before we can call ourselves modern, because our country is bankrupt. It is so easy to declare bankruptcy here that you can do it one day, turn around and start your own business the next day, and nobody will do a thing about it. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

People say we have a great country. Of course it is vast. As far as the total area is concerned, it is the largest country in the world since the dismantling of the U.S.S.R. Canada is probably a few square miles larger than the new Russia. But it is a country which does not react to demonstrations. It is a country which does not hear its population; it does not see how much people do not agree with the current policies of the government, it cannot listen to its workers when they say that the new employment insurance is really poverty insurance and they do not want it. It was said from coast to coast that we do not want that program, yet the government still promises to bring back the bill, maybe with a new number and a new title.

I know my time is almost up, but if you look at the first throne speech and at the red book, you can see they amount to several pages of unkept promises. If the past is any indication of the future, this throne speech offers little hope to Canadians, unfortunately.

[English]

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. House for giving me the opportunity to participate in this most important debate. I feel honoured to be able to offer my comments on the government's upcoming policies. I also wish to bring to the House what we as elected representatives have heard during the last recess in conjunction with the throne speech. In order for us to formulate policy and bring forth proposals it is important that we convey to our caucus and to our colleagues what the people who have elected us and who have given us the opportunity to be in the House have to say.

As stated in the throne speech 28 months ago, Canadians elected a new Parliament and chose a new government. I was one of those people newly elected. I felt then as I do now that I have been given a great responsibility to represent those who elected me and to serve them to the best of my ability.

In 1993 I campaigned on the promises made in the now famous red book. I felt very strongly that we would make a difference for the country, that we would help build a stronger and more united and fiscally sound country. I am pleased today to state without a doubt that we have to date kept most of our promises.

• (1220)

In the past two years the Liberal government has delivered on the majority of the promises made in our last speech from the throne. One of the most important commitments we made was to make jobs a major priority. We have remained true to our word to date.

I want to repeat a quote from our red book which speaks volumes: "A Liberal government will put jobs and economic growth in the forefront of its objectives. We will also take long term measures to create jobs and growth by focusing on small and medium size businesses, setting the stage for an innovative economy, investing in people through training and apprenticeship programs, encouraging research and development and fostering trade initiatives".

We can only reflect on the unprecedented trade missions the government has taken over the last couple of years. They have resulted in billions of dollars of contracts and several hundred thousand jobs. A couple of weeks ago I was in Apollo Business Machines to repair a calculator. A gentleman approached me and said: "We have just opened a facility in the riding of Scarborough Centre employing 65 people". It specializes in refrigeration equipment. Had it not been for the trade mission 65 people would not be working today. I commend the Prime Minister, Team Canada, and I hope this effort continues in the future.

As we move from a resource based economy to an information based economy the programs we have brought forth will with no question prepare the students of today for Canada's future. Nevertheless, as these programs unfold we must remember it takes two to tango, as we have often heard.

Our record in the first half of our mandate speaks volumes. We have focused on job growth. The results speak for themselves with nearly half a million jobs, two hundred in the past year alone. Notice these statistics are not from any Liberal press release. They come from the pundits who on a daily basis analyse each move the government makes. They come from the media, not from Liberal press releases.

We have had to date the lowest level of unemployment in the past five years and one of the highest growth rates in the industrial world. We have worked hard to get the fundamentals right. We have reduced the deficit from over 6 per cent of gross domestic product in 1993, not to the targeted 3 per cent we initially committed to in our red book but, as we heard the other day, to a projected 2 per cent by 1997-98.

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We have avoided increasing personal income taxes, a promise made and another promise kept. We have cut the red tape and streamlined government services so that small and medium size businesses can concentrate on achieving better productivity.

I am also proud to report that we have taken several initiatives to help small and medium size businesses, an important issue especially in my riding of Scarborough Centre which has an abundance of small and medium size businesses on which we depend very heavily at the municipal and national levels. These businesses are the engine of our economy and we must continue to find ways to support their efforts.

I was a small businessman prior to entering the political arena. I realize how important business is and the role government must play. Over the last year and a half the corporate world has asked us to streamline our activities, to address our financial problems, to reduce the deficit, to downsize government, which we have done in a compassionate and humanitarian way.

We have streamlined. We have reduced our spending. We have done our share. However, as the throne speech indicated, the corporate world also has an obligation. The throne speech was not just a statement but a signal to the corporate world which I believe has not been a good corporate citizen over the last couple of years.

There have been record profits. We have all heard the banks have been reaching numbers like never before. The automotive industries have reached record profits but what is hurting here is that these corporations are continuing to downsize. It is just not fair. We are allowing the investors, the speculators to trigger the economy. What about the average individuals? Where do they go? Where do they seek job security and how can they do long term planning?

• (1225)

I am concerned and I am also extending this challenge to the corporate world. I have no problems about companies making profits but they have an obligation to offer long term job security to the Canadian worker.

I have heard from my constituents how they are sick and tired of being nickelled and dined to death by the banks. Everywhere they go it is service charge this, service charge that. The banks and the financial institutions also have an obligation to lead the way. Working together with this administration we will be able to recapture a healthy economy.

It is not the government's responsibility alone to create jobs. A government cannot hire the people but the government's responsibility is to create a climate in which business and prosperity can flourish. The government has set such an agenda.

We can look to the interest rates, the lowest they have been in decades. We can look to the deficit reduction that has been

projected as we hear from the Minister of Finance. We can look at the formula unfolding and supporting small and medium size businesses. We have done our share. The corporate world once again has to step forward. There is, however, only so much that a government can do to encourage job creation and job growth. Without the help of the private sector the economy will continue to stall.

The Liberal government has promised that it will continue to work alongside the private sector so that more jobs can be created. The government's mandate during the second half will continue to work with the province as well to bring down the trade barriers which are often stumbling blocks in creating more jobs.

The partnership the Prime Minister indicated yesterday must be a real partnership because everybody can benefit from this type of partnership. I am concerned about our youth. I had the opportunity recently to speak to several students in my riding. They are concerned about their future and about the programs they are now into and whether there will be a job for them tomorrow?

What I said to the students is, first of all, stay in school, complete your education, get the proper skills. I am encouraged about the apprenticeship programs the government is now enfold-ing. The co-op program, the training session they would get while in school certainly will help them get that first job. Those on the job skill sets are crucial to that first job opportunity they are seeking.

If talking is a remedy, listening makes us a healer. The government is listening. Over the last month and a half or so which we had the opportunity to spend in our ridings, we heard what the people are saying. The throne speech has covered most of those areas. I was very pleased to hear that when and if we have another referendum, not only Quebecers but the rest of the people in Canada will have an opportunity to participate in that debate. I was also pleased to hear that the question and the process in the next referendum will be transparent, a clear and fair question.

I say to my brothers and sisters in Quebec that we have the best thing going for us. We have Canada, recognized once again as the number one country in the world. We have the skills, we have the people, we just simply have to put it in motion.

• (1230)

In addition to our youth initiatives, we will focus on investments in science and technology. This area is the way to go in the future. Twenty-five and 35 years ago, 75 per cent of the jobs that were created were resource based. Today we are moving onto the information highway. High tech is the way to go.

In conclusion I congratulate the Prime Minister and this government for having the foresight to take this initiative today that will benefit the generations of tomorrow. It is with pleasure that I give

my support to all the initiatives that were brought forth in the throne speech.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the hon. member's statement I would like to share some of the concerns of my constituents in Richmond, B.C.

When I talk to my constituents they are worried about their future and their children's future. They want the federal government to get the deficit under control and they want a say in the future of our country. During and after the referendum, people in Richmond, British Columbia expressed their frustration at the way in which it was conducted. I passed this on to the cabinet and my caucus colleagues.

This throne speech shows that the federal government is listening. Our government has made a commitment to ensure that in any future referendum all the facts will be on the table, the rules of the process will be fair, the consequences will be clear and that all Canadians get a say in the future of their country.

The 1996 budget will set out the government's plan for hitting deficit reduction targets, bringing the deficit down to 2 per cent of gross domestic product in 1997-98 and ensuring that further progress is made in 1998-99.

Deficit reduction is a major concern of my constituents and I am pleased to see that our concerns are being heard. Our government has come a long way in reducing the size of the deficit from 6 per cent of GDP to 3 per cent, but we still have work to do.

On behalf of my constituents I urge the finance minister and the government to continue its steady but firm approach to deficit reduction to reach our ultimate goal of deficit elimination and paying down the debt. This throne speech is an excellent reflection of the discussion I have had with constituents about where our country should be going.

I appreciate the statement from the hon. member and I congratulate him for a good statement.

Mr. Cannis: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague put it so right. We have to address our finances. We have to bring them in order. We are on track in doing so, but at the same time I urge this government to keep focusing on job creation. The more people that are working, the quicker we are going to take care of our deficit.

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to address the second throne speech of the 35th Parliament.

When our government came to power in October 1993 the Canadian people had elected us on a platform of promises and commitments to the voters that we believed in strongly enough to print boldly for the whole world to see in the famous red book.

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The greatest commitment that would affect all other commitments was to restore financial confidence in Canada and reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of GDP by the 1996-97 fiscal year.

When this government came to power the annual deficit was more than \$42 billion. By the end of the 1995-96 fiscal year, which will end in just a few weeks on March 31, we expect to reach the deficit reduction target of approximately \$32 billion. We will be on target of the original goal and we will by the end of fiscal year 1996-97 be around a deficit of \$25 billion to \$27 billion. The Minister of Finance has already set new rolling targets to take us into the second half of our term and that will reduce the deficit to 2 per cent of GDP by fiscal year 1997-98. By the turn of the century I personally hope to see a deficit of zero and a balanced budget.

• (1235)

Why is this so important? It is important because it has reduced interest rates. It has reduced unemployment. It has reduced mortgage rates and has provided a healthier financial environment. It is important also to let Canadians know that we have set realistic targets and that we have made the tough cuts in spending to meet those targets.

Our finance minister has shown strong leadership and our government has shown great political courage to do the right thing, not always the politically popular thing. I am proud to be a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and I am equally proud of the advice and support that the Canadian people have offered us in the consultative process.

The kept promise of financial responsibility was of number one importance in order to keep the promises of our government programs. As well, the greatest promise of all, the all encompassing commitment was the contract with the Canadian people to insist on the highest standards of integrity and honesty of all ministers performing their duties in this 35th Parliament. Our Prime Minister has kept that promise.

By setting and meeting realistic goals and by delivering an honest government with integrity, we have restored credibility and confidence in our elected representatives. This is not only good for Canada at home but it is very good for us globally as other countries view Canada with great respect. What is it about Canada that causes other countries and the United Nations to declare it to be the number one country in the world to provide the best quality of life?

We as a government have shown leadership in getting our financial house in order, in reducing the public service and in doing the business of government more efficiently. Now we can ensure the continuance of our highly valued social justice system that provides this high quality of life that the world views in awe.

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The throne speech highlighted the fact that our government respects the values that Canadians hold dear. In respecting those values our government must ensure economic opportunity as well as security for all Canadians. Economic growth alone does not make a nation. Canadians have told us what defines greatness in nationhood is: the opportunity to work; the national health care system; a fair judicial system; and compassion and respect for all human beings to live in one united Canada.

We have delivered on what the majority of Canadians asked for in the first half of our mandate. Now we are committing to those values that Canadians have identified and asked for, values that bind this country together in Canadian unity.

We are committing to income security for the elderly and the availability of old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. Measures will be taken in this Parliament to ensure the sustainability of our elderly benefits system into the future. Let there be no doubt that we will look after our elderly.

We are committing to our youth, to double the number of federal summer jobs this year immediately, which will help them pay for their post-secondary education. We will challenge the private sector and other levels of government to create opportunities in assisting young people in finding their first job. Our youth must be our priority.

Recently I was honoured to announce funding to establish a new Bachelor of Science degree program in aquaculture, that is fish culture, at the Nova Scotia Agriculture College in Truro. This program is extremely important to the Atlantic coast as it provides an opportunity to train our young people in a new field that has tremendous potential for growth in world markets for Canadian fish products.

We have committed in the throne speech to the five principles of the Canadian Health Act. We will work with the provinces to ensure the future of our publicly financed health care system which remains the number one health care system in the world.

• (1240)

We have committed to the security and protection of our environment and we will modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. We will introduce an endangered species protection act and legislation to ratify the UN straddling stocks agreement and the law of the sea convention.

Canada will continue to participate in the G-7, in NATO and in the United Nations for a more stable and peaceful world. We will commit to advancing human rights and the dignity of all people. We will work vigorously to eliminate the exploitation of child labour and child prostitution throughout the world.

Many people listening to my voice today will know that very often I speak in this House on issues on rural Canada. I was very pleased to see that this throne speech addresses the problems facing rural Canada and acknowledges the fact that our government must tailor policies to meet those needs.

Quite often the problems of urban centres overshadow rural needs and we lose sight of the great richness of the human resources and the great contributions made by rural people to this country. The Prime Minister has heard our voice speaking on behalf of rural Canada. I feel confident that he recognizes that in a strong, united Canada we must ensure that both rural and urban needs are met and that both rural and urban Canadians benefit from the wealth of this great country and share in its economic prosperity. I look forward to seeing the words rural Canada becoming key words in all of our policy proposals in this session of Parliament.

These past two years have created much anxiety as many programs were cut to take swift action against the deficit. It has not been easy for anyone and it is not over. I am sure members will agree that had we not taken the prudent steps of compassion, if we had taken the steps of slash and burn as recommended by some parties, it would have been even more painful. We have shown compassion while being responsible and accountable in fiscal matters.

There is still much to be done. When the hon. Minister of Finance presents his budget next Wednesday afternoon, we will need the co-operation and the continued trust of the Canadian people. We need their support so that we can create the economic climate for investment and job creation while still funding programs that represent Canadian values.

We will serve the Canadian people in the second half of our mandate with the same integrity, honesty and dedication as we have in the past two years. We will pass legislation that ensures and serves all Canadians with a sense of fairness and equality in a united Canada.

I look forward to hearing the views from my constituents of Cumberland—Colchester. I thank them for giving me the privilege of serving them in this 35th Parliament of Canada.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Edmonton Southwest.

I am pleased to rise in the House to reply to the speech from the throne. I might start by saying that some of what I heard in the throne speech, such as the government pledge toward the devolution of power, was encouraging. Unfortunately, it also appears that once again this government is relying on reworked policies from the failed Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords. Once again it is relying on half measures.

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I do not know what it is about this government but it cannot seem to bite the bullet on any of the big issues that face us, whether it is really coming to grips with the justice system, the Young Offenders Act, the debt, the deficit or parliamentary democracy. These things are not confronted in proper style. It is half measures and that is all that we are about to get.

• (1245)

I was also disappointed that the speech contained such vague and fleeting references to a subject that I have tried very hard to implement since being elected in 1993. I speak here of participatory democracy.

The speech mentioned this subject on only two occasions. With reference to national unity, the government says in the speech: "The government welcomes public participation in the debate about Canada". It goes on to say: "Canadians no matter where they live will have their say in the future of their country". Good words. I would that the government would invoke them and truly reach out to the people of Canada and say we want your opinion.

I have heard the Deputy Prime Minister on the one hand saying one thing about the possibility of going to the people of Canada in a referendum on national unity and I hear the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs saying something quite different. I have heard the same dichotomy between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. I would that the government could make up its mind. Does it want to go to the people or does it not?

The government puts forward nice words but if we examine the Liberal track record it is quite clear that they have little meaning.

In the 1994 throne speech two years ago the Liberals promised: "A national forum on health, chaired by the Prime Minister, will be established to foster, in co-operation with the provinces, a national public dialogue on the renewal of Canada's health system". That was the promise made two years ago in the throne speech. In reality that committee met only once, said nothing and will not report before the next election.

While this in itself is evidence of the government's unwillingness to keep its promises, the February 13 Calgary *Herald* report on the forum's visit to Calgary shows the Liberal's promise of public dialogue was nothing more than lip service. According to that report the health forum consultations are "restricted to selected participants and are closed to the public and the media". So much for consulting with the public.

The government is not living up to the promises it has made and it is certainly not interested in participatory democracy.

While I am saddened by this turn of events, I am certainly not surprised, for this government often talks of involving Canadians

in the decision making process but seldom walks the talk. Instead we have a Prime Minister who punishes his own MPs who have the nerve to vote the will of their constituents on issues such as gun control or sexual orientation. In fact he has even gone so far as to threaten not to sign nomination papers for those in the Liberal caucus who have the integrity or nerve to vote on behalf of their constituents rather than blindly toe the party line.

To someone who believes as strongly as I do in participatory democracy, these actions are an affront to the very principles of democracy. Yet to the Prime Minister it is just business as usual. What else should we expect from a man who feels his views are more important than those of the people who elected him?

• (1250)

Two years ago on February 16, in response to a question from a Reform colleague on the issue of voting the will of constituents, the Prime Minister said: "This notion that we should be replaced by polling is revolting to me". How interesting that what I see as the legitimate right of Canadians our Prime Minister views as revolting.

Based on these example, I fear that even the vague government promises of consultation contained in this throne speech are merely more Liberal smoke and mirrors.

However, against the remote possibility that the Liberals are now willing to live up to their promises of consulting, I would like to offer them some advice on how true participatory democracy works. For the past two years, voters in my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan have had an opportunity to express their views on numerous issues through the use of a telephone voting system.

On a monthly basis, voters respond to questions posed on the public opinion survey system. Their input helps guide me on both local and national issues. It has also assisted me in the decision making process on such issues as international travel by MPs.

My constituents, indeed all Canadians, deserve to be heard in the House and all of us have a duty to do what we can to make this process as simple and as transparent as possible. That is why I have taken the basic voting system that I have just described to the next level. Through the use of state of the art Canadian made computer software, participatory democracy is fast becoming a way of life for voters in Nanaimo—Cowichan.

As a result of the initial vote late last year, I will soon be introducing a private member's bill in the House calling for a national referendum on reinstatement of capital punishment as part of the next general election. Again, reach out to the people, get their opinions and then do something about it. This will be the second private member's bill that I put forward after soliciting the input of my constituents.

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Next month, my constituents will have their say in the unity issue as participatory democracy takes yet another step forward in Nanaimo—Cowichan. I will once again bring their views forward to the House. Since I am a believer in true democracy it is my duty to do so, even though the Prime Minister feels that such behaviour is revolting.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague for his fine speech. I would also like to tell the House that my hon. friend is displaying some of the finest elements of democracy by asking his constituents what they think about the issues of the day and enabling them to have an effective role in this House through their elected member. Other members of Parliament should take heed of what my hon. friend has done in his riding and in how he employs those ideas.

My hon. colleague brought before us an area that is of some great concern to me professionally and also to members that live on the same island as both of us. In fact, it affects all Canadians: health care in this country.

One of the great disappointments of the throne speech was its inability to put forward any constructive solutions to the problems affecting the health and welfare of Canadians. The situation is unsustainable, which has been admitted by both the government and all members of this House. It cannot continue to go on as is. When it falls apart, it will only hurt those who are in greatest need, those who are sick.

We have to put forward constructive solutions to put publicly funded health care on a long term sustainable footing. I saw nothing about that in the throne speech. It is a great disservice for us to sit here and argue on the basis of philosophical grounds to maintain the Canada Health Act as a status quo. The government has mentioned that it does not want the status quo but it has not provided any alternatives.

• (1255)

Does my hon. colleague support choice in health care, enabling Canadians to choose alternative ways of getting health care through a two-tiered system which would enable them to buy their health care if they so choose while maintaining the status quo in publicly funded health care. This would give individuals the ability to get their health care free of charge in a publicly funded health care system but in a health care system that provided all Canadians with essential services in a timely fashion? Would my hon. colleague support such a move?

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, in response to my colleague, absolutely. If we have the ability for Canadians who have money to go and purchase health care that they wish, it would simply shorten the line for other Canadians who are forced to stand in line.

The government is unable to give the subsidies to the provinces that they require, therefore the lines get longer and longer. It would shorten the lines.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join this debate, the first in this second session of the 35th Parliament.

I would like to confine my comments on the throne speech debate to two items that in my opinion are serious land mines in the future of our country. These are land mines planted by the government and referred to in the throne speech that, sooner or later, our country will encounter going down this road and boom, we are going to have an explosion the likes of which we have not envisioned.

The problems to which I refer are two. That is the notion of enshrining within our Constitution a veto and the concept of distinct society.

When I was first elected a couple of years ago, along with everyone here, I received a letter from a constituent. The constituent's letter was to wish me well. It was a letter of support. The constituent wrote in the body of that letter that there are two kinds of people who get involved in politics. There are politicians and statesmen. The distinction was drawn between a politician and a statesman thus: a politician thinks about the next election and a statesman about the next generation.

I thought about the words and the feeling put into that letter by that family from Edmonton Southwest. A thought occurred to me as I was watching my four and a half year old grandson last week as he was speaking on cellular phone to his uncle at the same time as he was shutting down a Windows '95 program on a computer. He is four and a half years old.

I was thinking about our responsibility as statesmen, what my responsibility is as a statesman and what our collective responsibility is to future generations. Our responsibility is not to our grandparents. Our responsibility is to our grandchildren. Our responsibility is to the future, not to the past and that is where we should have our eyes firmly fixed.

I was thinking about my responsibility to my grandson and to our grandchildren, the future generations of Canada. I was thinking about this veto. I was thinking, what does that do? I put it into the context of the great debate that raged in the land south of us in the United States.

About 220 years ago, they were in the midst of putting together their constitution. It starts with the words: "We, the people—". One of the architects of the American constitution, Thomas Jefferson, had as one of his primary advisers a man by the name of Thomas Paine, who wrote the book that many will know, *The*

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Rights of Man. I believe the central thesis is contained in the phrase: "Each generation has the right and the responsibility to govern for its time and should no more bind future generations than past generations should bind today". He referred to the notion of binding future generations to decisions of today as the greatest tyranny of all, the tyranny of ruling from beyond the grave.

• (1300)

We in our generation and the generation that preceded us are already ruling from the grave in one respect. We will be saddling future generations with a debt we ran up, a debt we used so we could live beyond our means and live better today at the expense of future generations of Canadians. That is wrong. That is tyranny.

To put a veto for any particular group, no matter how well meaning or no matter how well deserving, into the Constitution of the country binds future generations to decisions of today. It will be virtually impossible to change our Constitution. The beauty and the majesty of a Constitution is its ability to change and to evolve, to represent the people of today.

By putting a Constitutional veto into our Constitution we remove the ability of future generations to adapt and to change the Constitution and our relationship one with another in the future.

What is the natural consequence of removing the ability to accommodate change in the future? Imagine today if we did not have the ability to evolve, to change the relationship one province to another. Would we be able to even sit at a table with Quebec and say this is how we think we can make the country work better for everyone? We would be removing the ability to be flexible in the future. That is a significant road block, a significant land mine in the future destiny of the country.

In the immediate future the effect of a veto for regions in the country that do not include every single coequal province is this. I guarantee House and the people of Canada that the day Albertans become second class citizens because we do not have a veto, just as the individual provinces in the maritimes do not have a veto, or the Northwest territories or Saskatchewan or Manitoba, all hell is going to break loose.

Guess what, folks? We in Alberta get to give, give, give: "You are just about equal but you do not have a veto like everybody else. You do not have a veto like Quebec, but by the way, send money". How long do we think that will last? That is a very real and a very significant problem which the government does not seem to want to address.

It is wrong for future generations because it ties their hands; it makes it impossible to change. It is wrong because it puts a red flag in front of one of the most prosperous, dynamic provinces in the country which will be so upset that if the government thinks it has a

problem with Quebec, it will look back at its problems with Quebec now as the good old days. I guarantee that is what will happen.

I did a little figuring the other day. The Prime Minister once again mentioned that he has been in the House for 32 years, which is quite remarkable. I added the number of hours in 32 years. If we divide the number of hours he has been an elected politician by our national debt it works out to \$2,090,000 an hour for every hour he has been elected. We cannot stand any more of that. It is too expensive. We must have some fiscally responsive leadership. Two million dollars an hour for the last 32 years; that is our national debt.

• (1305)

The other real problem is distinct society. I am not raising this for the first time. I have raised it before and I use as my authority of the problems with distinct society Eugene Forsey. Eugene Forsey, as many people know, was Canada's pre-eminent constitutional scholar. There is no single Canadian acknowledged to have a better understanding or who has done more work in determining or considering what brought Canada together.

Eugene Forsey left the New Democratic Party at its founding convention because the New Democratic Party embraced the notion of two nations. He could not abide that and he left the party because of it. The New Democratic Party at the time was trying to make inroads in Quebec. It figured that if it embraced the notion of two nations somehow it would help. Look what happened to the New Democratic Party in Quebec—nothing. It did not help.

Eugene Forsey constitutionally went right back to ground zero and the Fathers of Confederation, especially the French speaking Fathers of Confederation, including Cartier. They made the point that Canada did not work as two separate entities. That was the whole reason we came together.

Let me read a quote from his book: "The Canadian Fathers of Confederation, French speaking, English speaking, made it plain emphatically in both languages that they considered they were founding a new nation, a single great nation, a political nationality independent of national origin. Cartier and Macdonald spoke of joining these five peoples into one nation". The five peoples being the French, English, Irish, Scottish and others, perhaps the aboriginals.

He added: "We make the confederation one people and one government instead of five peoples and five governments, with local governments and legislatures subordinate to the central government and legislator".

Mr. Forsey said if we recognized a distinct society for anyone, it is not to say we do not understand there are differences in Canada, that we have special status for different provinces. We do. The maritimes have special status. Different provinces have different requirements. To base a distinct society on race and language is in

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itself racist tribalism. That is the bottom line. If we have a country based on race and language, that is what it is.

Eugene Forsey's point was that the minute we as a nation give the official imprimatur to the notion of two nations, we are giving it legitimacy. Guess what? He was right. We gave the nation of two nations legitimacy. Now we will give distinct society legitimacy so that every law, every consideration based on the province of Quebec will be based on its notion as a distinct society. It might as well be a different country.

What we are trying to do is form a country of equal people in equal provinces where equality is the defining feature, not differences. We need to get rid of the hypens.

There are a lot of things in this throne speech, most of which are motherhood window dressing that do not mean a whole heck of a lot.

In debate we have heard from time to time references to the fact that government has cut back all this spending and how it did its part and now it is up to the private sector to carry its burden. To some degree that is correct. The problem is that the cuts really have not taken place yet and the business of the private sector is to create profit. Profit is not a dirty word.

• (1310)

When corporations make a profit and if their profits are excessive what we should be doing is ensuring there is competition because competition keeps prices down. Competition prevents excessive profits and creates employment.

Let us be very cognizant that we are in real trouble with distinct society and the veto.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned competition. I do not think anybody is against competition. I do not think anybody is against corporations making profit. However, when we look at the consolidation and the financial institutions today, they are trying to move in on the insurance industry. We are talking about thousands of jobs in communities that have been served for years.

What is the member's answer to that? What is his answer to the banks and auto companies making profits, although I am glad they are? How does he respond to the downsizing still taking place today?

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, we cannot on one hand say we want to have the most efficient world class industries and businesses and on the other hand say by the way, do not make a profit. The business of business is business.

Let us talk about the banks because banks are organizations that people love to hate, by and large with good reason. Why are the banks making these outrageous profits? Are they making these profits because of their lending practices or because they are so

smart at what they do and they are finding opportunities to make money? Partly. However, every time we go to the bathroom we end up paying the banks something somehow. It is like a utility. They have service charges on everything. There is a service charge for opening the door. They are also making huge profits because of the amount of credit we are all using through bank credit cards.

One of the reasons business is slow is the per capita consumer debt in Canada is 88 per cent of the average Canadian's expendable income. Everybody is in debt. Ten years ago it was 65 per cent.

The way to ensure there are not obscene profits in any industry is to ensure fair, open competition. Banks are owned by shareholders who then get the profits and reinvest in the country. If we think the banks are making too much money, let us open up the flood gates of competition.

I do not think the banks should be in the direct selling of insurance unless insurance companies can be in direct selling of banking. We can open up the competition of the banking industry to everybody in the insurance business by saying if you want to be in business, fine, get in the business. However, the new people who get into business should not do it on the backs of the taxpayers. If I am to get involved in a business I should be paying for that. I should be able to reap some of the rewards and I should be able to keep some of the profits, which is the nature of free enterprise.

It seems when we get involved in and start talking about this we have to look at our tax system. We need to see if everything in our tax system motivates people to invest and risk their lives, their livelihood, their security and their capital in getting more, which then creates employment. That is the kind of foundation we should have if we want to create jobs. We need a foundation that rewards entrepreneurship, risk and initiative. We do not need a foundation that rewards passive investment.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned the tribalism that has descended into the country through offers such as constitutionalizing the distinct society clause and vetoes to one province and not to others.

What would he would do to bring Canada together under the framework of equality for all Canadians?

• (1315)

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, what we have to do is stop this whole notion of lists. We are all equal by virtue of the fact that we are human beings.

When we gathered under the oak tree and decided that for our mutual comfort and support we were going to have governance and that we were going to work as equals together for this governance, we did not say: "Oh, by the way, you are going to be separate because of the colour of your skin, your sexual orientation or because you are male or female". We said that for our common

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good as human beings we were going to come together and have governance.

In my opinion that would be the single thing we should do to make us work together and to say we are all equal, period.

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from St. Boniface.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in response to the speech from the throne, no doubt the last before the next federal election. I would like to focus on some areas that I find especially important.

Much has been said about the values, the beliefs, the hopes, the expectations and the personal and community goals that we all share. Being common to most of us, they act as a unifying force that helps to give us a sense of identity, a distinct perception of what it is to be Canadian.

I expect and anticipate that my friends, my neighbours and my fellow citizens would be as compassionate, understanding and as caring about others as is humanly and realistically possible.

The term others has far reaching connotations. It is a word that includes everyone. No one is excluded because of race, religion, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation or political affiliation.

Thus I turn to the Liberal Party of Canada, the only political party that is broad minded and all encompassing in its basic beliefs and policies to include all Canadians from sea to sea to sea. All other political parties cater to the agendas of special interest groups at the expense of all other Canadians.

Members can see why I am pleased in general with the content of the speech from the throne. It continues to build on that stable, solid foundation of liberalism that has been maintained and reinforced by not only the present Liberal government but by all Liberal governments in the past.

In particular I am proud of our commitment to aid Canadian youth in their quest for employment. We will be implementing initiatives which will allow our youth to make the move from school to the workforce. We will also be doubling the number of federal student summer jobs this year.

By working with private sector employers, we can offer youth more opportunities to obtain much needed work experience. We all know that when one has work experience one's chances of finding employment are greatly improved.

However, it is quite evident that we have reached the point in our society where all our formal educational institutions, the elementary schools, the private colleges, the public colleges and universities, our high schools, the private sector, all our agents in the

private sector and employers must search for creative techniques and ventures to produce more jobs for the youth of the country. It can be done.

I warn all those concerned that we will never solve the problems of today and the immediate future by using the strategies and the principles of the past. We want our young people working and that is why we are following up with these initiatives. I am confident that the opposition parties will support the government in its job creation strategies.

Having implemented a successful strategy for deficit reduction, we must be careful not to lose sight of or be insensitive to the consequences of our policies. We must not be pushed by the self-serving, self-centred and shallow agendas of the opposing political parties. We must carefully plan with the input from as many of those affected as possible.

• (1320)

I am proud to announce that in the past two years the government has clearly indicated not only to the people of this country but to a great number of interested parties in a variety of countries who are really concerned and interested how we get the public involved. From the level of standing committees to the small forums that each of us has in our constituencies, information has been flowing. This information has been analysed, absorbed and has had a great impact on many of the policies the government has put forth in the last two years. This dynamic democratic process will continue with our support.

The throne speech has reassured Canadians that we will maintain a highly cherished social safety net. Introducing improvements and efficiencies in our social assistance programs will ensure their preservation. This is a task that the government is keen to take up with great vigour.

We will preserve the most envied health care system in the world. We will preserve a system of employment insurance. We will preserve the Canada pension plan. These are commitments the government, my Liberal administration and any Liberal administration would adhere to as a matter of ideological principle. However, our programs are not stagnant. They are dynamic and continually change to meet the needs and demands for reform.

I have received letters from constituents in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan that praise us for having met so many red book commitments. Three-quarters of the promises have been successfully achieved, while others are yet to be carried through to fruition. The federal government is dedicated to keeping its promises. For example, it is committed to replace the GST. It is committed to a national child care program as well.

The Address

Over the past two years Canadians have consulted as to what should be done with the GST. Our countrymen have expressed their support for having federal and provincial sales taxes harmonized. However, it is extremely difficult for the federal government to act without provincial co-operation in this respect.

This difficulty also exists in the case of national child care. The red book indicates the importance of establishing child care across the country. However, once again we cannot act alone. The support of our provincial counterparts is essential in this matter. It is for this reason that progress on some commitments may at times appear to be developing at a slower rate than we might like.

The apparent difficulty of obtaining the necessary co-operation in joint ventures has influenced to a degree the federal government's decision to keep away from creating new, shared cost programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction without the consent of the majority of the provinces.

I would also like to discuss some of our citizenship and immigration policy initiatives. As a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, I am aware of the need to introduce legislation which will revamp the Citizenship Act, an act which has not been revised since 1977. These changes will make the process of citizenship that much more efficient and fairer. Moreover, these changes will reflect current Canadian views of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This will hopefully also serve to remind Canadians of what we have in common.

This is a very important point because we share a lot in common as Canadians. That we have two official languages and a diversity of cultures does not mean that we are significantly different from each other in the ways that really matter. Quite the contrary; it is these differences and diversities that serve to bring us together. Quite the contrary; it is these differences and diversities that serve to bring us together.

• (1325)

The federal government believes that differences can serve to bring us closer together while at the same time acknowledging the distinctiveness of Quebec. The throne speech clearly indicated that Quebec is different in some respects from other regions of the country.

It is my opinion that the underlying theme in last Tuesday's throne speech was one of common sense in that we are building on our differences to ensure a strong and united Canada, common sense in that we are on our way to getting our financial house in order, building a stable foundation—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my hon. colleague. I regret to have to tell

him that he is merely the mouthpiece of this government, which is quite good at improvising.

It has improvised on job creation. It had said that, yes, it would create jobs, but did not elaborate, did not say how it was going to do that. How is the government going to remove the barriers to job creation, how is it going to put Canadians and Quebecers back to work? It does not say.

Nor does it say a word about contradictory statements by ions between the words of various ministers regarding Quebec partitioning. I would have liked to hear what my colleague has to say on the subject. Does he share the point of view of the Minister of the Intergovernmental Affairs who, by the way, was contradicted by several members of the Cabinet regarding Quebec partitioning? I would like his opinion on the subject.

[*English*]

Mr. Dromisky: Mr. Speaker, regarding the creation of jobs, I think my colleague from Quebec is quite aware that the federal government in essence does not create jobs by itself. It is a co-operative venture, as was clearly indicated by the infrastructure program we initiated two years ago. It was extremely successful and produced over half a million new jobs in this great country of ours. Even the province of Quebec benefited immensely from that infrastructure program.

However, as I pointed out in my delivery, it is a co-operative venture. It is the needs that are identified and have to be catered to by the people who are involved.

In the province of Quebec I am anticipating that not only might all three levels of government be involved in a co-operative venture but that the people who are employing and the employees themselves through their various agencies and associations may have the opportunity to contribute to this decision making process. The people in the community may also have the opportunity to contribute.

What I have said is clearly indicated in my speech. We must change our ways of the past. We must not have the same expectations that one authority, one government is totally responsible for the creation of jobs. This government, in co-operative efforts with all other levels and all other agents, must work together to create those jobs. This is a completely different approach to the job creation philosophy versus the philosophy of job creation that we have maintained in this country for so many years.

We are active participants in a very co-operative, dynamic venture. We hope that citizens as well as the various levels of government in the province of Quebec and in all other provinces will join in a united effort to help nurture and create the kinds of jobs our young people and others need to meet the challenges of the next century.

The Address

• (1330)

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand in the House today to make a number of comments with respect to the speech from the throne.

Recognizing that as a member of the government I might be tempted to be somewhat generous in my commentary, I decided to approach it in a unique way. I have looked at what a number of newspapers have said. I have selected excerpts from various articles. I have some from almost 20 newspapers across the nation.

The first is from the *Guardian* in Prince Edward Island. It refers to the speech from the throne as a "take charge throne speech".

[Translation]

What did *Le Soleil* say? "A government which governs follows the quality criteria expected in such a message at mid-term. It gives, in a surprisingly clear and precise way, the objectives the government will follow, but it keeps practical details for the future. Jean Chrétien decided to show a Canada that works".

And *Le Devoir*, what did it say? "Will give priority to children's rights".

Le Droit: "Good speech and ambitious program".

[English]

The *Gazette*: "Ottawa outlines a promising unity plan. Throne speech promises to end illusions".

The *Toronto Star*: "Chrétien program should rally nation". "Welcome words. The Liberal government hit all the right notes in the throne speech: promises to strengthen the economy, maintain social programs and promote national unity".

The *Financial Post*: "Economy key in throne speech".

The *Globe and Mail*: "The throne speech promised the government will work with the private sector and provinces to make the collective investment required to produce hope, growth and jobs. But it will also be compassionate toward the losers". It goes on to say: "Spend on jobs, Prime Minister tells business." We have heard a bit about that.

The *Ottawa Citizen*: "In the main, this is the best course to re-establish Canadian unity: improve the governing of the federation, confront the separatists head on and avoid futile arguments about constitutional amendment". Again: "Liberals tackle reform of pension system." And again: "shows the government is aware that Canadians are worried about finding a job, getting a pension and continuing to live in a united country—the government promises to tackle these problems".

The *Winnipeg Free Press*: "Liberals face child poverty".

The *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*: "Premier Romanow says the throne speech is positive". "The federal government is giving up powers to the provinces to keep the country together, but will play hardball if there is another Quebec referendum".

The *Regina Leader Post*: "Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow—saying Chrétien seems to see Confederation as a true partnership".

The *Edmonton Journal*: "Government willing to give up powers but vows to get tough if separatists force another vote".

The *Calgary Herald*: "Throne speech puts Canadian youth first".

The *Calgary Sun*: "Unity message delivered".

The *Province* in Vancouver: "The feds vowed yesterday to play less of a role in several areas in an effort to beef up provincial responsibilities and national unity".

The *Vancouver Sun* says: "Promises for the future at home and abroad". "A helping hand and an era of co-operation are promised in throne speech." "The federal government's continuing commitment to deficit reduction is essential and most welcome."

I did not say that, nor did my colleagues on the government side. Those are excerpts and headlines from various articles which appeared across this nation in response to the speech from the throne.

[Translation]

This is what people without any connection with the government said.

As we can see, their messages are quite different from the one we get from the people opposite.

Now I would like to review briefly some of the subjects, some of the themes which were identified by the government. First of all a strong economy. The government will work with the private sector and the provinces to make collective investments to create hope, growth and jobs.

• (1335)

Youth is another theme. The government will challenge the provinces and the private sector to enter into a domestic Team Canada-like partnership to foster hope, create opportunities and create jobs for our young people.

[English]

With respect to business involvement in national economic rejuvenation it goes on to say the government has issued a call to the business community to join with the government to create jobs for Canadians. Profitable firms are challenged to channel some of

The Address

their revenues into job creation. Jobs for all Canadians and in particular firms are challenged to help create job opportunities for youth. Jobs for all Canadians and in particular for youth.

We are simply asking the business community to respond to some of the polling data which shows that over 90 per cent of Canadians worry about the problems young people have entering the labour market. We believe that the private sector can make a significant contribution. The government is acting on its part by creating a positive economic environment and doubling the funds for youth summer jobs.

Perhaps I can summarize this issue best by quoting today's *Winnipeg Free Press*: "But the most compelling bit was the direct challenge to corporate Canada to put its profits to work, to reinvest in the people who generate those profits and to take a more active role in creating jobs for Canadians. Private sector leaders cannot ignore the challenge. They have been silent about jobs for too long. It is time their voices, and their pocketbooks, were heard".

[Translation]

As I just mentioned, business plays a vital role in stimulating the economy is vital. We must create jobs for all Canadians. In particular, we must focus on young people who are unemployed, but who are well qualified, who have a number of diplomas and all sorts of skills, but who cannot reach their full potential.

That is what we must do and we are only asking the business community to respond to what Canadians have said. Canadians want the private sector to get more involved. It is fine to make profits, but these profits must be used for the well-being of Canada and its citizens. That is the role the private sector must play; it cannot and must not overlook it.

[English]

Science and technology is another important theme. We all know that research and development is the key to success. It is the key to success in terms of jobs. It is the key to success in terms of getting the edge on the competition, on being competitive. It is the key to success to being in the forefront, to being leaders rather than followers.

The government is undertaking a number of initiatives. It will launch a Canadian technology network to facilitate our growth in that area. It will continue to expand access to SchoolNet and community access programs. Those are but two of the initiatives in that area.

[Translation]

As I just mentioned, science and technology is a key to creating jobs and ensuring that we are leaders rather than followers.

We should also identify another theme, trade. You certainly know that the Prime Minister of Canada, with a number of

premiers from the provinces and territories, travelled outside the country to promote Canada, to sell our services and products. It has to be realized that for every billion dollars of exports, we create 11,000 jobs. Every billion dollars of exports means 11,000 jobs.

When we look at what the Prime Minister and Team Canada have done, we realize that almost \$20 billion in contracts were signed. Some pessimists will say: "What good will a signature do?" I guarantee that most of these contracts will materialize. Do not forget that for every billion dollars of contracts, 11,000 jobs are created for Canadians.

There will be other Team Canada missions. There will be others, and they will yield roughly the same results, perhaps even better results.

[English]

There is also the necessity to create a climate for economic growth and job creation. My colleagues across the way who are concerned about the deficit and the debt will no doubt recognize that we have made some significant progress. Of course we have not made as much as we would have liked, but we have made some progress. What offends me and offends Canadians is that they are unwilling to accept that. Of course they are unwilling to accept that because if they were to accept it, their very existence which has been put into question several times would absolutely come to an end.

• (1340)

So what has happened? In the 1996 budget we expect to reduce the deficit to 2 per cent of the GDP by 1997-98 and we will. We are currently having discussions to try to ensure that the GST is harmonized with other taxes and that will be realized. Here again people will ask for miracles. People will say we should snap our fingers and it ought to be done. That is what the Reform Party philosophy is all about: simplistic solutions to complex problems.

[Translation]

As for the security of Canadians, the government will ensure that the Canadian health system remains viable and accessible. It will ensure the survival of a public pension plan and ensure that Canadians are secure in their homes and in their communities.

[English]

We want a secure social safety net and we will work toward that end with a great deal of enthusiasm and energy.

I do wish I had more time because I can tell that my colleagues across the way would have loved to have heard what I had to say in the area of personal security. We are going to focus on high risk offenders.

*Speaker's Ruling**[Translation]*

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that my colleague took three-quarters of his time to quote some headlines. Of course, he picked those he found most appropriate, because he knew that if he were to go over everything that has been said or written since the throne speech, he would find that 25 per cent of the headlines are for the government and 75 per cent are against.

I will try to get from him an answer to a question I put to one of his colleagues earlier. It is the same question. Given the contradictory statements by ministers on the issue of partition, could my colleague tell the House if he agrees with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs?

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, there were several points to be made about the little speech we just heard.

The first is on quotations. My colleague says that 75 per cent of the headlines are against the government and 25 per cent are for the government. It would then appear that I only read from the 25 per cent in support of the government. It is not true at all. The hon. member should prove what he claims. I do not believe him. I am not trying to impugn his motives, but I think he is having trouble with figures this morning for some reason. Maybe it is because of the other questions he asked.

Earlier, he asked what we were doing to create jobs. First of all, we have to ensure that our financial house is in order. The hon. member knows full well that the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada have seen to it. We are gradually making progress, and the problem will be solved. But there is more. Everyone knows that we set up an infrastructure program, which created more than 100,000 jobs. And it is not over yet. Everyone knows that more than 500,000 jobs have been created since 1993. Not by ourselves, but with some help. Everyone knows about the major challenge issued in the throne speech, whereby the private sector is asked to get involved and to help us create jobs.

On the issue of partition, my colleague knows very well what the government's position is. It is very clear and it continues to evolve, as it should.

[English]

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we listened to the member for St. Boniface and what we have heard is a typical Liberal operation.

The member talked about involving the business community and the private sector in creating hope in the economy and creating hope for the youth of our country. This is just typical Liberal fashion. The Liberals are offloading the responsibilities they have not been able to take over the last two years on to the private sector. For more than two years businesses in the private sector have been

telling government to get out of their face. Get out of their face so that they can get on to doing business. If we are to believe what the hon. member for St. Boniface is saying, the Liberals plan on getting back in the face of business in a way that they have never been there before.

• (1345)

Business has been saying, leave us alone. If government wants to do something, lower our cost of doing business, lower the taxation levels so that we can make some more money, so that we can invest, so that we can hire people, so that we can give some hope on our own to the people. What this member is saying ain't gonna work.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question. My colleague's solution is simplistic. Let business take care of the country. Let business pocket the profits. One does not have to care about one's fellow Canadians. Just stuff more and more in and it will all resolve itself.

I am sorry but those simplistic solutions to complex problems have never worked and they will not work in this instance either. The corporate sector has a responsibility to its fellow Canadians. If it is going to make money, let it make darn sure that Canadians are employed. It is those Canadians who are employed who help them make more money.

* * *

*[Translation]***POINT OF ORDER**

SPEAKER'S RULING—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS—MOTION NO. 1

The Deputy Speaker: Dear colleagues, before recognizing the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, I must rule on the point of order that was raised the other day. Here is the Speaker's ruling on the point of order raised on February 27 by the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie regarding the procedural acceptability of government business Motion No. 1 standing in the name of the hon. government House leader.

I also wish to thank the hon. members for Lethbridge and Winnipeg Transcona, the government House leader and the chief government whip for their contributions to the debate.

[English]

Reinstatement of business from one session to another is not uncommon in our practice. In our parliamentary experience, there are a number of occasions where bills and other forms of business from one session have been brought forward to another session either by unanimous consent or, more recently, as was the case in 1991 by way of a government motion moved after notice.

The question before us is not whether business can be reinstated from one session to another, but whether Government Business

The Address

No. 1 which provides a mechanism where bills from the first session may be reinstated to this session is procedurally in order.

Speaker Fraser noted in his ruling of May 29, 1991—much referred to in the debate—at page 734 of the *Debates* that he could find nothing in our rules or practices to preclude the reinstatement of bills by way of motion. He therefore permitted debate to proceed on the government motion that had been moved. He was concerned that members would be afforded an adequate opportunity to express their assent or dissent on each item to be reinstated and therefore ruled that separate questions be put on each bill to be reinstated.

The same concern has been expressed most eloquently by hon. members with regard to the proposed government motion. In our current circumstances the motion does not list specific pieces of legislation to be reinstated. Rather it provides a mechanism whereby both private members and the ministry would have an opportunity to revive legislation from the last session. There is nothing procedurally objectionable per se to the adoption of a motion setting in place such a mechanism.

[*Translation*]

However, as the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona pointed out, pursuant to Standing Orders 68(2) and 69(1), motions for leave to introduce a bill and for first reading and printing shall be deemed carried, without debate, amendment or question put, that is to say, in the words of Speaker Fraser, without the hon. members of the House having a say in the matter.

[*English*]

I remind hon. members that our proceedings are generally arranged to provide hon. members with the opportunity to express their views on matters that come before the House. While the House would, of course, be able to vote on reinstated bills at subsequent stages of the legislative process, the Chair acknowledges the hon. members' concerns that under the terms of the third paragraph of the motion in issue, hon. members would not be able to take any decision on the bills that had passed all stages in the House and which were under study in the Senate when Parliament had prorogued.

● (1350)

While I do not believe it is within my power to unilaterally amend a motion which is procedurally in order, I would remind hon. members that during the course of the debate on this motion there will be ample opportunity for them to propose amendments to provide the members of the House with the means to express their assent or dissent on the reinstatement of each bill in issue. Of course, members may also choose to vote against the motion.

Both elements of this motion, that is, the first element dealing with the mechanism for the reinstatement of bills and the second

element dealing with amendments to the standing orders dealing with supply, specify how certain items of business will be dealt with during the first part of this session. As both elements relate to the business of the House, the motion is not a complicated question. Therefore, one debate will be held on the motion and one question will be put on the motion.

[*Translation*]

I thank all my colleagues for their contributions to this important matter.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak in reply to the speech from the throne because, over the past few months, we were able to get in touch with our constituents and finally stock up on the ideas they want us to put across in this House so that Quebec and Canada will be more in line with what the people of Quebec and Canada want.

The first message that was systematically conveyed to me by every person I was able to contact, which is not reflected in the speech from the throne, is to the effect of rejecting the unfair application of the marketplace rules of the road.

In this speech from the throne, there are many instances where the government gives up exercising its duties as a government.

Take the UI reform for example. On this subject, the speech from the throne says that it will go on as scheduled, that this plan to cut \$2 billion will go ahead as scheduled, without any changes to the fiscal parameters. This is in direct contradiction with the first few paragraphs of the speech, in which the governor general speaks of the compassion of Canadians. There is a contradiction between what the government is advocating and the objectives we have always pursued in Quebec and in Canada.

How can the government talk about compassion and honouring Canada's traditional values while at the same time requiring, for instance, that any first-time UI claimant have accumulated 910 hours of work? These 910 hours amount to 26, 35-hour weeks of work, but previously, the unemployed needed only work a minimum of 15 hours a week during 20 weeks, or a total of 300 hours, to qualify for unemployment insurance.

The baseline has now been raised to 910 hours. Might as well condemn every young person and anyone working in a seasonal industry to live off welfare for the rest of their lives. This is clearly and simply an incentive to moonlight. This government is systematically encouraging moonlighting.

The Address

Another aspect of the speech from the throne that deals with the UI reform and which will certainly prompt members from the Maritimes to jump to their feet and respond has to do with the rule regarding the number of weeks of work. The current UI reform penalizes seasonal workers because they work in seasonal industries. Does the government intend to maintain this type of situation? Will it stick to the principles underlying Bill C-111, or will it do as it is being asked to by everyone, that is withdraw this legislation and start over again, from scratch, and propose a UI reform that truly reflects the values dear to Quebecers and Canadians? Did the government not get the message? Have all MPs from the maritimes not been told by their constituents that this reform was unacceptable, that it did not at all reflect the values of Quebec and Canada?

Old age pensions are another component of social program reform where the government shows no compassion.

The speech from the throne says that it will be necessary to reform the Canada pension plan so as to maintain its viability. The government no longer talks about ensuring the survival of old people through a minimum income that would allow them to have a decent quality of life. Not at all.

• (1355)

The government is only concerned with the plan's viability. Once again, as with the UI reform, the issue becomes strictly a matter of dollars and cents. The government will do to old age pensions what it did to unemployment insurance, that is make the most vulnerable people pay. Is this what a government which is now half-way through its mandate should do? The government should ask itself why it was elected and where it is headed.

The measures proposed in the speech from the throne do not reflect the demands of Quebecers and Canadians in the least.

There is another issue that my constituents keep referring to. They told us that they expected their governments to create jobs. We have to find ways. I will tell you what a worker told me: "We need to find a way of taxing machines." New technologies have transformed the workplace over the last few years and everyone knows that we cannot stop progress, but as these new technologies are being implemented, as eight out of ten jobs disappear, the government has the responsibility to ensure that quick and effective retraining programs are available, especially for unskilled workers. These people must not become the victims of technology. There is no reason why workers should be pushed aside because of technological change.

We must accept technological change, we must make sure that we are competitive, but we must not act in a way that does not

respect the human being and the right of each individual to develop his or her full potential and use it for the benefit of society.

I do not see anything along these lines in the speech from the throne. Have you found, in the speech from the throne, things that lead us to believe that the government will give the highest priority to job creation, to the use of workers and to the development of each individual's skills? Have you seen any of that in the speech from the throne? I have found nearly nothing on that subject.

Yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development had to give some clarifications on youth employment. The text says that the government will double the number of federal summer student jobs. The minister has since told us that it will not only be in the federal public service, but everywhere.

Should we believe what is in the text or should we believe what the minister says? For now, according to what we see in the speech from the throne, there will be lots of jobs in every area where there are federal departments, and it so happens that there are lots of them in the national capital region.

But will the measure promised in the speech from the throne have the desired result in the areas where federal departments are less present, for example in La Pocatière where the experimental farm has been closed down, where there are fewer and fewer people in the Canada employment centres and where you can count federal employees on your fingers? Never in a million years!

We will get the opposite effect to what we want if we concentrate jobs where they are less needed and allow for fewer of them where they are cruelly needed. The government must correct its range and adjust to what has to be done.

Perhaps the main point that people everywhere mentioned to me is that they want to be respected. There is nothing like that in this speech from the throne. They say to Quebecers: "We are going to control the way you will be consulted on your own future". Quebecers are told that all Canadians will have their say about Quebec's own future; this shows a blatant lack of respect. It proves that they have completely lost touch with the people of Quebec. It shows that they have in no way understood the result of last fall's referendum.

The government must clearly and definitely change its position on that and say unequivocally that it will respect the choice Quebecers made, just as sovereignists did in 1980 and again in 1995; it must recognize that there is a democratic process to be followed and accept the people's choice.

Quebecers have a right to be respected and expect the Canadian government, the Canadian Parliament to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue after question period.

S. O. 31

The Speaker: Absolutely, and you will then be recognized. [English]

It being two o'clock, we will now go on to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased that the speech from the throne focused on youth, the mobility of Canadians within Canada and science and technology. I was also pleased that we will build in a cash minimum in the Canada health and social transfer. All of these emphases will be good for the economy and the future of our nation.

I urge the Minister of Finance to recognize in his budget that our colleges and universities are already involved in all of these throne speech themes and are greatly affected by the block transfers. They are one of the great focuses for our young people. They provide for and encourage the movement of Canadians within Canada and they are the foundation of our science and technology. I hope the minister remembers they are also key beneficiaries of the Canada health and social transfer.

We must do all we can to sustain and strengthen higher education in Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is now a card-carrying member in good standing of the Club to annihilate the right of the people of Quebec to determine its own future. After the irresponsible statements by certain ministers of the government, Stéphane Dion in particular, now we have the Minister of Justice following suit.

Last fall, he was stating that the wishes of the people of Quebec were to be given priority, not the method by which sovereignty was to be decided upon. Now this week we find the minister doing an about-face, contemplating asking the Supreme Court for an opinion on the legality of a future Quebec referendum.

The Minister of Justice believes that Quebec's fate is tied to the consultations that he deems appropriate. He is wrong. Quebecers are the ones who will determine their own fate, regardless of what the minister says.

CURLING

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have some good news for Canadian curling fans. The World Junior Curling Championships are being held in my riding of Red Deer, Alberta between March 9 and March 17.

This bodes well for Canadian success because, as many will remember, last year Red Deer hosted the World Junior Hockey Championship and the best team won: Canada, of course. Now it is time to show the world that we do not just have the best hockey players but the best curlers as well.

Come on out March 9 to 17 and watch the world's best compete for the curling domination. What better way to promote Canadian unity as Canadians from coast to coast gather at the Red Deer curling rink to watch the action.

I am willing to bet that even hardened separatists who come will be converted and will end up pulling for Team Canada, the home team, our team.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Tuesday's throne speech was an attempt by the government to appease Canadians about the deplorable state of our economy, to comfort them about our social programs and to reinforce their vision of a united Canada. Now the government must deliver all the promises in the red book. Canadians will not tolerate any more rhetoric and false promises.

Job creation should have been the number one priority of the government and the impending budget has to address this issue if Canadians are to continue to have faith in the Prime Minister. Throughout the first half of his mandate economic growth has been dismally lacking and job creation has been almost non-existent. Nothing short of full employment can bring national unity and prosperity to Canada.

Reducing interest rates to even lower levels is the only way to stimulate economic growth and job creation. Mr. Prime Minister, the choice is yours.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today in honour of the important role black Canadians have played in our nation's history.

During black history month we can all feel proud of the contributions made by black Canadians in every sphere of Canadian life.

In 1793 Upper Canada's first lieutenant governor, John Graves Simcoe, helped to free black slaves living in Upper Canada. In time this brave act would clear the way for people like Lincoln Alexander, Ontario's first black lieutenant governor in 1985.

By honouring the achievements of black Canadians, the House has given all Canadians a greater understanding of the richness of black history.

* * *

● (1405)

FISHERIES

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past several months I have been meeting with fishermen's organizations at round tables to try to reach a consensus on many of the major issues facing the fishery today.

I expressed to them my deep commitment to the inshore fishery and to the small coastal communities that rely on the prosperity generated by this sector of the fishery.

For the past month fishermen in my riding and adjoining ridings throughout Nova Scotia have participated in demonstrations and have occupied Department of Fisheries and Oceans offices across the province in protest of new policies they feel will be harmful to the inshore fishery.

Unfortunately since the occupation of DFO offices which began in Barrington in my riding of South Shore, the lines of communication between the fishermen and the department have not been open. I have met and will continue to meet with the leaders of the fishing organizations.

Last week I attended two round tables in order to maintain an open dialogue. I urge those involved to move beyond the present impasse so that the issues causing this conflict can be resolved by dialogue in a productive and rational manner.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Chamber of Commerce has reacted very favourably to the speech from the throne presented by our government a little earlier this week.

Its president, Mr. Michel Audet, feels that our withdrawal from areas of provincial jurisdiction bodes well for future co-operation,

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as well as for some of Quebec's traditional demands in the constitutional area.

The Quebec Chamber of Commerce invites the PQ government to show good will by establishing "a dialogue with the other provinces and with the federal government to find concrete solutions in areas that will encourage job creation and investment".

Canadians across the country are encouraging us to work together in seeking solutions to our collective problems. We follow the example of the Quebec Chamber of Commerce in issuing an invitation to the Government of Quebec to collaborate with us.

* * *

ROLAND VEILLEUX

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Roland Veilleux, the spokesperson for the no committee in Beauce and owner of Groupe RGR, is at it again. Last fall he threatened to pull out of Quebec if the no side won. Now he is justifying the closing of his factory in Saint-Georges-de-Beauce by blaming it on the fact that the results were too close.

But, as it happens, Mr. Veilleux is currently negotiating with his workers, and that is what brings about the threat of closure. He has used the same tactics in previous negotiations. It seems therefore that his blame keeps switching from one guilty party to another, sometimes the sovereignists, sometimes the union, as it suits him. This is strangely reminiscent of the good old industrialists of the 19th century.

* * *

[English]

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I draw to the attention of the House the serious issue of impaired driving.

In 1994, 1,414 people were killed as a result of impaired driving, three times the number of murders.

Those who end up killing someone while impaired routinely are given excessive light sentences, generally between one and four years.

This morning I introduced a private members' bill which would see a minimum of seven years imposed on those convicted of impaired driving causing death. Those who drive impaired must be held responsible for their actions. They choose to be impaired, they choose to drive. We are all potential victims and we must do everything we can to deter impaired driving and keep impaired drivers off our streets.

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CUBA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the American decision to punish everyone who does not hold to their view on Cuba is truly objectionable, if not laughable in some respects.

When it comes to the issue of using property confiscated in revolutions, are they suggesting that whatever property in the U.S. which might have been lost by United Empire Loyalists should be similarly treated? Hardly. Nor are they suggesting that countries like China and a host of others with lousy human rights records should be sanctioned like Cuba is. Why not?

Could this hypocrisy be possibly related to the fact that Cuba, like Canada, is in the so-called American sphere of influence and is supposed to behave like a good little neighbour. However, when it comes to Cuba Canada has shown a streak of independence that we do not always show on other issues.

I urge the Minister of Foreign Affairs to carry on this tradition which goes all the way back to John Diefenbaker and resist in every political and diplomatic way possible this latest manifestation of the bully in the American psyche aided and abetted by some electoral domestic politics.

At the same time the Cuban government might reflect on how wrong it was politically and morally to have shot down those planes the way it did.

* * *

• (1410)

ROBERT SUTHERLAND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of black history month, I am pleased to acknowledge Robert Sutherland, Ontario's first black lawyer and one of Queen's University's earliest benefactors.

Robert Sutherland graduated from Queen's in 1852 with an honours degree in classics and mathematics. He later studied law at Osgoode Hall and was called to the Ontario bar in 1855.

After being called to the bar, Mr. Sutherland settled in Walkerton, Ontario and practised law until his death in 1878 at age 48. On his death he left his entire estate of \$12,000, a considerable sum for that time, to his Alma Mater, Queen's University. It was to date the largest single bequest Queen's had ever received.

Robert Sutherland's commitment to academic excellence at Queen's stands as a reminder to us all of the limitless potential all people possess regardless of racial or ethnic origin. His early accomplishments and subsequent generosity are another proud

reminder of the substantial contribution black people have made to Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we heard the throne speech this week, so once again I decided to poll a group of constituents. They applauded the government's initiative for the next session.

For instance, they were delighted to hear that the government had promised to help young Canadians develop their full potential and to double the number of federal summer student jobs. They ask the private sector to do likewise. They support the federal government's plan to work together with the provinces and health care intervenors in order to preserve and modernize medicare and make it responsive to the needs of future generations.

My constituents also endorsed the concept that Canadians will be consulted on the available options and the changes that are necessary to preserve the Canada pension plan.

This throne speech is straightforward and it is also important because it provides a clear indication to Canadians of what the government intends to do.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of black history month in Canada. This initiative, which gave rise to a host of activities across the country, was for us an opportunity to get better acquainted with the children of Matthew Da Costa who have chosen to make our destiny theirs as well.

Thanks to this event, we are now in a better position to understand and appreciate the role of these Canadians, their motivations and the contribution they made towards building Canada and Quebec.

[English]

The activities and celebrations during black history month help to dispel many myths about visible minorities and provide us with a better understanding of our fellow Canadians.

Like other communities across Canada and in Quebec, the children of Matthew Da Costa and Martin Luther King chose to live in this country because they shared in our values. Above all, they, like other communities, will continue to contribute to the growth of this country, their Canada, so that it remains prosperous and united.

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[Translation]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the weekend of January 20, 1996, the waters of the Châteauguay river flooded its banks, which caused flooding in a residential area of the municipality of Châteauguay and made it necessary to evacuate 1,200 people. The damage is estimated at nearly \$3 million.

An additional problem was the fact that the only hovercraft posted in the Laurentian region by the Canadian Coast Guard was in for annual repairs and was therefore not available.

At a time when the federal government is about to waste millions of dollars on purchasing submarines, we do not have enough emergency preparedness equipment to protect ourselves and our property. The office of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who is responsible for the Canadian Coast Guard refuses to provide a response to the elementary questions we asked about the hovercraft.

I can assure the flood victims that we will not let the matter rest.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to challenge the Minister of Justice to attend the victims' rights rally tonight in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Yesterday the Minister of Justice gave us fine words about his concern for victims of crime. Tonight the minister could talk the talk and walk the walk by attending the rally and reinforce his support for the rights of victims of crime.

● (1415)

Canadians are demanding the Liberals take immediate action to place the rights of victims ahead of the rights of criminals. The Liberals and the Minister of Justice are ignoring the fear and outrage of Canadians because of how little security they feel on their own streets and in their homes.

That is why my Reform colleague, the hon. member for Fraser Valley West, has proposed a national victims' bill of rights. We call on the Minister of Justice to join us and be an advocate for victims and participate in the victims' rights rally tonight in Abbotsford.

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a very real country, diverse and world renowned. Everyone must have a fair chance to participate in its daily life.

The throne speech reinforces our commitment to social and economic equality as a basic Canadian value. It opens the dialogue to partnership and flexibility for an evolving federation as it sets out the terms and conditions for change. It harnesses the energy of Team Canada to create hope and opportunity.

English speaking Quebecers, skilled and bilingual, are a vital part of this team. They must have guarantees of fair access as an official language minority community to health care and social services, education, jobs and cultural institutions to ensure our collective prosperity.

Visiting with parliamentarians today are over 200 members of Alliance Quebec who work diligently to inform, enlighten and ensure intercultural and linguistic harmony in our multi-ethnic communities and provinces.

Good luck in the continuing dialogue both inside and outside Quebec, and congratulations to all on your efforts toward unity and understanding for all peoples.

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GRAMMY AWARDS

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night the Grammy Awards belonged to Canada's outstanding women performers.

Alanis Morissette from my home town of Ottawa won awards for best rock song and best performance by a female vocalist in the rock field. There is more. She also won best rock album of the year and best album of the year.

That is still not all. Shania Twain, the new queen of country music, won the Grammy for best country album, and Joni Mitchell won the best pop album.

The four best albums, best rock song, best rock performance, what a way to begin the Canadian celebration of international women's week. What a way to show Canadians can perform with the best and win.

The Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could intervene on behalf of the House and ask her constituent to come to the House so that we can all meet and praise her.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***CROSS CANADA REFERENDUM**

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at 10:10 this morning, a Canadian Press release revealed the following:

Stéphane Dion, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, has reiterated that a cross Canada referendum is not out of the question. In a telephone press conference, Mr. Dion said no means of consultation had been ruled out. He did say that the government did not want a referendum with all the trauma it would entail.

We will remember that, on Wednesday morning, the Deputy Prime Minister completely ruled out the possibility and did not answer my question yesterday afternoon during question period.

My question is for the Prime Minister. I would like to know from the Prime Minister, because it is he who set match to kindling by raising the possibility of a cross Canada referendum in the throne speech, and because even his ministers are confused by his remarks—two of his ministers are contradicting each other—, whether he would be kind enough to clarify the issue once and for all so we can get on with other things and tell us, yes or no, whether he intends to hold a cross Canada referendum on the future of Quebec?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister expressed what we are all thinking, which is that we do not want another referendum. No one wants a referendum.

I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not want a referendum and that he subscribes to the theory of Jacques Parizeau, who, on the night of the referendum, was going to tell Quebecers and Canadians that the result was irreversible, that democracy had spoken, that the page had to be turned and that everyone should rally behind the choice made. We are rallying behind the choice Quebecers made, we are going to stay in Canada.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, needless to say the Leader of the Opposition is rallying and does not want a cross Canada referendum, because it is up to Quebecers to decide their future.

The official opposition feels it is up to Quebecers to decide their future, does the Prime Minister share this opinion?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am of the same opinion as the Premier of Quebec, who is asking people to attend to public finances, to work to create jobs.

This is what Quebecers want at the moment. This is what the speech from the throne proposed.

We proposed that we create jobs, especially for young people. We have proposed a program to improve the federation. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will take the time at least to read this part of the throne speech. It seems he read the word “referendum” in the throne speech, when it was not there.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, is the Prime Minister aware that he is the one who wrote the throne speech and not the Leader of the Opposition?

Second, all Canadian political observers, without exception, have raised the matter of the cross Canada referendum as a threat hanging over Quebec. I did not invent it, all the observers pointed that out.

Is the Prime Minister aware that his double talk and his thinly veiled threats to Quebec are today preventing us from moving on to other things, as he claims he wants? He is the one in the way.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just said that the throne speech focussed on the real problems of Quebecers and all Canadians, that we spoke of job creation, that we challenged business to come up with jobs now that the Minister of Finance and this government have managed to clean up public finances. Those are the real problems.

If the member is talking about the referendum threat, the matter is very clear: let him tell us that there will be no referendum in Quebec, and political stability will return, jobs will come back to Quebec and prosperity will reign anew in the city of Montreal.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In the throne speech, the government announces that it will withdraw from a number of areas of jurisdiction. Curiously enough, these areas—namely job training, forestry, mining, and recreation—all come under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. With a few exceptions, the areas in question are the same as those listed in the Charlottetown accord.

Does the Prime Minister confirm that his new constitutional position is based on the Charlottetown accord, but with something missing?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, improving federal-provincial relations is a matter of public administration. We decided to improve the situation.

I had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the premiers, during our trip to Asia for instance, and everyone agrees that the time has come to improve the federation. This is a plan that we put

forward unilaterally. We will hold a federal-provincial conference, which I hope the premier of Quebec will attend. We will review all the possibilities and find a solution that will allow us to restore Canada's political stability, thereby promoting economic growth.

• (1425)

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister believe for one moment that his timid constitutional proposals can meet Quebecers' expectations, when the Charlottetown accord—whose content the Prime Minister is obviously trying to water down in order to respond and make his proposals acceptable to the rest of Canada—was rejected by a majority of Canadians and Quebecers?

[English]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working and will be working with the provinces to ameliorate the federation for the 21st century. We put forward, on our own initiative, some propositions that seem to have been quite well received by the premiers and the provinces.

I hope the Government of Quebec will look objectively at these propositions which are aimed at making the federation work better. In doing so, everybody will benefit from these initiatives, particularly the people of Quebec.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that his government has delivered, but what a delivery it has been.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Miss Grey: Mr. Speaker, they clap now but let me tell them about the delivery that it has been; drifting targets that leave the deficit at \$30 billion—no clapping now—an 8 per cent drop in disposable income—no clapping now. There is no prospect for tax relief, despair instead of hope and a near defeat in the Quebec referendum. Applause, please. None, Mr. Speaker.

How can the Prime Minister have the nerve to claim victory? No clapping now. How can he claim victory when \$50 billion a year is going to pay just interest on the national debt. The average Canadian paycheque is \$200 less a month than it was in 1989 and the prospect of tax relief is absolutely nowhere in sight. What kind of victory is that?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago in this House the hon. member was complaining about the level of interest rates in Canada compared to the United States. The level of interest rates between Canada and the United States today for the short term is exactly the same.

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Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): For every point in reduction in the interest rates, the treasury is saving \$1.7 billion a year. The finances of the country have improved tremendously. That is the judgment of the market. Of course, it will never be enough for the Reform Party because it wants to get rid of medicare and the social network that protects Canadians. We have a balanced approach.

We can run the affairs of the nation and at the same time make sure that people are not going into the streets as a result of a government that does not care for them.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that he is bragging about low interest rates with the recession that we are going through. There is nothing to be gained in that reply.

Yesterday the Prime Minister said that he has broken the back of the deficit. That is not true.

Some hon. members: More, more.

Miss Grey: Mr. Speaker, again comes the clapping and the arrogance. They have not broken the back of the deficit. They have broken the back of the Canadian taxpayers who are leading the battle in making ends meet. The best way to create real, sustainable jobs is to lower taxes. The best way to do that is to eliminate the deficit.

When will the Prime Minister and his finance minister announce a firm date for balancing the budget and give Canadians much needed tax relief?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has done very well so far.

Some hon. members: Bravo.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, the rest of the answer has been given by the whole caucus.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of hands being put together, by waving the white flag with that hand, the Prime Minister is declaring that he is surrendering the war on the deficit and government overspending. He is condemning Canadians to many more years of insecurity and mediocrity.

• (1430)

When is the Prime Minister going to get his hands on the throat of the deficit, rather than on the taxpayers?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the deficit is being handled in a very gentle way.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***AIR SAFETY**

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

On December 29, because of human error, an Air Canada flight was intercepted by South Korean combat aircraft. Experts blame an overworked crew and the degradation of service and equipment for the incident.

Could the Minister of Transport tell us whether air deregulation may have been the cause of the problems experienced during the flight in question, which could have had tragic consequences for the air travellers?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that we have full confidence in Air Canada's safety systems.

We are looking into the matter which occurred some six weeks ago. It appears that the problem which arose was, in fact, not related to the Department of Transport but an error in a clerk's typing of one code which led to a mistake in Japan. That is what we are looking into at the present time. That is all the information I can give him at this time.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here is my supplementary question.

Can the minister give us any formal assurances, other than his words, that no one will ever type in a wrong code again and that the security of Canadians will never be compromised in the future?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly I can give the hon. member the assurance that the safety systems of Air Canada are among the very best in the world. We are doing everything possible to make sure that standard of safety is maintained.

I can assure him also that this matter will be looked into by the department and that in due course we will have further information to give him.

I would like to make sure that the House fully understands that the safety system for Canadian airlines and the Canadian air transport system are of the world's highest level.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, after two years of promising jobs, jobs, jobs and promising hope, the Prime Minister's record is clear. He has failed to deliver on job growth; failed to balance the budget; failed to provide tax relief; failed to abolish the GST and failed to create the economic environment in which businesses can create jobs. His government is failing.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Who is responsible for job creation? The government or the private sector?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I made it clear yesterday that the role of the government is to prepare a climate for the private sector to invest. That is exactly what we have done.

A big problem for the business community was that the interest rate spread between Canada and the United States was too wide. This has been completely eliminated and it is a big achievement for all of us.

It was reported this morning that the economy has created 579,000 new jobs since we formed the government. For a failure that is not bad.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, now the Prime Minister wants businesses to create more jobs, not the government. I am trying to find out if in fact he still believes in the infrastructure program.

The way to create jobs is to lower taxes so taxpayers and businesses have more disposable income. To lower taxes there must be a balanced budget. The government is adding to the debt, not reducing it. Funding must not be decreased the way this government has done with its social and health transfer and education.

The government should look at the way it is handling everything to do with the economy and let the private sector grow and create the jobs it should create. The government has not done its part. The government must look at the debt and look at its budget and present a balanced budget.

When will the government present a balanced budget?

• (1435)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the government has taken office the deficit has gone from 6 per cent of GDP, which it was, to 5 per cent. This year it will be at 4 per cent. We will hit our target next year at 3 per cent and the year after we have set the new target of 2 per cent, which we will hit.

That is one of the best records of any of the industrialized countries, certainly one of the best records of any of the G-7 countries, and it ought to be recognized.

The hon. member wants to talk about commitments. Before Christmas the hon. member said that his party would present a budget before the government brought down its budget. It has five

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days. When is the Reform Party going to present its budget? When is it going to stop blowing smoke?

* * *

[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In the speech from the throne delivered on February 27, we read the following, and I quote: "The government will propose to Parliament measures to sustain Canada's elderly benefits system for the future". Yesterday, no less than 18 Quebec associations for seniors opposed the federal government's intention to determine old age pensions based on family income.

Will the Minister of Finance reassure the elderly by confirming that their pension will not be determined by using the family income criterion?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet these associations a week ago. I told them that it was my intention to meet with them again after the budget to discuss the need to ensure the long term viability of old age pensions, that is old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

I also took this opportunity to assure them, as did the Prime Minister in the House yesterday, that, as regards old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, those who are already retired will not be affected. Our goal is to make sure that the plan still exists for younger generations.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister leaves an element of doubt as to whether pensions will indeed be based on family income. Can the minister at least tell Canadians that retirement age will not be raised from 65 to 67 years?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, during the meeting of provincial finance ministers, we agreed with our Quebec counterpart to hold public hearings on the Quebec pension plan and the Canada pension plan.

One option is to push retirement age to 67 years. I said that this was definitely not my preferred choice, but it is an option that was put forward by some provinces and we have to look at it. But again, I want to make it clear that it is certainly not this government's first choice.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade, but first I would like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment.

It seems that President Clinton has agreed to pass a bill on Cuba that could seriously harm Canadian companies with investment and trade interests in Cuba. I would like to ask the minister what avenues he is pursuing to make sure we are protecting Canadian interests.

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his congratulatory comments.

While the government joins the United States in condemning the Cuban action in shooting down two civilian planes, we are disappointed by what is resulting in the Helms-Burton bill. We are disappointed by the effect it will have on Canadians and business people from other countries in terms of access to the United States for these business people as well as the potential of lawsuits against them.

We have yet to get the details of the legal text of the bill. We hope to get that later in the day. When we do, we will be looking at it in terms of the options for action the government can take. In terms of NAFTA, in terms of the trade obligations the United States has with respect to that, we want to make sure they uphold their part of that agreement. We want to make sure Canadians continue to have access in the United States and are able within Canadian law to continue to deal in a business fashion with Cuba and other countries.

• (1440)

We will take action on that after we have looked at the options before us.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I address my supplementary to the Prime Minister.

The leaders of Canada and the United States have always had a good relationship. Indeed, the Prime Minister has often spoken about the warm relationship he has with President Clinton.

Given that warm relationship and given that this is such a hot issue which is before us right now, can the Prime Minister tell this House if he has called President Clinton on this issue in order to protect Canadian interests and if so, what were the discussions regarding this issue?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to answer the question.

The hon. member is quite right. We have a number of different relationships with the United States. Fortunately for us many of them are done in a very co-operative fashion. We want to maintain the opportunity to continue a very good and fruitful dialogue with the government and the people of the United States.

On the specific issue dealing with the Helms-Burton bills, the Minister for International Trade has said it is one item on which we have strong disagreements with the approach being taken. I can assure the hon. member that a number of representations have been

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made at a variety of levels to ensure that the United States government knows of our objections.

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[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Somalia inquiry is currently going on in Ottawa. Several of those responsible for it have raised the possibility of a conflict of interest concerning the legal counsels of the Department of Justice.

Does the Minister of Justice acknowledge that having legal advisers from his department representing both the crown and the defence in the investigation of senior officers places the department in a conflict of interest situation, a point that has been raised by chief commissioner Judge Létourneau?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the outset in this as in any other commission of inquiry, the possibility of conflict has been acknowledged. Whenever government lawyers act for government institutions as well as individuals, that possibility can arise.

Equally from the outset, we have made provisions for such conflicts. To date 13 individuals have been invited to retain their own separate counsel at the expense of the government and that has been done. In addition to that, additional safeguards have been put in place to ensure that any person who is interviewed as a witness or who is brought before the commission is given the opportunity to have separate representation if their interest is different from that of the government.

I can inform the hon. member and the House that earlier this week my deputy minister met with one of the commissioners, Commissioner Létourneau, and discussed this matter in detail. We are now preparing a written response to the letter we received last week on this subject. I am confident that procedures can be devised to address this difficulty while maintaining the responsibility that this department has to represent the government in the inquiry.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Justice acknowledge that the sole purpose of using lawyers from his department to defend senior officers was to protect those officers at the expense of the lower ranks who were represented by their own lawyers, and continue to be so represented?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, and I say that there is no foundation on the facts for that allegation. It is simply unfair.

Our interest from the outset has been to ensure that the facts come out before the commission. The Minister of National Defence created the commission for that purpose. I repeat that the Department of Justice throughout has made it possible for anyone who is in a different position from ours to have separate representation. We will continue in that regard. If the hon. member is aware of any instance in which that principle is not honoured, I would ask her to let me know so that we can deal with it immediately.

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FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Financial Institutions.

Bell Canada's supplemental pension plan was placed with Confederation Life Insurance. At least one Bell director was also a director of Confederation Life. When Confederation Life collapsed, the same director did not notify Bell of the difficulties.

• (1445)

Are the director's fiduciary obligations under such circumstances to protect the employees' pension funds or to remain silent?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the heart of the matter the hon. member brings up is an issue of corporate governance. The issue of corporate governance is one that the Minister of Industry is looking at in his department. They have released a series of papers. The Senate banking committee is looking at the issue of corporate governance. The studies will form part of my own white paper on the financial institution legislation.

To refer to the actual incident the hon. member brings up, I will not give him a legal opinion as I am certainly not a lawyer and as a matter of fact, he is a lawyer. However, I can say generally speaking that the fiduciary responsibilities of financial institution executives are taken very seriously. Where a conflict occurs, they can of course abstain from voting on those matters.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my first question is for the finance minister. If he wants us to hold his hand on balancing the budget or learning how to balance a budget, he can join us this Saturday morning. My colleague from Capila-

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no—Howe Sound is giving a seminar on just that subject. He should remember to bring a new pen because we only do our budgets in black ink. Please come.

In today's *Sun* there is an article that states: "Finance Minister Paul Martin is working on a bribe to persuade the four Atlantic provinces to harmonize"—

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to please just use the title of the minister rather than his name.

Mr. Solberg: Mr. Speaker, the quote states: "The finance minister is working on a bribe to persuade the four Atlantic provinces to harmonize their sales taxes with the GST". If harmonization is so great, then obviously he ought to be able to sell it on its own merits.

Is the finance minister seriously going to go ahead with a proposal that is so bad he cannot sell it on its own merits and he actually has to bribe the provinces to go along?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the arguments in favour of harmonization are overwhelming. Consumer associations across the country argue in favour of harmonization. Small and medium size business argue in favour of harmonization. The Canadian Tax Foundation argue in favour of harmonization.

In this day when what we are trying to do is to find new vehicles for the delivery of government services, what we want to do is rationalize them. Surely to heaven the ability of the federal and provincial governments to co-operate is not something that should be denigrated but something members opposite should be applauding. The only thing I would say on that basis is that a number of provinces understand the benefits of harmonization. I do not think that it speaks well of the Reform Party to say that any provincial government would allow itself to be bribed. It is an insult to the people of their provinces.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member for York South—Weston when referring to the Prime Minister recently said: "He made a promise; we all made promises. We went door to door to scrap the GST and if we do not keep that promise it will be very difficult for Liberal MPs to go into an election knocking on the same doors asking support once again from people they lied to in the last election campaign".

Will the minister fulfil his and his colleagues' promises not to disguise, not to fudge, not to tinker with, but to eliminate the GST? That was his promise.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me simply quote from page 22 of the red book:

A Liberal government will replace the GST with a system that generates equivalent revenues, is fairer to consumers and to small business, minimizes disruption to small business, and promotes federal-provincial fiscal co-operation and harmonization.

That is exactly what we intend to do.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am going to give the Deputy Prime Minister a chance to quote from a page of the red book. My question is for the Prime Minister, who recently announced that he did not intend to keep his word and to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation as the eleventh grounds for non-discrimination.

Will the Prime Minister again commit to honouring his word and will he proceed with the necessary amendments in keeping with his campaign promises?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House has already voted on a bill of this nature concerning an amendment to the Criminal Code. That part of our commitment we have made good on. Now what remains is the legislation to which the hon. member refers. It is part of our promises and we hope to find the time to adopt it some day.

We have already kept one of our promises and now there is just the second one, but we have two and a half years to go.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister not ashamed, as the leading citizen of this country, to go back on a promise and thus to perpetuate discrimination against the gays and lesbians of this country? This is disgraceful, and we have the right to expect the Prime Minister to keep his word.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question here. He has only to read the red book and to tell us when an election will be held, and on that date it will be known whether or not we have adopted the bill.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask about another promise which had a shorter shelf life than the one just addressed. That is the promise of a national referendum which seems to have gone out the window already.

The government said in its throne speech: "Canadians, no matter where they live, will have their say in the future of the country".

I ask the Prime Minister: What precisely did he have in mind when the government made that commitment?

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Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are many ways for Canadians to express their views.

There will be a federal-provincial meeting of the first ministers. The people will be represented at that meeting by the Prime Minister of Canada and the premiers. There are also organizations which are expressing their views at this time by sending briefs to the government. They are meeting with their members of Parliament. We are receiving briefs from many people on that subject.

At this moment we have put forward a plan of amelioration of the federation. We want to discuss that with the first ministers. That is exactly what we have in mind for the time being.

I hope the Reform Party will approve the plan we have of offering some clarification, some devolution of powers, some improvement in the relations between the federal and provincial governments. I do not see why that is not good enough for the hon. member for the time being.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, apparently when the Prime Minister meant that Canadians would be able to express their views, he meant only the 11 first ministers of the country. Nothing has changed.

Yesterday when the hon. member for Beaver River was asking about this, the Deputy Prime Minister responded: "We believe that Canadians do not want more constitutional wrangling". If that is the case, I would like to ask the Prime Minister why did the government propose in the throne speech to constitutionalize the distinct society notion, to change the amending formula of the Constitution? Why is it proposing to reopen the wounds of Meech Lake, Charlottetown and the patriation of 1982?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always said that we hope this will be constitutionalized. We said that when we had votes in the House of Commons on that. We have always said that is what we wanted to do.

In order to have the reality of Canadian life that Quebec is a distinct society in the Constitution we need seven provinces to approve it. I hope that the hon. member would support that. For changing the amending formula, I have always been in favour of a veto for the regions and this was expressed in a bill in the House of Commons and you voted against it. It was a formula that was accepted by all the provinces at the time of the Victoria discussion. There is nothing new. It is something that was acceptable even to the Sacred government of Alberta which you are the grandson of. There are many ways to consult with the public. There is one that will come soon. That will be the day a lot of these guys will disappear, when we have a general election.

• (1455)

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Recently Canada and the United States signed a softwood lumber deal that will secure Canada's access to U.S. markets for five years. Why did Canada enter into this agreement with the United States rather than take the softwood dispute to the NAFTA panel, a panel process that Canada has won on all previous occasions?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem was that between the last dispute and this one, the law changed in the United States.

According to the rules of NAFTA and NAFTA panels, the NAFTA panel only has to determine whether or not a country in the agreement follows its own laws. Because of the change in the law, it created a great state of uncertainty about our ability to succeed in a further countervail measure if we should challenge it through a NAFTA panel.

We dealt with the provinces and with the industry in each of the provinces across the country and were able to come up with a good solution. It is different for the different provinces but is one they all subscribe to. It is one we were able to bring together under an overall Canada umbrella to work as a team with the provinces and with industry to come up with a solution that gives them secure access to the United States market for the next five years. This is something that has never been achieved before without any countervail measure.

We have secured a better access for very substantial volumes of our lumber to the United States market very similar to what we have had over the last two or three years.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General.

Mr. Pierre Roy was fired by CSIS for informing his superiors that a mole in the service of the former Soviet Union had been working there for 20 years. The review committee said Mr. Roy had a case and asked for the investigation to be reopened. The mole, however, is still working for CSIS.

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Would the Solicitor General agree it is astonishing, to say the least, that Mr. Roy was fired and the mole was protected, despite these troubling allegations?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been assured by the director of CSIS that there is no mole within the service as alleged by my hon. friend. This matter has been looked into thoroughly by the Security and Intelligence Review Committee. Its recommendations have been taken into account.

With respect to his reference to a former CSIS contract employee, this involves the internal management of the service. I cannot go into his relationship for privacy reasons.

[Translation]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General received those assurances from the same people who told us there was no Heritage Front case, no Grant Bristow case, there had been no infiltration of the Reform Party and no file on Preston Manning.

Since these questions cannot be resolved by magic, and considering the Heritage Front, the file that was opened on Preston Manning and these new allegations about the existence of a mole within the service, a mole who is still there today, will the minister finally agree to order a full-scale public inquiry on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): They had a mole of their own, Claude Morin.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people suggested I mention Claude Morin, but I am a little hesitant to do so.

I want it to be quite clear that I was advised by the director of CSIS that there is no mole in the service. The service remains vigilant in this respect, and I repeat that the SIRC has investigated the matter and is unable to confirm the allegations of my hon. friend.

* * *

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, although the finance minister said yesterday that he will not reveal details of his budget, he will recall that in January the Juneau report called for a special tax to support the CBC. Surely he can put this objectionable idea to rest. Will he commit today to no new taxes to support the CBC, Telefilm or the NFB?

• (1500)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the hon. member will have to wait for the budget to find out budget measures.

I am in the process and will continue to have lengthy, important discussions with the minister responsible. In the end we are talking about the preservation of a major Canadian institution. We are also talking about the ways in which a country exercises its cultural sovereignty. That is very important to this side of the House.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, then let me ask the heritage minister about this.

Canadians really are sick and tired of the never ending tax and spend mentality to which this minister and most the Liberals in the House adhere. Surely she has realized by now that Canadians are not prepared to put up with this special tax.

Has the minister recommended to the finance minister that she not continue to pick the taxpayers' pockets at the expense of the security of Canadians? Because the money all comes out of one pot.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the hon. member that when it comes to the security of Canadians it is not only of concern to this party in terms of physical security. We also want to secure our long term future. Part of securing that long term future means ensuring that we have strong public broadcasting available in every part of the country to help build the links we need to bind us into the 21st century.

* * *

GRAIN

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the new Minister of Transport. I want to congratulate him on his appointment and make clear that a lot of people in prairie Canada are depending on him.

The year over year grain exports until mid-February this year are only 15.1 million tonnes compared to 21.4 million tonnes for the same period last year.

During the intervening year the government imposed its privatization and deregulation solutions to solve grain export problems.

Since grain exports have plummeted and demurrage charges have soared with ships waiting what, if anything, is the new minister proposing to do in order to keep us on target for exports of \$20 billion by the end of this century, which was his government's target?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his kind words.

Certainly the concern about the grain shipments from the prairies is a very important part of the Transport Canada portfolio.

The Address

However, a number of factors come into play when considering grain exports. Weather is one of the more difficult ones at this time of year.

We are lucky to have virtually unprecedented prices for Canadian grain overseas and we will do everything we can within the transport system to make sure that deliveries are made as effectively as possible so we can take advantage of that market.

The work that has been done to make sure we have a more competitive transportation system is very much key and central to having a system in place year by year which will be able to deliver our products to markets effectively wherever they may be overseas.

I can assure him I look forward to working with him to make sure those goals are achieved.

* * *

PORTS

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Transport.

As the minister knows, serious concerns have been raised about security and law enforcement at our ports, specifically, the port of Vancouver under the new marine police.

Can the Minister of Transport assure British Columbians and all Canadians that the security of our ports will not be compromised?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the security at our ports is a major concern to me, the Solicitor General of Canada, the Minister of Justice and every member of the government.

We want to ensure that in the transfer to local port authorities the policing function is at a level which is as effective as previously, if not more so. We will be working as best we can to make sure that the level of security at the ports of Canada, particularly the major ports, is just as high as it has ever been or in fact augmented.

I can assure him that this will be the case in Vancouver and elsewhere.

However, I must also point out that as local authorities take more control they may have variations in the existing system which we will have to consider. I want the whole House to understand that the level of security will be maintained.

• (1505)

The Speaker: This brings question period to a conclusion.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a delegation from Ukraine led by Minister Lada Pavlikovska, head of the Agency for Co-ordination of International Assistance.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as is our custom each Thursday, I would ask the government House leader to give us an indication of the legislative agenda for the coming days.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the hon. member on his appointment as his party's House leader. And now for the specifics.

[English]

Today we will continue with the address debate. Tomorrow, in light of the ruling which I understand was given by the Chair on the point of order saying that my motion is in order, I will proceed with it. This is the motion regarding the organization of the business of the session. On the day after this motion is disposed of our plan is to return to the address debate.

Hon. members will have noticed on the Order Paper two new government bills, one in the name of the Minister of Justice and one in the name of the Minister of Labour. There will be discussions among the representatives of the parties with regard to fitting these bills into the schedule.

Finally, as we know, the Minister of Finance will present the budget on Wednesday and therefore we intend to commence the budget debate on Thursday morning.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment and the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup had the floor. My dear colleague, you still have about 11 minutes left.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to resume the debate after question period.

The Address

When the first part of my speech was interrupted, I was talking about what is most important according to my constituents, namely what the government is going to do in the coming months.

I was referring to something that is very important to both Quebecers and Canadians, in that people must feel respected as citizens of a country, whether it is Quebec or Canada. And that is something that Quebecers obviously do not find in the throne speech. When told that the decision on their future may well be made by all Canadians, they are obviously very unhappy about this; they do not identify with that part of the throne speech.

The speech contains another, more concrete part that is more difficult to address, but I think it is essential to do so. My fellow citizens everywhere have criticized the Prime Minister for his behaviour in assaulting Bill Clennett. I think it is not too late for the Prime Minister to apologize to Mr. Clennett, because his action had a very negative impact on all young Canadians. I am talking about the children who talked about that incident and asked their parents whether such actions were acceptable. I think it is unacceptable. We are replying to the throne speech, but at the same time there is something in this that I find unacceptable.

Another demand made by an increasing number of people across Canada is to simplify the system in which we live, so that we can properly assess government effectiveness.

• (1510)

We should have more clearly defined jurisdictions, and a simpler fiscal system, to make it easy to see whether or not everyone is doing his share. In order to move beyond phrases like “make the rich pay”, we need to be able to determine if indeed we are all pulling our weight in this society of ours. Are the tools available to all taxpayers to claim, for instance, every tax deduction they are entitled to? Do companies, the wealthy, and ordinary people have an equal chance of using the tax legislation to their best advantage? Do they have access to all deductions? As matters stand, the answer is no. It is pretty obvious that only the wealthy and big companies can afford to hire tax experts to find every last loophole in the tax legislation, not the common man. Nothing in the speech from the throne indicates that the government is prepared to head that way. I think this is a change the government should consider.

I shall call this eliminating the expert bonus. That is when a company can afford to hire a tax expert to find the tiniest loophole in the Income Tax Act, enabling this company or an individual with a large income to get a better deal than someone else, who does not have as good an income. It is somehow similar to the systematic hunting down of UI abusers. Of course we must make sure that everyone obeys the law, but we must make sure that governments have the same kind of requirements for big companies, those that were once referred to as corporate welfare bums. There is a need to

guarantee a degree of fairness in this regard, and there is no indication of anything of the sort in the speech from the throne.

Another paragraph of this speech caught my eye because I watch so closely over the interests of my riding, which is located in a rural area. It reads: “The government is committed to the economic renewal of rural Canada.” It is very well to mention rural Canada in the speech from the throne. I think it is a good idea to call the attention of the House to this issue, but at the same time, several of the government’s initiatives adversely affect rural Canada. How can the government advocate at the same time the development of rural Canada and the pursuit of its current UI reform, which will systematically penalize rural areas across Canada, fostering the off-farm migration of the young people when the rural communities need them to take over in time. There is an inconsistency in all this that is unacceptable.

We will also be able to judge the government on how it will review the mandate of Canada Post. A committee has been set up by the minister to hold hearings in six Canadian cities. In the next year, we will be able to see whether the government truly takes into account the needs of rural areas and whether it ensures that the CPC not only delivers the mail but also contributes to the economic development of every region in Quebec and in Canada. These will be good tests that will show whether the government really cares about rural development.

How can rural development be reconciled with the current exercise, which consists in closing Canada employment centres right across the country and centralizing operations in every region? The government is recreating small centralized units in very large regions. This means that many Canadians who previously enjoyed more accessible services will no longer do so. It also means that there will be fewer opportunities for workers to adjust and to get adequate counselling. In my opinion, these measures are unacceptable and they also contradict the will expressed in the speech from the throne. There is no connection; the government fails to reach its objectives.

I want to mention another point in the speech from the throne. I was very surprised when I read it. I find it interesting to see a reference to aboriginal people, they are recognized; however, nowhere is there any mention of the Quebec people. The government wants to ignore the wish expressed by many Quebecers, close to 50 per cent of them, at the last referendum. If Quebecers were asked whether they form a people, a vast majority of them would say yes.

Had the government wanted to send a clear signal that it got the message, it would have done so in the speech from the throne. It would have clearly indicated that it recognizes Quebecers as a people. But there is no such mention in the speech. Obviously, this government—perhaps because it does not know what really goes

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on in Quebec—did not manage to get the message sent by millions of people. It could have said things differently in its speech from the throne.

• (1515)

To conclude, I would like to say that the touchstone of a good throne speech is the feeling of confidence in the future it inspires in citizens. Do they think the government has put forward adequate measures to settle current problems?

Employment is the great issue on everybody's mind. Everybody seems to think that, over the last 10 to 15 years, we have set up a system in which very productive people can manage. But at the same time we have deliberately chosen to toss aside people who may be overtaken by new technological requirements and those who have experienced in their life an unfortunate event that prevents them from re-entering the labour market. This is a shameful waste of human resources.

If there is one clear message which the throne speech ought to have got across to give a flicker of hope, it is the message that workers will get a real chance to find a job. The throne speech should have given them that hope. Yet, not a word is to be found in the throne speech about people who are 40, 45 or 50 years old, about workers who have been displaced by technological change, about people who have been working for 5, 10, 15 or 20 years for the same company and find themselves unexpectedly unemployed overnight.

What is the government going to do for them? There is not a single word about the help they might be given. There is no hope for the future to be found in the throne speech, and it does not meet at all the needs of Quebecers and of Canadians. It needs to be amended in the way suggested by the Leader of the Opposition. I hope this House will consider the amendment moved by the Bloc.

How can a government be so short on creativity after only two years in power? Is it because the men and women who are part of the government lack the necessary skills? I do not think that is the case. There are men and women on both sides of the House who have all the necessary qualifications to do the job. There is a more fundamental reason. It is because Canada is an ungovernable country. As long as it does not decide on a fundamental structural change, as long as it does not accept to set up a new relationship between its components, it will go on trying to tinker with old plumbing instead of dealing with structural problems.

On this side, we have taken due note of the message for Quebecers and Canadians contained in the referendum results. We have been told: "We are not ready yet". We accept the result and that it would take 50 per cent plus 1 to have a majority, which result has not been reached. We have acknowledged the result. On the other hand, there is a very clear message sent to Canada and

Quebec: a significant change is needed. This change lies in the recognition that there are two peoples in Canada and that we in Quebec must have all the powers we need to be able to develop and in order to have a partnership between the two countries, not a tangled mess like the one that is proposed in the speech from the throne.

If we were to implement what is proposed in the speech from the throne in constitutional matters, we would find ourselves in an even more complicated situation. Ten years from now, it would be worse than it is now. We should have gotten out of the rut. That is what the government has not managed to do and what it would have the opportunity to do if it decided to change its position in order that Quebecers and Canadians can finally see a reflection of themselves in the government now representing them.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the floor. I wish to put a few questions to the hon. member. He spoke in particular of the referendum results in Quebec.

• (1520)

Of course, we lost the referendum with 49.4 per cent of the vote. The government, the Prime Minister, keep on repeating that we should accept our defeat, and the Canadian government recognizes that we have lost.

If the Canadian government recognizes that we lost the referendum, should it not also recognize that with 51.4 per cent of the vote, Quebecers would have had a legitimate victory?

There is another striking example. Would the province of Newfoundland, having decided to join the Canadian confederation in a referendum, also be free to leave it in another referendum? Would that not be logic? I wonder why there are these great debates to say that you need 60, 65 or 70 per cent of the vote to leave the Canadian confederation. It looks completely ludicrous to me. You need 50 per cent plus one. This is the democratic rule we work with. This is our culture and democracy as we know it.

I would ask the hon. member to elaborate a bit on the matter because the Liberal government seems to be hard-of-hearing on this issue.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Longueuil. Of course, it slipped out of my mind, but since we have known each other for a long time I hope you will accept my apologies. It will not happen again.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting question, because the Speech from the Throne is full of contradictions. For instance, there is one sentence I would like to quote that is along the same lines and bears out what the hon. member for Longueuil just said. It says:

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On October 30, the people of Quebec voted in a referendum to stay in Canada.

If the government says in the Speech from the Throne that we voted to stay in Canada on October 30, on the basis of the close results we had, to me this means that if the outcome had been reversed, the government should have said: "The people of Quebec voted in a referendum to create the nation of Quebec" and then acted accordingly as the Government of Canada.

That would have made sense, but it is very difficult to make sense of the current statements and positions of the Prime Minister and his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. It is the old double standard. We win if it is 50 per cent, but for you to win, it has to be 60 per cent. This is a complete denial of a democratic system that has been the pride of Quebec and Canada.

It is pretty hard to make sense of all this. I think the Government of Canada should confirm that the next time Quebecers vote on the national question, the results will be recorded and will be binding as they were in 1980 and in 1995, with this difference that Quebecers will decide to create the nation of Quebec.

I think there is an increasing body of evidence that the only way we can resolve this question in Canada is to ensure that Quebecers will be in a position to establish, from nation to nation, as equals, a relationship and a partnership that is mutually advantageous for Quebecers and Canadians. This will be possible once Quebecers have voted again.

Meanwhile, the Government of Canada should remove the implication in the Throne Speech that it will keep Quebecers in a straightjacket by calling a pan-Canadian referendum.

We must know what the government's intentions are as soon as possible, so that it will be clear to Quebecers and Canadians that the government will abide by the choice made by Quebecers.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, because, in my opinion, he went to the heart of the matter.

He just said that we are two founding nations. I think everybody recognizes that, but I cannot understand how we can have two nations and only one country.

• (1525)

We, Quebecers, we want our own country. The throne speech mentions only one country. In view of the fact that there are two nations, I would like my colleagues opposite to understand the right we have to demand our own country.

We all went to the Senate to listen to the speech. The atmosphere was quiet and peaceful. Some were happily resting, others even fell asleep during such an important speech. For my part, I was standing and I could not help thinking: "How will it be received by

my fellow citizens in Matapédia—Matane who are watching on television? They always have good questions for me."

Even though they might be unemployed, people in Matapédia—Matane will not allow their children to be bought by offers of free trips across Canada during the summer holidays, at public expense. It is nice to travel and to show our young people how vast, great and beautiful Canada is. Indeed, it is. But if their father is out of work, and their mother cannot feed them, they are not interested in travelling across Canada, for the time being, at least.

In my area, people have taken to the streets; women are worried, the elderly are too. I would ask my colleague whether he found in the throne speech concrete steps dealing with our young people, farmers, the elderly and the unemployed.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's comment brought to mind one thing we could change in the present system, since we can propose changes.

When I went to the Senate to listen to the throne speech, I realized something that we could call absurd nowadays. Why is the throne speech delivered in the other place, where members are not elected and where elected members are not even allowed in?

It is all very technical and symbolic, but at the same time, the following change could really improve things. Why would the next throne speech not be given in the House of Commons, right here, where we would invite senators to join us if the Senate is not abolished by then? Would that not be more respectful of democracy?

Senators are real good people, they have been chosen for multiple reasons, often for their political opinions, but in the end, when the image of the people listening to the throne speech is broadcasted on TV, everybody can see the many empty benches. As for the decorum of the Supreme Court justices, I wonder if that is in line with the democracy we all have to respect. I think we could propose some changes concerning decorum and protocol. Next time, if there is a throne speech here and if I am present at the time, I hope we can hear it in the House and we can invite the senators. I think that would be a way of supporting democracy.

Personally, I also believe there are substantial savings to be made as regards the non-elected House but we could discuss that more thoroughly at the time of the next budget speech.

My colleague's other remark deals with the references in the throne speech to young people, farmers and senior citizens. Regarding young people, there is a reference to employment within the federal administration. Yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development said that the text was not properly worded and that we should read jobs within the whole of Canada. We are going to wait and see what the reality will be, because the throne speech talks about jobs only where it deals with the public service. In areas where employment centres were closed, or in an area like

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my riding where the experimental farm of La Pocatière was closed, there are no departments where students could work.

Therefore, it is not necessarily a measure which will do a great deal in areas where the need for jobs is the greatest; on the contrary, it will widen the gap between an area like the national capital and other regions of the country. This does not make much sense.

• (1530)

Turning to farmers, there is not much for them in the speech. There is the paragraph I was referring to earlier which deals with rural Canada, but specific measures which will help the farmers of Quebec and Canada face the future, face the new international agreements, will have to be assessed when they come out, because there is nothing concrete in the speech.

The sentence of the throne speech which is the most worrisome deals with senior citizens and talks about measures to sustain Canada's elderly benefit system for the future. The sustainability aspect does not mean that we will preserve the quality of life of our senior citizens. It does not mean that we will maintain what we have developed over the past 20 years. It means there will be cuts, that there will be less security for older people, and I invite them to be extremely vigilant and make every possible representation to make sure that these measures will not have a negative impact on their quality of life. There is no doubt that opposition will have a role to play in this regard.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by reiterating, for the benefit of the opposition critics, my commitment to creating a spirit of co-operation between the opposition and the government as far as foreign affairs are concerned.

During the debate on Haiti yesterday, I could not help but notice the open-mindedness and absence of partisanship in their speeches. I am convinced that we can rely on their co-operation, in the best tradition of our Parliament, to further the interests of Canada as a whole on issues of major consequence for the representation of Canada abroad.

[English]

A throne speech is not just an agenda for a government. It is an agenda for an entire society. It seeks to articulate an agenda by which we can make commitments, responses and actions required as we face new conditions and new developments.

The throne speech we received this week is a positive agenda. It is trying to take today's issues and meet them with a sense of confidence, aware of difficulties, aware of hazards, aware of all the

dangers out there, but at the same time ensuring that we face those dangers, not hide from them.

It is in contrast to all those who work upon fear, who cling to yesterday's solutions, who refuse to confront challenges as they exist and who instead try to find ways to exploit and develop people's sense of insecurity and anxiety.

The throne speech is about a renewal of this country, renewing a spirit within, renewing ourselves and renewing what the country can represent. It is not a prescription to run and hide.

One thing that is important to impress as part of the throne speech is the very important international dimension this agenda has.

No one can escape from the major impacts and influences of the world we live in. Jobs in a competitive economy and globalization are affected every day in every way. There must be international co-operation and understanding to make sure that we work together to create the climate and initiatives for employment.

Our financial system is a totally global one. We must find ways to break rules and establish conventions to ensure that it works in an orderly, fair and just way. Our own democratic way of life can also be threatened by instability beyond our borders and by the denial of rights of other people. These can soon haunt and reflect on ourselves.

We have a system of health in which viruses can travel across borders without any interference and all of a sudden we are faced with a need for massive international action.

• (1535)

Even now we can visit the Internet where hate literature, propaganda and the violence of words can be screened across electronic communications to reach the minds of our young people within seconds.

Canada is intellectually, indelibly and forever a part of an international system. As part of that system we must be deeply concerned about the rise of the counter culture playing on people's doubts and insecurities in languages increasingly shrill, against enemies finding someone to oppose. It fragments society when there is an urgent need to strengthen it.

I listened with shock and dismay to the member for Matapédia when he said: "As a founding people we deserve our own country". How often have we heard that around the world in recent generations, where one culture or language group has demanded its own country? As a result, there has been war, conflict and even worse by that very same attitude that was expressed a few minutes ago. It is shocking and awful to hear this in the House of Commons when we as a country have worked so hard to build on diversity, tolerance and openness to give all people a fair and equal chance.

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The charter of rights gives everybody a fair degree of opportunity, liberty and rights. No country in the world has a greater sense of liberty. The reality is that it is being denied. This sense of liberty is something we can hold up as a model to the world. We can show the rest of the world that we know how to be tolerant to make different languages and cultures work together. We are the prototype of the 21st century. We are a nation state that understands that in order to accommodate and work in a global economy we must build on the strength of that diversity.

With all my heart and passion I oppose the kind of attitude we heard from the member opposite and what he represents. That does not represent the best and finest of this country. Part of the international dimension is to oppose that view.

[*Translation*]

Canadians understand that it is in our best interest to develop a more open relationship with foreign countries. We must ensure that young Canadians will be able to export Canadian know-how, Canadian expertise and Canadian culture. Youth employment programs give young Canadians numerous opportunities to develop their skills, be it only through job experience in the third world or by working for the advancement of human rights. These are opportunities that are open to young Canadians.

[*English*]

That is what the international dimension is all about. It is wrong to retreat into isolationism and separatism. It is why it is so important that we as Canadians stand as a model that we can advance round the world.

Philosopher George Steiner said not too long ago that life in many parts of the world is becoming a series of dangerous reversions in the face of rapid change. I understand that. It is one of the callings of Canadians to fight against that reversion, fight against that inward look and fragmentation and work in the world with a much more broad and expansionary view.

We see it in the incidents Canada is facing today relating to what is happening in Cuba. Americans are justifiably angered that a small civilian aircraft was shot down. We have supported their efforts to go to the United Nations and ICAO.

It is equally wrong to pass legislation that in itself contravenes international rules and practices to unilaterally affect individuals and companies in another country against basic treaties and conventions that have been signed and against the expressed desire of the United States government to have a new set of rules of investment to make sure there is openness and fair trading. It is wrong to introduce that kind of legislation in order to correct the other possibility. That is why we object so strongly to it.

• (1540)

Flagrant unilateralism, great or small, cannot be tolerated. We must have a world of rule, of law. We must have a world governed by a set of standards we can all adhere to. That is what we Canadians have to stand up for internationally.

The answer in Canada is to build bridges, not walls. That is the Canadian way and has been for many generations. It is what I believe Canadians want us to express as a government: to help people reach out, to help build those bridges, to bring a partnership between government and people, to do it domestically, to bring a partnership of business and labour together to help create jobs for young people, to build partnerships and bridges between the regions of the country so we can share in our diversity, to build bridges and partnerships between different generations and different ages. The fundamental role of this national government is to help build those bridges, not to bring up the walls as others in the House seem to espouse.

I have been struck, since taking on the responsibility of foreign minister, with how constant and ongoing the expectation is of people around the world that this is what Canadians will provide. They recognize that over the years we have been able to acquire and adopt an important and significant role. People around the world look to Canadians for solutions, for good ideas and for leadership.

Let us consider the kind of initiative we debated in the House last night. We are being asked by the world community to take leadership in Haiti. Why? We are a country of two founding peoples with two languages and are able to bring together the strength of our two great cultures to offer an opportunity to the world.

What an enormous, incredible, important and significant contribution we have to make as a country as we now stand. Those who want to break it apart, to separate it and fragment it are certainly making a serious mistake. As former Prime Minister Trudeau said in the U.S. Congress many years ago, it would be a crime against humanity to have Canada separate simply because of what we have to offer to the international world.

An American himself, Adelai Stevenson, one of those kinder and gentler Americans, in a speech he made in Canada said that Canada has never claimed the status of a major power but it has been influential beyond its means because it is a patient, level headed poise in the world. We can ride out convulsions. He said the rest of the world needed the built in gyroscope that Canadians seem to acquire when dealing in world affairs.

Forty years later the world is still in great convulsion. We face storms of our own time. I think if Adelai Stevenson were alive today he would agree that the gyroscope, the special skill and aptitude of Canadians is still working.

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We seek to be an activist, a partner nation encouraging global systems of security and human improvement, helping to shape rules and procedures, advancing the cause of human rights and strengthening the ties of trade so we can help people grow and prosper. The throne speech indicates those spheres of action where we can make a difference.

We have to set priorities in our foreign policy. If we have a priority for everything then there is no priority. The first priority is to ensure the fundamental defence and protection of Canadian interests both here and abroad. The fundamental responsibility of government is to make sure Canadians have the best representation possible and I can guarantee they will receive that from this government.

However, security goes beyond simply the protection of one's own boundaries and interests. So much in the world today is now bound up in the much broader global scope. The best way we can defend our interests as a country is to defend them in our international institutions and forums, to build those rules and institutions that allow Canadians to get the kind of protection they need.

Since taking on this responsibility, I have said that I am deeply concerned about the state of affairs of the United Nations and the fundamental need to reform its finances, its institutions and its outreach to ensure it can become an institution that enables us to provide a way of life and a way of mediating conflicts, responding to poverty and defending rights around the world.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Our peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, Croatia and Haiti must be maintained. Beyond the military action, we want to help rebuild their civilian society.

I think a new concept of safety has now emerged, including personal safety and social, environmental and economic security.

We may not be a great power, but have been favoured by our position. Our two official languages, French and English, our diversified population, our expertise as a trading nation and our respect for democratic values enable us to play a crucial role as a link, for instance, between Europe and America.

In my opinion, Canada might be able act as a bridge to help reopen the transatlantic dialogue between Europe and North America. We can build new partnerships in terms of financial, technical and training assistance for Canadian and European youth.

That is why I pointed out the fact that the European Commission had decided to strengthen the links between Europe and America.

[English]

At the same time, our security as Canadians is also deeply and inextricably tied to the way we deal with the problem of arms in this world. Canada has a long and historic tradition of working against the build up of arms and to secure disarmament and arms control. We must work effectively for the policing of the comprehensive test ban treaty and include a ban on the ghastly cheap weapons that haunt every countryside of warfare with the awful land mines that are dismembering thousands of people around the world today.

Security also depends on good law and good regulation. The throne speech clearly enunciated our commitment to fulfil the mandate of the law of the sea to protect the increasingly scarce resources, to cherish the sea as the sustainer of life and not as a waste pit.

We also need to temper and balance the workings of the international marketplace with proper rules and standards, which is perhaps the most serious and important dialogue that members of Parliament will have. We have discovered in our own domestic economies and societies that there has to be a good framework of law to make the marketplace work. We need the same framework internationally. We need to be sure that the disputes are properly handled. We need to clearly demonstrate the practices that will ensure basic standards of rights for people within that framework.

That is why the throne speech made a very strong commitment to making a real difference as a country in developing new labour standards, particularly as they apply to the exploitation of children.

[Translation]

Regarding human rights, Canada can play a leading role. Children's rights high are among this government's priorities. We are currently seeking an international consensus to curb child labour.

[English]

In addressing this very important issue, I believe we can begin to move to protect and promote children's rights, as we debated in this House on a resolution I sponsored almost eight years ago, but we must first ensure that there are proper rules, laws and covenants that can ensure that children's rights are protected. This means working at the multilateral level, the commission of human rights in Geneva and through the ILO, and taking the lead in negotiating a protocol on the abolition of child sex trades in this country.

We also have to ensure that those countries which are facing problems of child labour have the means and capacity to respond and change. We have recently given a major donation of \$700,000 to the International Labour Organization so it can be helpful in developing these new standards.

We also have to work bilaterally, as we are now in Africa working with 15 countries on that continent to establish programs for the education of girls. Education is the alternative to exploitive labour. Where we can make a real difference as Canadians is to help those young children receive the education they deserve.

• (1550)

We also need to look at the voluntary actions of Canadians and at the codes of conduct for businesses building on a consumer oriented approach like the Rugmark. We need to have an outreach among Canadians to ensure they understand that a purchase of an article created through the travails of a young child is contributing to that exploitation.

I look forward to the views and suggestions of members of Parliament on this very important priority. It will take a full consensus, not just internationally but within Canada, to make this an effort that can demonstrate just how important and how effective Canada can be.

I also suggest we take an important leadership role, working with like minded countries, to promote a reduction in the demand for arms. We must begin by tying economic and international development to the spending on military weapons and armaments to ensure there is a proper ratio between the two. This will enable us to provide a bonus system for those countries that are willing to reduce their arms expenditures. By providing that kind of consensus internationally, we can make a difference.

There are many other areas we can talk about, but the most important one, which does not have a substance, a policy or a program, is just basically the Canadian way of doing things. Call it creative realism, as Lester Pearson, our Nobel prize winner, once called it, building consensus, developing alliances or forming acts of careful conciliation. It is a way of ensuring that the values by which we live do not become ideologies, do not become hard and rigid, but in fact we find ways of building bridges between people so that various values and interests which compete can also find co-operation.

One must believe that one cannot have everything that one wants to have. We must search for overarching ways of providing connections and liaisons between people. To do that we must substantially engage Canadians in this new search for our international dimension. The new technologies of communication have outpaced the traditional meeting places of committees and councils. It is probably an overstatement, but the fact is fax machines helped circumvent the Soviet dictatorships that tried to reimpose the old suffering.

Each month millions of people add to the new networks of the web to get worldwide information. As I speak today, students in my own city of Winnipeg have an Internet connection to Pacific rim countries talking about their common problems. There is a young

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teacher from New Brunswick who is now connecting with groups in Scotland to find out ways of training young people.

The opportunity the Internet provides is a form of electronic peacekeeping. It brings ideas, information and research and development around the world in an instantaneous way. One place Canada can make a difference is in the grand field of international communication and helping to build that consensus with the means that we have.

I believe that if we take a look at the area of national life that is so much affected by our international dimensions, no area is untouched or uncovered. That is why in this throne speech we go out of our way to make sure that foreign policy is not just a closed door exercise, some esoteric discipline taken behind the area with whispers or by elites, but becomes the grand engagement of all Canadians. In particular, we want to reach out to young Canadians because they will be the true citizens of this new global world as we move into the 21st century. It is not just a matter of the policy and the programs, it is also bringing it about.

I welcomed the expressions last evening from members of the opposition wanting to work in this Parliament, wanting to make it a place for global dialogue and a place where Canadians believe they have the opportunity to make a difference with their views, their ideas and their suggestions so that we can truly give them a sense that they are engaged as world citizens in the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks about building something together, I am with him. When he talks about a consensus, I am also with him. When he talks about building bridges, everyone agrees with this.

• (1555)

But I would remind him that, since Mr. Lesage, we have been trying to build such bridges year after year. One after the other, the Liberal Party in Quebec, the Union Nationale, the Parti Québécois tried to negotiate in the best of faith, and without bias as even the Liberals then in power met with failure. When Jean Lesage coined the phrase “Masters in our own house”, he knew what he was talking about.

The minister referred to Mr. Trudeau earlier. If I understood correctly, he was saying that Mr. Trudeau kind of brought people together at some point. I am sorry, but if there is someone who isolated Quebec, it is Mr. Trudeau himself. So how can you tell me that Mr. Trudeau tried to bring Quebec into the fold.

The minister said earlier that he was insulted by the fact that I was referring to two peoples. I must repay him in kind by saying that he in turn has insulted the people of Matapédia—Matane, 64 per cent of whom voted for an independent Quebec. Sixty-four per cent of the people in my riding said yes so that we can have our

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own country. That is a lot of people, and not only the member for Matapédia—Matane.

On another point, as I said earlier, there are many unemployed people in my riding. It is the minister himself who put forward the proposed employment insurance reform. In my riding, they called this poverty insurance. They say, and I think they are right, that the fund comes from employee and employer premiums. How can they take money from people who are hard-pressed to earn \$20,000, \$22,000 or \$23,000 a year?

Our forestry workers work with chain saws in the heat of summer from five in the morning until late in the evening. It is back-breaking work. Those who have never done such work should try it.

I therefore make a suggestion to the minister who, I think, was behind this employment insurance: Since there will be a \$5 billion surplus in this fund next year, why not distribute it among the regions to create jobs instead of unemployment?

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, first I want to tell the hon. member that he is not the only person interested in partnership. I have been a member of this House for many years and I work very hard to develop a partnership in Canada.

[English]

Part of the problem, as I said in my speeches, is looking at this in isolation. There are many members of the House who have gone into their own regions. When the Meech Lake accord came in front of the House, it was not exactly the most popular proposal in my constituency in Winnipeg, but it was presented as a way of reaching out and forming a partnership. I voted for it and so did my friend from Winnipeg Transcona. It was done even though public opinion at the time in western Canada was very much against it. However, I believed it was a way of building a bridge.

I do not need to be lectured by this hon. member about what it takes to try to build bridges. I have not given up on that. I still believe in this country. I still believe in building bridges. I still believe there is an enormous advantage for all of us in working together, not only for ourselves as I said in my speech, but for the rest of the world. If we can prove that it can happen, that we do not have to separate and form little countries around small groups of people, that we can find strength in diversity and build those bridges, then it is a model this world desperately needs and desperately cries out for.

• (1600)

The hon. member talks about employment insurance. Perhaps one of the reasons people in his riding did not respond is that I am not sure he told them what was in the bill. He did not tell them that

in the employment insurance bill was an absolute guarantee of income for low income Canadians. For the first time in the history of that act the people he is talking about are now guaranteed a basic income, something we have been talking about in this House for 30 or 40 years.

I bet the hon. member did not have anything to say about that. He did not talk about the fact that hundreds of millions of dollars are going to be reinvested to find jobs. I have never heard a Bloc member credit the fact that what we are saying to the poor people in his riding and everywhere else is that the best way out of poverty is to have a job. And the best way to get a job is to make sure that one has the opportunity to have that job is to reinvest in skills, to reinvest in developing that job, to reinvest in changing the economy; in other words, to be really ready to face change and not hide from it, not fear it, not exploit it, but to face change—

[Translation]

We must face the need to adjust the economy, for the benefit of all Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the minister's presentation. I was particularly interested in his comments when he was talking about Canada's place in the world and the importance of rules based organizations to look after Canada's interests. I certainly agree with him on that point.

Canada has been a world leader in trying to develop trade rules ever since the second world war and has been successful in pushing for a settlement of the latest Uruguay round of the GATT agreement. That is to our credit. As an exporting country it is certainly of interest to us. It is important that we have a rules based organization to rely on in areas of trade disputes.

We have had trade disputes with the United States on softwood lumber where we have won panel decisions three times. Is it not time to test those new organizations such as the World Trade Organization and ask them to make a ruling? I feel we have a very strong case. Instead of accepting caps on exports, such as we did on wheat and softwood lumber, is it not time to test the strength of those organizations that both ourselves, the United States and 120 other member countries have signed?

I would ask the minister to give consideration to asking a wider body for a ruling on this, rather than having the trade frictions that exist between Canada and the United States on these issues?

The Speaker: I ask the hon. minister to give a very brief answer if it is possible.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Yes, Mr. Speaker. First I thank the hon. member for focusing on that point. I believe

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one of the most serious priorities we face is to establish the validity and legitimacy of many of these organizations.

As I said earlier in my speech, what I find disturbing about the present debate in the United States on the Helms-Burton bill is that the United States has been a great advocate at the OECD, for example, for developing a multilateral set of rules on investment. Now it has brought in domestic legislation which fully contradicts that whole notion of having a free market of investment based on an international set of rules.

Sometimes it is difficult to make changes as we are still working in a world of nation states. We have to use our powers of persuasion as much as we can. At the same time the hon. member has a useful suggestion to make. If the rules are there we should begin using them. That means we also have to accept the fact that people are going to use the rules against us and we must be prepared to abide by that as well.

I have talked to the hon. member's colleague about how we can bring these matters before the committee and have a really good dialogue about them so that we can begin to see where there is agreement in this Parliament. If we have Parliament agreeing, it strengthens the hand of the government to pursue these kinds of actions.

• (1605)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the Reform Party for allowing me to take 10 minutes of their time. I asked yesterday that the NDP be allowed to speak after the three official parties in this House had spoken. We were not successful in that.

Afterward, the Reform Party offered me this spot. I appreciate it but, of course, we still feel that on matters of major importance we should be allowed that role. We will be seeking it in the future. In the meantime, I am appreciative of the opportunity being granted to me at this time.

I am also appreciative, by coincidence, that I happen to be speaking just after the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was a surprise. Without being too much distracted from what I planned to say, I want to say that I listened carefully to the minister's spirited defence of multilateralism. That is both within the tradition of the Liberal Party and within the tradition of a broader Canadian consensus.

It is also within the tradition of Canadian foreign policy that at times we realize the limits to multilateralism, that we have to act on our own on occasion and show leadership. Certainly that is what I was trying to do when the government brought in the legislation to implement the WTO.

The NDP moved amendments that would have done two things. First, it would have prohibited the importation of goods produced by child labour pursuant to the ILO definition. Second, it would have called on the government to report on a regular basis what it was doing to build a social clause into the WTO.

I understand that the minister does not feel that Canada can act unilaterally on child labour, that he wants to build a consensus. There is also a role for regulation in the WTO. Maybe that follows the consensus.

Certainly there is a role for the Canadian government to report back to Parliament, on a regular basis, what it is doing in order to create that very thing. You could say that the social clause that we wanted you to report on and which you voted against at that time is the very kind of thing you now want to create.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I simply want to remind everyone to please direct comments through the Chair to the minister or whoever.

Mr. Blaikie: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about a couple of things. First is the whole question of national unity.

Canada is threatened on two fronts having to do with unity. First is the ongoing problem with respect to how we accommodate the obvious need in Quebec for its cultural distinctiveness and desire for more autonomy to be recognized within the Canadian context.

The second one—they are related—is the pressure on the Canadian social contract that was built up in the post-war world. The pressure on that social contract is a result, partly, of an ideological trend against seeing government as a positive force in the economy and in society.

Also partly ideological—some people call it globalization—are the pressures from so-called competition and the debt, which is a result in large part of that globalization and our inability to maintain our revenue base.

All these things are putting pressure on the kind of Canada that Quebecers voted to stay in in a substantial way in 1980. Two things have to happen in my judgment. We need to find a way of taking into account Quebec's cultural distinctiveness and need for more autonomy within the Canadian context and we need to build, to recover, to maintain a kind of social democratic Canada. There was a social democratic consensus in the country about what kind of country we wanted. To the extent that that has been eroding it has created a Canada about which not just Quebecers but also many other Canadians are anxious and wondering about the future. I say that those are the two fronts on which the government must work.

• (1610)

The failure to meet Quebec's needs is being exploited by people who were separatists all along. But it has also made separatists out of people who were not. We need to recognize that. It is an ongoing

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failure the government must address. I do not have any long or brilliant suggestions to make as to how it ought to do that today.

However, I do want to put on the record something which has bothered me for a long time. Along with a handful of other MPs, including the member for Winnipeg South Centre, I was here in 1981 when we repatriated the Constitution. We, who were not from Quebec, by voting for that repatriation package, in no way intended to deliver an insult or any humiliation to Quebec. We were in the House with 75 MPs from Quebec, 74 from the Liberal Party at that time. Those of us from outside Quebec were assured over and over again by all our Quebec colleagues in the House that this was not an insult to Quebec, that there was support for this in Quebec. For anyone in Quebec to suggest that those of us outside of Quebec were engaged in some kind of nefarious activity against Quebec at the time is quite unfair and inaccurate.

What is true is that most of us from outside Quebec for a number of years in the House and elsewhere have been constantly reduced to spectators in a debate that is really taking place between Quebecers themselves, whether it is Mr. Levesque and Mr. Trudeau or Mr. Bouchard and the current Prime Minister. I think Canadians outside of Quebec are tired of being spectators to this debate taking place in one part of their country about the future of the whole country.

Although I do not necessarily know the details, in that sense I applaud the notion that somehow next time round the whole country will be involved in what transpires with respect to Quebec.

I want to say a bit about jobs. The Prime Minister has challenged the private sector to create jobs. He said that the government had done its part and now it is up to the private sector to do its job.

I do not think the government has done its job with respect to job creation. It says it is getting the fundamentals right. I am not sure that the fundamentals are as fundamental as it thinks they are. However, let us take it for a minute that the fundamentals are right. The government still has not addressed other fundamental issues such as the fact that the world trading system, the global economy the minister spoke about is siphoning off jobs from the so-called industrialized world into other lower wage economies and labour markets.

Unless we set ourselves against that trend we are going to continue to have a very difficult problem generating the kind of employment we want in the country. It is not about creating any old job. It is partly a question of creating jobs that pay Canadians enough so that the middle class of the country, and others who aspire to be so, can continue to dream the kind of dreams we dreamt in the past and to live the kind of life we dreamt of in the past, albeit within some diminished expectations related not to the economy but to the environment and the need for us to realize the

limits of the planet when it comes to growth, but not the limits to justice.

I am prepared to recognize limits to the environment when it comes to economic growth but not limits to justice. It seems to me there is not that kind of effort on the part of the government. I know that is a big project but I do not see progress. I see too much acceptance of the way things are on the other side of the House and not enough resistance. I know the resistance was there when they were in opposition and particularly when the member for Winnipeg South Centre was on the opposition benches. I hope he has not given up on resisting those trends.

I have some concrete suggestions in terms of job creation. I do not think the corporate sector is going to meet the Prime Minister's challenge. In order to be challenged one must be a moral agent.

• (1615)

In order to accept the challenge of another human being one must be a human being. In order to accept the moral challenge implicit in the Prime Minister's challenge, one must have a particular mind set. The mind set that our corporate elite and corporate sector have now is by definition amoral. I might want sometimes to say even immoral, but it is at least amoral. They do not recognize the economy is a moral sphere at all, which is why I do not think this challenge will be picked up. I hope it is. There may be some companies that are exceptions but we continue to see company after company whose profit margins are in good shape laying off employees, or as my colleague from Kamloops recently said, casting off employees.

The other day the member for Kamloops unveiled something he is promoting which we are promoting with him, a Canadian code of corporate citizenship. This tries to instil in the Canadian business community some sense of its responsibility to the community, but that is very hard to do in a world of free trade and globalization which basically says there are no borders, there are no communities, it is all just one big marketplace.

We are fighting the very kind of mindset that has been enshrined in these agreements when we try to do this, when the government is trying to do it or when the NDP is trying to do it or when anybody is trying to do it. We are tilting against a windmill when it comes to talking about responsibility in a world trading system, in a global economy which basically pooh-poohs that kind of thing.

The government should be looking at ways it can encourage corporations to create jobs. There are all kinds of tax breaks that discourage job creation and mitigate against the preservation of employment. We have tax breaks for research and development and technologies that eliminate jobs.

The banks have taken advantage of tax credits to introduce their automatic teller systems. We have tax breaks that favour mergers which lead to layoffs. We have tax breaks that favour greater RRSP

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investment outside of the country which creates jobs outside the country.

Instead we need to get rid of those tax breaks. Let us have a tax on overtime. I have people in my riding who have to work overtime at the CNR and there are hundreds of people laid off there who would be dying to get back in there and work. They cannot get back in there but the CNR and other corporations like it are allowed to make people work overtime who do not want to work overtime.

Why do we not have a tax on overtime? Why do we not have taxes and other incentives to make family friendly schedules, benefit requirements that do not discriminate against part time workers to allow people to work part time rather than full time and still have benefits? There are many things we can do like that to create jobs without challenging the global economy. I hope next week we see some of that in the budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments and questions I would like to put to the member for Winnipeg Transcona. First, he talked about always working for Canadian unity. I would simply remind him that an NDP member scuttled the Meech Lake accord.

I do not know what the NDP did to prevent its members from blocking the Meech Lake accord. Perhaps he could give us an answer. This is a sensitive question for an NDP member.

The government talks a lot about dialogue with the provinces in the speech from the throne. I would like to ask the hon. member for example what he thinks of the government's behaviour since October 30 and its statements, which are rather sources of provocation for Quebec.

What, for example, does he think of the Minister of Indian Affairs, who said that the Government of Quebec intended to use the army to clear native peoples out of Quebec after it became sovereign. Is this confrontation or dialogue? What does he think about Quebec being divisible? If Quebec is divisible, it could also take part of Ontario or New Brunswick. I would like to know what he thinks of that.

I would also like to know what he thinks of the fact that the speech from the throne intimates that the offers are like those in the Charlottetown accord, that the vision is the same or less than that of Charlottetown. It is less than Charlottetown. It is an affront to Quebec.

• (1620)

In my opinion, this is no dialogue. It is not an offer that can be easily accepted. It is, rather, a confrontation, because we turned down the Charlottetown accord in Quebec, because it did not

provide enough for Quebec. English Canada turned it down, because it gave Quebec too much. I would like to ask him about this as well.

Of course, we in Quebec have said we wanted to destroy Canada. They say the separatists want to destroy Canada. I would like to ask him a question on this as well, because we have no intention of destroying Canada. On the contrary, we have extended an offer of economic and political partnership. I would like him to clarify his remarks somewhat in this regard.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Somehow I have a particular sense that the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona would love to answer all of those questions more extensively but I ask him within the framework of two minutes to summarize his comments.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I feel obliged to answer the member quite comprehensively but I will take your advice on the matter.

With respect to what the hon. member said about an NDP member of Parliament being the one who destroyed the Meech Lake accord, of course that is not true. There were no NDPs who did that. I presume the member is referring to former NDP MLA in the Manitoba legislature, Elijah Harper, who has since become a Liberal member and who now sits in the House.

With respect to Meech maybe that is not a coincidence because if memory serves, it was the Liberal Party which either talked out of both sides of its mouth on Meech or had people in both camps or had people who were responsible for starting the brush fires that eventually consumed the accord. I am thinking of the leader of the Liberal Party in Manitoba, the Liberal premier of New Brunswick and a number of other people who were first to jump on the anti-Meech bandwagon which then grew.

When the Meech Lake accord was originally arrived at in 1987 there was a great deal of consensus about the importance of the achievement that it represented on all sides of the House. The hon. member should know because he was here that the NDP caucus did not waiver in its support of Meech. From time to time it sought amendments as the pressure grew and might have saved it but certainly does not deserve any way the accusation the member made.

With respect to the status of the Cree in northern Quebec, that is a matter which the PQ government, the new premier and the Bloc Quebecois have to take very seriously. To some extent this whole thing about Quebec has been a bit of a parlour game in this country for a long time but it is not a parlour game anymore.

There is a reality called the aboriginal people in Quebec who inhabit a territory that was not always part of Quebec. They have a case to be made, a case that runs counter to the consensus that

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exists in a lot of parties over a lot of time about the nature of Quebec's self-determination.

Aboriginal people have also made the case for their self-determination in the last 10 or 20 years. If push does come to shove and we do have a Quebec that seeks to separate that will be a very ugly situation. Anybody who pretends that is not so is not doing a service to either the Canadian people or to the voters of Quebec.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it seems we have been meeting this way quite often lately, including last night.

I want to express the views of my constituents primarily, what I have heard them talk about when it comes to this throne speech. I have been listening in the House and I have not heard a lot of people referring to the throne speech and yet this is the throne speech that we are talking about. I want to direct myself at that and keep on that topic.

I think Canadians have been looking forward to this. This is the mid-term of the government. There has been great anticipation as to when things are going to get started and when something will actually be done.

• (1625)

All of us as members of Parliament have been listening to our constituents tell us they are concerned. They are passed concern. They are outright worried about what is happening to the country. Whether it is town hall meetings or whether it is when we are door knocking or whether it is TV phone-in shows or whatever, the message is loud and clear: they are unhappy and concerned about a number of things.

I will talk about how they were dealt with or not dealt with in the throne speech. I will start with official opposition status. Obviously there is a concern that a regional party represents all parts of Canada when it is from one province and conduct only the concerns of one province. There is an outright repulsion by this whole idea. This is not good for anybody in the country. I trust the party in power realizes that as well.

The people are ahead of the politicians, as they so often are. I sat in a seminar with over 500 farmers. In that room there were more people with more common sense and more entrepreneurship than I have found anywhere in Ottawa among bureaucrats or politicians. They are ahead of us. They know what is happening and they are saying: "The message must come from us to government through you guys. You must carry the message that way". They do not see that happening.

I am sure when they look at the throne speech they will only have their outright concern brought forward even more dramatically. The people are saying they are concerned about jobs, about the security of their jobs, their hope for the future. Band-aid solutions

are not the answer. Infrastructure programs, government make work programs are not the answer.

We need to get creative. We need to look at things like a total reform of the tax system. That will certainly cause a whole change, a light at the end of the tunnel for business and for individuals. We will see something happening. That is what people are demanding, not a government run by a bunch of bureaucrats.

Canadians are concerned about their pensions. They hear that from ministers. They hear that from provincial politicians. They hear that from everyone. Their pensions might be threatened. That is real, not something they are imagining. They are hearing it.

We need a plan. As representatives of the people we have come up with a plan similar to one Chile adopted 11 years ago in which people are responsible for themselves. They do not count on UI or on government because government has failed miserably in these areas. We need to look at these and give people some hope, some light, but the throne speech did not do that.

Canadians are concerned about health care. They want a plan. They want to know where it is going. They feel threatened. Lines are getting longer. Service is poor. Why is that? There is no long term vision to get a national standard and then let the provinces handle the administration of it. We know that is a major part of Canadian society and we need a vision.

When I was elected the debt was \$489 billion. Now it is \$577 billion. When we go back to the polls it will be \$600 billion plus. That is a lack of vision. We are not doing the job here and that is the message we are getting. The \$50 billion in interest payments is destroying our social programs. That is what is destroying us.

In the province I come from I cannot believe the pride and the whole sense of accomplishment because we have balanced our budget. The people are proud of it. They say: "I did not vote for those rotten—" whatever the government is, but they are proud of them anyway. There is pride, there is hope and they see light at the end of the tunnel. That is what the federal government has to realize.

• (1630)

We could talk about the criminal justice system. We could talk about the light that is needed in that. We could talk about government waste. We could talk about the other place and the disgust people have for it. We could talk about accountability. Give people the accountability they are asking for.

We need free votes. We need recall. We need to be able to get rid of MPs who do not do their jobs. We need that sort of thing to build the trust, hope and vision for Canadians.

I will touch on the area of foreign affairs in response to the foreign affairs minister. I listened with great interest and I trust we will have the co-operation we have talked about and that in committee there will be meaningful meetings where instead of

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partisan politics 15 people can work together for the good of Canada. That is an area in which it can be done.

We want to become a strong middle power. We want to have leadership. In those areas where we can we want to do really well. If it is peacekeeping, then let us be sure we have the very best trained with the best morale. Let us pick and choose the missions and then let us do our best so that the whole world will see us as the best. The pride Canada will gain from that will have great domestic value as well.

Let us talk about diplomacy. We should be the world's leading diplomats. We have the best reputation. We do not have a colonial record. We do not have any kind of aggressive record. We have the best record. Canadians are very shy. We tend to have an inferiority complex when we are outside the country. We must get over that and the government has to lead the way on it.

We need to promote our country because we are a trading nation. We need to lead in demanding and helping with UN reform. The UN is not working. It is a bureaucratic nightmare, one that has become corrupt with time. It is 50 years old. It needs to be reformed dramatically. We should emphasize the details of that.

As an example, we are still fiddling around with Haiti and the mission expires today. It is gone today, yet there is still no agreement. We are still getting changes. The UN is not doing the job set out for it and we must work on that.

I could go on with this vision. I hope I got my message across that it is leadership we need. We need leadership to show the Canadian people that we do have a vision for the country and that we are sincere in what we are doing.

Probably the best quote I picked up in the last three days of the throne speech debate just happens to be from the member for Beaver River: "Canadians have told us they want a nation where a person's dreams are not hollow, where ambitions can be pursued and ultimately realized. They want a country where people can look to the future with excitement rather than fear, where a mother or father not only hopes but honestly expects that their children's lives will be better than their own. They want a country where every individual feels safe enough to explore, confident enough to innovate, secure enough to take risks. They want an environment where accomplishments are celebrated and setbacks are only temporary. They want a country where people can feel secure in their homes and their communities, where every member of society can live with dignity and where men and women can grow old without fear".

That summarizes the vision I see for this country. I hope other members share that vision with me.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the remarks of the member opposite it is no wonder people in society are showing their disrespect for MPs and for government. I

am surprised at how the member downgraded the members of Parliament in the House by saying that they are basically not intelligent enough to present good ideas.

• (1635)

To quote John Ralston Saul: "People become so obsessed by hating government that they forget it is meant to be their government and is the only public powerful force they have purchase on". He goes on to say: "My point is that the individual and the government are linked together by an artery. If we act to sever that artery by replacing or opposing a central role for government, we cease to be individuals and revert to the status of subject".

One of the things we are seeing promoted by the Reform Party is to get government out of everything. I would like the member to be more specific than he was in his remarks. Does he see a role for government at all?

The unemployment insurance program he talked about is very important to this country in terms of ensuring that we do not have the same situation which happened last year when people from Atlantic Canada competed for jobs in London, Ontario because there were no jobs in Atlantic Canada. This country needs a program such as UI, or EI as this government is proposing, which allows people to live in the off season and keeps them in their regions as full time workers in seasonal industries. Those programs are needed.

Could the hon. member tell me specifically what he is saying the role of government should be? Could he be specific in terms of what he is asking us to get out of and to stay in?

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly give the member a copy of our 20-20 vision of the new Canada. It would take more time than I have to answer.

Basically what I heard was a fairly elitist attitude and one I would expect from someone who is entrenched in this place with looking at the status quo as being the only way where government has all the answers and people have none of them. That is a total lack of respect for the people of this country. That kind of lack of respect has to be beaten down.

There is no place for government to have the domineering attitude that it knows best. We would expect that. That is why most of us are here. That is why there are 105 people who came here saying the same thing: We demand change for this country.

As far as the whole UI matter is concerned, there is a plan for that. Look at the plan. The plan is to give back to people the responsibility for themselves. When a person is 20 years old, they start contributing 10 per cent of their salary to their own plan, one that the person monitors. That person gives 10 per cent and watches the amount grow month by month. If that person becomes unemployed, the government allows them to take some of the funds out.

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That person is not going to abuse that system because it is their system. It is their future.

Those are the kinds of new ideas we need. We can apply this to health care. We can apply this to all other areas. The federal government will always have a role. Its role is to make Canada work and to be the umbrella under which all the units will operate. That is what the provinces are demanding. That is what they want. That is what the Prime Minister is saying he is going to deliver.

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to participate in this important debate.

The throne speech is a blueprint for the federal government. We have reached the midpoint of our first term. Now is the time to evaluate our successes, build on our achievements and prepare for the new challenges we will face.

Today I will focus my remarks on Canada's youth. When I was elected to represent the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants, I made a commitment to work with the local youth. I promised the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants that I would do everything I could to ensure that young people had every opportunity to reach their full potential to learn, adapt and succeed in the job market and in our society. This has continued to be a key priority for me over the last 28 months. I will continue to make this a priority in my work both in Annapolis Valley—Hants and here in Ottawa.

• (1640)

Our future depends on our youth. If we can ensure they are provided with the tools and the opportunities to gain education and experience now, we can help ensure a healthy future for Canada. I was therefore very pleased to see the focus on youth in Tuesday's throne speech.

During our first two years we have introduced a number of important initiatives to help achieve this goal. One such program, Youth Service Canada, has had an extremely positive impact in Annapolis Valley—Hants. I have seen firsthand how local youth have benefited from the Youth Service Canada program.

In April 1995, under this initiative a program entitled "Hants County youth for youth" was established with my co-ordinating efforts and with the help of a number of local partners. This project is serving 20 unemployed youth between the ages of 18 and 24. What has made this program so unique is that it is designed by youth for youth.

This group has identified a number of local priorities and areas where they can make a difference in the community. The participants are providing community related work through the development of a youth oriented newsletter, tourism development and the

operation of a youth centre. Through Youth Service Canada they are truly making a difference. As a result of their success, this program has been extended with the support of the federal government and our community education partners.

My riding has also been fortunate to host a group of young people involved with Katimavik. This nationally based program which is being funded through Youth Service Canada has allowed young Canadians from all over the country to come together to gain work experience, to travel and to learn about the regions of our wonderful country. I have been truly impressed with just how successful this program has been in terms of building a sense of accomplishment, a sense of self-reliance and self-esteem.

I have also seen firsthand the success of the youth internship program. The youth unemployment rate is far too high and every year thousands of young Canadians cannot find work. At the same time, half of Canada's software product companies were unable to fill jobs in 1994. Seven thousand jobs went unfilled and this is just one sector. In order to help bridge this school to work transition, our government with the co-operation of educators, non-profit organizations and the private sector developed the youth internship program.

In my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants there are currently two internship programs up and running. In January 1995 our government approved a proposal for the Hants West District School Board. This program involves 80 students between the ages of 16 and 24. The participants are all associated with the adult high school program. They are combining classroom learning with valuable on the job training.

Similarly, an internship proposal was developed by the Kings County District School Board and has recently got under way. This project involves 200 students. Participants are gaining valuable educational skills and training in occupations with job potential.

Clearly, if we want to use the constituency of Annapolis Valley—Hants as an example, we are making a difference for local youth. However, our efforts do not stop there. Our government recognizes that an important part of education and learning is through summer employment. Not only does it provide valuable income to allow students to further their education, but it allows our young people to gain experience they can take into the workforce in later years.

I was pleased therefore to see the commitment in the throne speech to introduce measures to double the number of federal summer student jobs this coming year. However, measures to promote education and employment are not enough. We must build on these programs. I propose that we explore ways to partner these existing programs with the private sector in order to double the benefits for youth and create economic growth. In that regard I will

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be exploring new partnerships in my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

• (1645)

Last June I had the opportunity to participate in an international symposium on education and the economy at Acadia University. This conference brought business leaders, educators and youth together to discuss new partnerships and ways to forge closer links between education and business.

I will be working with the mayor's committee on youth in the town of Kentville in my province of Nova Scotia. This committee intends to explore new ways to find opportunities for local young people.

In recent years we have seen disturbing statistics with regard to the levels of child poverty in Canada. Canada is consistently rated as the number one country in the world in which to live. We are envied by other countries and yet one in five children still lives in poverty. These children often live extremely disadvantaged lives. They often live in poor housing conditions. They have a greater likelihood of experiencing unemployment in their families and they are more likely to drop out of school.

What is even more telling, however, is that close to 60 per cent of all female single parents live in poverty. In March 1994, I had the opportunity to speak to this issue in the House of Commons. I called on the government to re-evaluate how we tax child support payments in order to ensure more money was reaching the children of separated families. All too often our current child support provisions have produced awards that are varied, unpredictable, sometimes inadequate and often unpaid.

I said in my speech, which I will reiterate now, we must ensure that children are not unfairly targeted by a system that no longer works the way it should. I was pleased to see entrenched in the throne speech a commitment to change the rules governing child support payments. As the governor general stated in his remarks, equality of opportunity is a basic value in Canada and begins with children.

I will touch on the important role young people can play in bringing Canadians together and promoting national unity. Although we sometimes forget, our similarities as Canadians far outnumber our differences. We have a common history and we share a common collective experience. It is important to dispel the regional misconceptions that sometimes divide us. In order to do that we must promote greater dialogue between all of our regions and in particular with the people of Quebec.

I strongly believe the government can play an active role in helping achieve this through the promotion of exchanges among students and young people. In doing so, we can help ensure that future generations will have an opportunity to build ties that are based not solely on national politics but on friendship and on the

understanding of our differences and, more important, our many similarities.

This is an idea that I have actively promoted among constituents in my riding. I have been meeting with local educators, business organizations, school groups, government officials, and we are looking at ways of funding and making this idea work. I am pleased to say that one school in my riding, Horton high school, is now preparing to participate in such a venture in Quebec. I believe we have made some important inroads in the last two years. I am also pleased that focus is given to youth in the throne speech.

It is certainly the time to build on our accomplishments and to construct partnerships to ensure that all of our young people have the opportunity to reach their potential and contribute fully to our society.

• (1650)

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak on behalf of the people of Guelph—Wellington in support of the speech from the throne which has begun the second session of the 35th Parliament. I look back on the first session with a sense of accomplishment and I look forward to the second session with hope and anticipation for continuing the jobs and growth agenda begun in October 1993.

The people of Guelph—Wellington witnessed a number of firsts in the past 24 months. For the first time in 20 years their federal government is reducing the deficit. For the first time in history their federal government has reduced the pension plan and benefits for members of Parliament. For the first time in a long while they have a government that does what it says, keeps its promises and is working on their behalf rather than in its own interests.

Over the past 24 months I have participated in the opening of community centres, roads, schools, sports fields and other projects generated because we kept our word on the infrastructure program. It has created a tremendous amount of growth in communities all across Canada.

I congratulated the employees of Nipponia Export, Armtex and Skyjack who have benefited from our Team Canada missions to Asia and South America. We just heard a Reform colleague talk about vision and about what the Prime Minister is doing in that area. For goodness sake, he is going firsthand and leading these missions. How grateful we are to have him.

I worked with small business and the banks in improving relations and increasing dialogue. Our community said no to the former Leader of the Opposition when he travelled abroad promoting separation. Most important, I have seen the beginning of a transformation in the people of Guelph—Wellington. They want to work with the government to create jobs, foster growth and build on opportunity.

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The speech from the throne offers good news to the people of Guelph—Wellington. They are concerned about the economy and with the way the federal government spends their money. By meeting our deficit targets we have listened to the constituents of Guelph—Wellington who have told me not to mortgage the future.

We have placed a new emphasis on youth, science and technology and trade. For a community that is home to the finest university in Canada, this is good news indeed. For businesses that produce the finest goods in Canada and are looking for new markets, this is good news. For people concerned about their personal safety, for our children who want a good future and for our seniors concerned about the future of their health care, this a blueprint for their future.

The speech from the throne, like the red book before it, promises to put the interests of my constituents first. It promises not to destroy the very foundations of our country.

Let me remind every member of the House, our parents and grandparents have built the greatest nation on earth. They have done so through our health care system, our social safety net and our work ethic which is second none in the world.

The people in the House who wish to destroy what they built must remember that we are the envy of the world. Canada has been selected as the best nation on earth because we care for one another and we have social programs which protect those most in need and care for those most vulnerable in society.

This session, like the last, will show the people of Guelph—Wellington the real difference between the Liberals and the opposition parties. They already know the fundamental difference is between a party that built this nation and parties that want to destroy it. They also know that our goal is growth, employment and opportunity while theirs is despair, destruction and doom.

Let us look at the Reform Party. No matter how hard they try to smile, Reformers cannot hide their real agenda. Reformers like to say they want to trim the fat. We know they really mean they are going to fire the butcher and close the shop to boot.

• (1655)

They have replaced hope, growth and opportunity with me, myself and I. With Reformers national standards will be replaced with regional disparity. The principles of medicare will be replaced with the principles of money. Who has the most money can get health care.

Reformers look at us as consumers. We look at all Canadians as our neighbours, our friends, people we care about, people we need. We want to offer a hand but they want to give those in need the boot. Reformers see wrong in our federation. They search for bad

in our institutions. I take this opportunity to remind them of Pogo's famous saying the next time they look for what is not working: "We have met the enemy and he is us".

Every new Parliament sets challenges for itself. We begin in the next few weeks to build on the values that have been established by our parents and grandparents. Our challenge in the second half of our mandate is to continue to protect our seniors, provide a future for our youth, which this throne speech does, and give real meaningful employment to those looking for work. We must remind every Canadian in the process their participation in the future of the country is vital in order for us to grow and prosper in the next century.

My constituents have asked me to work on their behalf to strengthen our nation, to provide them with a future that includes every Canadian from sea to sea. They want to work with all parts of the country, every region, all people, all provinces to build a better country. They know it is harder to create than it is to destroy. They know it is easy to take an axe to cut down but it takes patience, persistence, time and energy to build up.

Our opposition parties want to either break up our nation or destroy the programs that have made it great. There are similarities between the two parties. One, the Bloc, wants to take a great province from the country and the other, Reform, wants to take the heart out of our nation. That is the difference between Liberals and the other parties.

The people of Guelph—Wellington have faith in themselves and in their Canadian family. They reject those that want to destroy, but they welcome opportunity for their future, hardship for the sake of value and change for their betterment.

We have many challenges facing us in the next few months. We must continue to improve our social safety net in order to protect those most in need. We must ensure our public pension system provides protection into the next century. We must always work to keep Canada united and strong.

I began speaking about some of the many accomplishments we have shared in Guelph—Wellington during the past two years. The people of Guelph—Wellington will support our efforts to reduce the deficit. They will welcome programs that create jobs and expand growth and they demand excellence. They do not want me and the government to forget the human element in every single thing we do and every single action we take.

This July marks the 100th anniversary of the election of Wilfrid Laurier as Prime Minister. I end with his words and may they guide us in this second session, all of us: "I am a Canadian. Canada has been the inspiration of my life. I have had before me as a pillar of

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fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day a policy of true Canadianism, of moderation, of conciliation”.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's comments, particularly her closing comments by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. If I may take a moment I would like to offer some comments by Mackenzie King, who I understand was a Liberal, that may be appropriate for this time in our political history. I may not get this right, but you will understand the context of it. He said: “When control of our currency and our credit is taken away and usury takes over, then all efforts and hopes of democracy are both useless and futile”.

• (1700)

We have a situation in this country where we have lost control of our financial house. We have a debt of over \$500 billion. We have interest payments of \$50 billion which are continuing to rise.

The point I want to make is that despite all the nice words contained in the throne speech about hope and optimism, despite all the words spoken by hon. members from the government, the fact is that every single discussion, every single decision made in the House is influenced by the severely impaired financial state of the country.

Reformers have been saying that we must begin to restore hope and optimism for people of all ages from students who are trying to get an education and find it a tremendous financial burden, people who are out of work and are living on welfare or no money at all, people who are trying to build careers and raise families. Every decision the government makes is impeded by our financial state. No matter what words we use to offer hope, the fact is that we have to get our financial house in order. It is so important. We cannot even talk about making democratic decisions because we are so influenced by the financial crisis.

What positive steps do we see? How are we going to reach a balanced budget? When are we going to reach a balanced budget? How do we explain to the Canadian people that the \$50 billion we are paying in interest is something we have to live with? This \$50 billion is taking away from our social programs, our health care, our education payments. It has a hold on us to such an extent that we almost cannot function as a government until we get this financial mess straightened out.

What kind of answer does the government have? There is none in the throne speech. There are a lot of fluffy words but there are no concrete answers.

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, with due respect to my hon. colleague who I am on committees with and I am friends with, it is hard to begin. The balanced budget that is driving the Reform Party

would kill this country if it was done with the speed and haste the Reform Party suggests.

Reformers talk about trampling, taking away programs such as medicare and punishing the poor. The list goes on. The reality is that the government is proving on a daily basis that it is reducing the deficit. The reality is that the deficit by 1997 will be cut in half. The reality is that the government will have chopped \$29 billion in a humane and proper way, in a way that will continue to give us medicare, help for the poor, reduce regional disparities.

With all due respect I feel badly that the Reform Party continues to only look at a balanced budget and not think about the human element, to not care about the people.

I would not suggest that the member from the Reform Party as an individual does not care about people. Unfortunately, I feel strongly that for some reason the agenda of the Reform Party of a balanced budget at all and any cost would seriously cut the heart out of Canada.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the optimism in the words of the member for Guelph—Wellington, they do not represent reality.

In Quebec, for example, reality means 11 per cent unemployment and far more people on welfare because unemployment insurance is harder to get, so there are more people in Quebec not working than in the past. That is reality.

While she is speaking about putting public finances on a healthier footing, I am thinking about the \$32.7 billion deficit we will have again this year. Her words are fine, optimistic, encouraging, for those who do not know the real situation. The reality is exactly the opposite. The government has not succeeded in creating jobs. The government has not succeeded in cutting expenditures sufficiently to produce a normal deficit. I feel the hon. member ought to be more realistic in what she has to say, so as not to deceive the public who hear her words.

[*English*]

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, Quebec is quite different but Quebec is part of Canada and we are all Canadians, first and foremost.

The former leader of the Bloc has left the party and become premier. He has pledged as his first duty to make sure he looks after the finances of Quebec. We hope that the trust the member and his party put in their leader that that will be done.

The hon. member talks about what we have done. Unemployment has gone down by over 2 per cent since we took office in 1993. We have created over 500,000 jobs. Consider each trade

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mission including the last one with \$8.1 billion. Each billion dollars in trade is equal to 11,000 jobs.

Youth was referred to in the throne speech. It was mentioned that the government would double the student jobs. That means for Quebec too. We have done a lot and I am proud of it. I thank the member for drawing attention to it.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, going back to the closing words of my colleague from Guelph—Wellington when she was calling for moderation and conciliation, I would like to point out to her that it is rare for moderation and conciliation to go along with the self-affirmation that one's country is the greatest in the world.

Every time politicians and political leaders have said that theirs was the greatest nation in the world, this has been bad news for their citizens, their minorities and their neighbours.

This government was elected on the slogan of "jobs, jobs, jobs". It was to solve Canada's problems. After managing to hide the real situation, it found itself faced on October 30 with a Quebec that almost voted for sovereignty. This amazed people all across Canada; 54,000 votes prevented the Quebec referendum from succeeding.

One would have expected this government to be interested in this important issue. That it would have felt fear, that it would have felt responsible, and that it would have therefore made every effort to ensure the situation would not be repeated. As a result, one would have expected sincere and moderate federalists, of whom there are many in Canada, to have demanded that their government seek to convince the people of Quebec to remain within Canada by paying attention to their problems and their needs.

• (1710)

So what did this government do? What did it do next? Back in the House, it tabled two feeble measures, worse than minimal, which included a definition of a distinct society which did not even approximate the one in the Meech Lake accord and was not enshrined or even "enshrineable" in the Constitution, and a multiple veto which, instead of meeting the expectations of Quebecers, would make these even more difficult to achieve.

Did this government act responsibly? No. So what happened next? Well, I must say I was very upset when I read about it in the newspapers. The caucus had a meeting in Vancouver. We read that these members, with whom we have worked side by side, talked about only one thing, and that was how to prevent us from achieving sovereignty. It was not about considering our needs, or about recognizing that we are a people. It was all about preventing and scaring us. They found some new saviours from Quebec, other

Trudeaus in the making, who raised the issue of partition of the territory.

I repeat, did they try to find a way to convince us, to understand Quebecers? They did not. Sadly, I saw this as a denial, a rejection.

The third step was the speech from the throne, and we are now back in the House. So what about the throne speech? Briefly, it says that as far as the economy is concerned, the government is no longer involved. It says: "I have done my share. It is now up to the private sector to create jobs". I do not know where the government found this particular economic principle, but it is all very easy for the government to say what it just said. Just because the government offloads its deficit on the provinces, which in turn have to make cuts that affect the average person, just because the government is lying low and dipping into unemployment insurance contributions, all that does not mean it is putting the economy on a sound footing and it can tell business: "Mission accomplished. Now it is up to you to create jobs".

This is so shortsighted it makes me weep, and the same goes for the Team Canada concept and the idea of partnership. In fact, partnership is a wonderful word, and the way we used it during the referendum campaign, and will continue to do so, it means something. In Quebec, for years governments, business and unions representing the grass roots—not just business and government—have been working together to develop the regions. Together, they realized they do not have enough power, in one area in particular, where there is a consensus on the problems that must be solved, and unfortunately, that does not seem to be in the cards, and I am referring to manpower training.

• (1715)

First, the government is washing its hands of the matter. Second, what did it say it would do at the administrative level to eliminate overlap? The plan it announced is in fact a centralizing measure. It says that there is only one social, economic and cultural plan in Canada, that is to say a national plan, and that it will delegate, decentralize and privatize as it sees fit, shifting certain things to the private sector, to municipalities, to certain groups or, occasionally, to the provinces.

Does the government take into account what got Canadians all upset on October 30? One third of the speech from the throne deals with national unity. But what does it say? What does the government have to propose to Quebec? Only outrageous things.

What message is the government conveying in the few and insignificant economic measures it managed to come up with, like doubling youth job opportunities? It says it will enhance summer student job programs. Does this address the major problems facing Quebec?

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What message is it conveying with regard to the Canada social transfer, which will play even more havoc with the Quebec social system? It talks about standards, standards to be established in co-operation with the majority of the provinces. What is in it for Quebec?

Referring to the labour market, it describes it as a national phenomenon and talks about the need to promote mobility, when we all know that, in terms of employment, the problem for Quebec within Canada has always been the fact that, for obvious reasons, Quebec workers are not as mobile as others and that the labour market is different in Quebec.

On the subject of training, there is a nice line about the government being prepared to withdraw from that area and to decide what would be best and who should take over. Does this mean that the government is getting ready to negotiate with the Quebec government? Perhaps.

It says it is prepared to make a great, unprecedented offer regarding exclusive provincial jurisdictions by not creating any new programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the consent of a majority of the provinces, with compensation for those provinces that are not part of the consensus. It talks about infrastructures already transferred to municipal authorities and community-based groups. The federal government decides what is good; it decides what suits the Canadian vision of society.

There is no room, actually less room than ever, for the people of Quebec in this Canadian vision.

• (1720)

No wonder they did not try to convince people in Vancouver. But, if they are not trying to convince them, what are they trying to do? They are trying to stop them, to frighten them by carrying a big stick. Are they hoping that Quebecers will back down, that they will suddenly have fewer needs?

It is while listening to the Prime Minister's speech yesterday that I finally understood. I may be off the mark, but when I heard this sentence, I said to myself: "That is the source of the huge problem that Canada will face if the government does not get back on a path that will allow it to prepare for a future of peace and perhaps prosperity". I heard the following sentence coming from the Prime Minister's mouth: "A united Canada is a far nobler enterprise than the narrowing of vision proclaimed by those who would break up this country". Now everything becomes clear.

There is a great vision, that of Canada, and there is a narrow vision, the one shared by half the people of Quebec. So Quebecers are wrong; they understood nothing. Canada is a nobler enterprise than Quebec? Why? Because it is a bigger country? Then we would be better off as Americans. Because there is not enough ethnic diversity? What about France, Italy, Germany or Israel? In fact,

why is Canada still distinct from the U.S.? That is a good question. Because of the Queen? Because of social programs?

I respect Canada, which is a great country. When I was in Quebec during my recent campaign for the leadership of my party, I stressed the need to repeat that Canada is a great country, that we respect Canadians, but that we as Quebecers cannot grow in this Canada. All members of the House, whatever their party, have a responsibility to preserve the future and that future must be based on respect. We might have won on October 30. Our vision and our country would then have been as great and noble as Canada.

Quebecers are a people; they will form a sovereign nation in which all citizens have equal rights. Until then, and there is no doubt in my mind that this day will come, I do hope that the government and our colleagues in opposition will understand that, while they can expect respect from us, they should remember that they must also respect us, our project, and the people of Quebec, for whom we speak.

• (1725)

Both federalists as well as sovereignists belong to the people of Quebec. They recognize themselves and will not tolerate contempt, whether directed at themselves or at their wish to control their destiny. After going through a long series of failed attempts and unfulfilled expectations, Quebecers see a deteriorating economy. Young people are losing hope. Quebecers say that the situation cannot go on any longer.

As far as I am concerned, yesterday the Prime Minister once again gave a bad example. I am not pleased to say that, on the contrary. I am not pleased because the Prime Minister, who is a successor of Lester B. Pearson, should be building a future based on peace and harmony, regardless of the democratic choices of Quebecers, and he should strive to reach that goal. I know that moderate federalists hope to convince Quebecers to stay in Canada, but they also strive to ensure that economic, social and cultural development is not impeded the way it is right now.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a true federalist but I fully agree with the principle that Quebecers are a people, as the hon. member said.

The member for Matapédia—Matane said that because there is a people of Quebec, Canada must be divided. He said that if there is a people, there must be a country. This is simple and logical.

An hon. member: Normally, yes.

Mr. Bryden: Normally, you are right. Let us take the example of Newfoundland. In the forties, Newfoundland was a country and the people of that country decided to join Canada. Newfoundlanders—and I see the hon. member from Newfoundland—are still a people. Therefore, if Newfoundlanders are a people within Canada, why

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would the same not be possible for Quebecers? This is my question to the hon. member for Mercier.

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I have good friends from Newfoundland. I often ask them the question: If, in 1949, the population of Newfoundland had been seven million, what would you have done? I will let you guess the answer. This is the first element of my answer.

• (1730)

The people of Quebec did not always define themselves as such in Quebec. As you know, our history is a long one. It goes back farther than the history of those we now call English Canadians. That history includes events such as the Conquest and the quelled rebellions of 1837-38, which created conditions such that, for a long time, leaders sought to make arrangements within Confederation and they did so in all honesty. They felt that the way to protect the French-Canadian nation was to do so within Confederation.

But as time went by, as Quebecers developed their culture and as they suffered setbacks—I have already mentioned this in this House—there came a point when a premier of Irish descent, Daniel Johnson Sr., first used the slogan of “equality or independence” and explained that, if the French Canadians who live mostly in Quebec were not treated fairly, it would be normal for them to go for political independence. Daniel Johnson Sr. wrote *Égalité ou indépendance* in 1965.

Since 1965, our history is an endless string of failures, of searching. That, dear colleague, is the answer to your question. I am not saying this because I used to teach history, but because it is a fact. Quebecers have repeatedly tried to gain recognition and to get the tools they need to develop. And it is precisely because they have been unable to reach these goals that the last referendum was held. I do not want to go over Meech or Chalotetown again. It is true. We went through all that, we were deeply hurt, but there are limits to the patience of people who feel helpless and unable to control the means to ensure their development. Successive federal governments chose to treat Quebec only as a province. The people in our province cannot tolerate this situation any longer and want their own country.

[English]

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention that I am sharing my time with the member for Halton—Peel.

[Translation]

There are two issues I would like to focus on in this debate on the throne speech.

The first one deals with the openness shown towards Quebec, and the second one with the way cultural issues are addressed. The two are similar in that they are equally important for the future of our country.

When one listens to Quebecers, it does not take long to understand their concerns, their confusion and even their anger, if I may say so, when faced with the problems the Quebec society has to deal with.

Quebecers are concerned about job insecurity and job loss. They are worried about the way the major social services are deteriorating, whether it is the unemployment insurance program, the health system, education or the social safety net.

• (1735)

They are concerned about the future of the regions and the price they will have to pay for the excessive debt incurred by the governments. They complain about the very few tangible effects brought about by the business restructuring and the new high tech industries whose merits they hear so much about. They express their frustration through their strong will to change things.

Quebecers are all the more anxious to change things since they have the talent, the entrepreneurship and the adaptability to catch up with the front runners. They are asking for change so that they can resume their place and take advantage of the social and economic benefits stemming from dynamic growth. Quebecers have had it with double talk, gimmicks, scapegoats and so-called winning questions. They do not like politicians who avoid talking to them about what they cherish most, that is their quality of life and their opportunities.

Faced with these challenges, the Parti Québécois government, so far, has only come up with a policy resembling the squaring of the circle. On one hand, the supposedly inescapable road to separation from Canada and, on the other hand, the recovery of the Quebec's economy and finances in partnership with that same Canada.

The inherent contradiction in that policy creates a climate of uncertainty that paralyzes economic growth in Quebec. Moreover, that policy, which is based on an irreversible break with Canada, causes division among Quebecers. In turn, this division fosters uncertainty. One day, Lucien Bouchard sings the praise of separation and promises yet another referendum, and the next day, he is calling for economic recovery and fiscal consolidation in Quebec which, in turn, require stability and confidence.

We know that it is this squaring of the circle that caused Jacques Parizeau's political demise. We must get out of this dialectic before Quebec itself is destroyed by it.

The speech from the throne offers an alternative to Quebecers, a partnership that affects not only economic and social issues, but also the method of government.

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Let us not be mistaken, this speech speaks to Quebecers in a language fraught with consequences; that may be the reason why the opposition rejected it offhandedly, fearing that the message would get across.

Basically, the speech proposes to modernize the Canadian federation, together with the provinces, to meet the needs of the 21st century. It invites the government of Quebec to participate in this process so that Quebec's interests are better served. The message is clear: this adjustment will not be done by increasing the powers of the federal government to the detriment of the provinces. The federal government will limit the use of its spending power, obtain the consent of the provinces and create joint management systems if necessary.

It will withdraw from areas under provincial jurisdiction such as tourism, mining, forestry and recreation and will continue to withdraw from transportation and manpower training. The speech from the throne does, however, propose increased partnerships with the provinces and a common effort to ensure our security by strengthening our economic and social union and preserving the quality of our environment.

These new partnerships are possible without these endless constitutional debates that have taken up so much of our energy. This is possible without the trauma of Quebec's separating. Nothing would be better for eradicating the uncertainty than this new beginning in an atmosphere of confidence and co-operation. This is the opening now available to the people of Quebec.

• (1740)

If we wish to work together to create a Canadian society for the 21st century that can serve as a model for the rest of the world, clearly that society cannot be anything but pluralistic, with each part recognizing and respecting the distinct identity of the others. In this we are no different than any other large country in which different languages, ethnic groups and religions live alongside each other.

But we are far advanced over most of these because of the common values of open mindedness, understanding and generosity which have characterized our history and still prevail. Such values are diametrically opposed to the parochialism and intolerance which lead to division, fragmentation and weakness. For these reasons we can rejoice in the fact that the Throne Speech confirms the government of Canada's desire to recognize the distinct character of Quebec society and to have it acknowledged.

I would like to conclude with a few comments on the commitments to the cultural sector expressed in the speech. It can never be repeated too often that cultural creation is essential to our identity. We abound in creative talent and enjoy a widely diverse cultural industry, but there is still need for further development in this area.

Our biggest challenge in the years to come will be to ensure a strong Canadian presence on the information highway. We are already facing competition from foreign products, mainly American. In the future, regulations protecting the Canadian audio-visual market will gradually lose their effectiveness, and our political will will be undermined by American threats of punitive measures. We will have to create our own high-quality products to maintain control over our own space and even better, to export these throughout the world. This strategy has a better chance of success than a protectionist strategy. It will, however, require increased financing for Canadian content.

In addition to fiscal measures encouraging the investment of private capital in our cultural industries, few options open to the Government of Canada will be as effective in their impact on the cultural sector as creating a consolidated fund of audio-visual productions. Thanks to this initiative, the consumer will be able to choose from foreign products, which are always available, and domestic products which, without this new financial support, would never see the light of day. Cable companies and satellite-television distributors already contribute considerable amounts of money as a condition of operating their services. This type of contribution could be used to provide better financing for the production of Canadian content.

In the past, we have always opted for strategies that would support our artists, our creators and our cultural industries and provide a buffer against the tide of American culture. We are aware that this sector, which is critical to establishing our distinct identity in the world, would not come into its own if market forces alone were allowed to prevail. That is why we have put in place policies and institutions that serve to maintain a balance between our own identity and foreign perspectives.

The throne speech is in line with a tradition that has confidence in the talent of our own citizens.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the speech from the throne, I noted very little, a few lines only, on semi-urban and rural communities.

• (1745)

Earlier, my colleague said that mining and forestry would be handed over to the provinces. But we know that mining and forestry are already under provincial jurisdiction. In this case, I do not know how this could be organized another way. It is a bit like the eastern plan, which worked very well for communities in eastern Quebec. It was put into effect, and timber owners were very happy.

The Conservatives, before them, had set a deadline of a year, which was extended a year, but is now about to run out, in March. Will there be compensation? When something wonderful happens somewhere, particularly in a rural setting, it would seem great

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pleasure is taken in cutting it. I saw nothing in the budget to compensate for what was cut.

There are other problems in our regions. Matane has a local airport, and Mont-Joli a regional one. Major renovations are required at the moment, and the plan is to give them to the municipalities or an independent agency to do. There is a lot of talk about Mirabel and Dorval, but little thought is given to regional or local airports. Their maintenance alone will cost the people in the regions a fortune. There is nothing on that.

There is something else I would like to mention, in the area of agriculture. We, as in other regions, are having huge problems getting a meat packing plant. We apply, and this sort of thing always involves some pickiness. They do not want to help farm producers process the butcher's beef they produce.

I wonder what the budget contains for the regions, the rural communities and the farmers?

Mr. Dupuy: Mr. Speaker, to start with, I would like to clarify something. Our colleague mentioned the budget; the budget will be presented next week. Today, we are dealing with the speech from the throne and he should not expect me to comment on the content of a budget which the finance minister said will be delivered in a few days.

Also, I would like to mention that when I referred to areas such as tourism, mining, and forestry, I took care to specify that they were areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. There is no doubt about that, it is a well known fact. Therefore, from what is the Canadian government withdrawing? What is the meaning of this new step it is taking?

It is responding to the request of provinces which have been asking for years that it withdraw from certain areas by not using its spending power in those areas. Provincial governments found it offending that the federal government exercises its spending power in areas under their jurisdiction. The federal government is complying with their request. But you have to be logical, you cannot, on the one hand, ask the federal government to withdraw its spending power from these areas which are acknowledged as areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction and, on the other hand, ask that it spend money in those very same areas. This is one of many contradictions.

Transport is certainly a major area and I have no hesitation in recognizing that we need to provide assistance to small airports, which I have myself used on many occasions.

• (1750)

The federal government owned them. It was responsible for all the work. Pressure was put on it to privatize, because municipalities and private groups asked the federal government to let these

properties go, put them up for sale and put them back in the hands of the local communities, which claimed to be better able to manage them.

This is what the government is doing. However, it is extremely difficult here as well to tell the government to withdraw from the management of these investments, these assets, but to continue to help pay for them and the management of them. So, we have to accept the consequences of what we ask for when we get it. I think the policy of the Government of Canada is a good one. It responds to requests at the local level and by private industry, and we have to live with the consequences. I hope, however, that these new owners will invest enough to make these vital communications centres cost effective and useful.

[English]

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing his time this afternoon.

The throne speech has charted a course for the next two years, the remainder of the term in this House. It has dwelt in a number of areas. First, it has had something to say about the accomplishments of the government to date and significant accomplishments they have been. It has also had something to say about one of the most perplexing and what should be the most important issues of concern that we have to deal with at the present time, the issue of Canada and Canadian unity.

I have listened for the last two years to the Bloc and the speeches that have been made in this House. I heard the remainder of a very impassioned speech this afternoon by the hon. member for Mercier. If I am wrong, I stand to be corrected but what I seem to detect so often from some members of the Bloc is an underlying belief that Quebec cannot exist within the framework of Canada because Quebecers somehow do not have the self-confidence nor the strength to preserve their society within that framework.

From the very beginning, built into the framework we call Canada are the elements to protect that society, to protect the language, the culture and of course the Napoleonic civil law. Those things together are part of what naturally make Quebec a distinct society. That is why the government has endorsed such a move to recognize what actually exists, what already is.

I am always perplexed when I feel, perhaps wrongly, that at least some members of the Bloc do not feel confident within that framework. I ask them and I ask Quebecers to consider what life would be like without those protections that are built into the framework we now call Canada.

It seems from an emotional perspective that one could isolate oneself even more and build a wall around a very small country. However the world is not made like that any more. We communicate instantly to every part of the globe. We trade virtually

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instantly to every part of the globe. Money changes hands from hour to hour. The sun never sets on the economies of our countries.

● (1755)

I seriously ask those members who wish for separation if they really believe in the long run that they will enjoy the protection of their language, culture and law that they enjoy in the framework we call Canada.

Canada is made up of distinct societies. I visited one a couple of weeks ago and had a wonderful time. It has a distinct language and culture and unless the people speak very slowly I cannot understand them. However they are a very confident and proud people. They exist within the framework of Canada. They are our friends in Newfoundland. If we take the trouble to travel to other parts of Canada we will find other very distinct societies all living within that same framework.

Last summer I had the privilege of travelling into central Quebec. My wife and I went there partly on a bit of a holiday and partly on a pilgrimage. We drove along the north shore to the Saguenay and up the Saguenay and stopped at Baie Trinité to scatter my brother's ashes. He spent the happiest years of his life sailing on the cruise ships on the Saguenay. We went on up to Lac-Saint-Jean and Chicoutimi. We stayed in Chicoutimi and then went on to Roberval and down the long highway to Shawinigan and back home again.

I realized one thing. The geographical isolation of that area separates it very much from other parts of the country. It is unfortunate that many of the young people there do not have the opportunity to move, to visit, to exchange with young people in other parts of the country. If they did there would be a new and revitalized realization that we are all in this country together. We built it together. Quebecers have as much ownership of British Columbia and Alberta as other Canadians have in Quebec.

We have travelled a long distance together, not without our difficulties and not without our arguments in the family and so on. But now we have an opportunity to look to the future together and to move on. The destruction of one part of us produces something less in the rest.

With Quebec, with Newfoundland, with the Arctic and all other parts of Canada, we make the greatest distinct society in the world. With all of our differences, but also with all of our common goals, we all want the same things. We want fulfilment in our lives. We want a roof over our heads. We want to be able to have three square meals a day and to be able to raise our children in safety and in confidence. We want to attend the church of our choice or indulge in the religion of our choice without interference, without anyone coming along and saying we cannot do that.

Those are common aspirations of all people in the world. Sometimes they get clouded with history or with the visions of

history or the perceptions of history, sometimes true, sometimes untrue, sometimes twisted.

● (1800)

My first ancestor in this country came from Ireland. He was a Protestant living in the south of Ireland. Talk about being on the wrong side of the railway tracks. The troubles that existed in 1834 continue to assail that land today, in 1996. He made a conscious decision to leave that strife behind him.

He was being terrorized. His cattle were killed. His life was threatened and so on. He left with his wife and five children and came to the wilds of Canada. He lost his wife to cholera on Grosse Isle, a place I hope to visit in a very few weeks.

I have his diary. He made a conscious decision to put the past behind him and to put the old enmities, which have held that country back for hundreds of years, away and come to Canada, a new land where he could find fulfilment and partnership with the people he met.

I make a plea to my friends in the Bloc. The time has come to make a conscious decision to put the past behind, to join hands and to move together because together we are much stronger than pieces separated and scattered. We can do far more as a family, as a team, than we can as strangers.

Quebec is very special to me in many ways. I spent some years in Montreal as a child. Montreal was a thriving city at that time. I was disappointed to see it again and how it has declined.

We can talk about the politics of blame. We can blame the federal government. We can blame somebody else and all the rest of it. The time has come to make that conscious choice to move ahead. If we do, we can only be the richer for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to point out to my colleague, who talks about people with clouded minds, that we should look at Quebec from another angle. I heard my colleague talk about the small country that Quebec would be.

We can compare Quebec to other countries in the world, Israel, in particular. Israel is a country with a population of about 3.5 million Jews, without any natural resources, and surrounded by 220 million Arabs. It is 74 times smaller than Quebec. Quebec is not small. People should stop saying that.

I take another example, Singapore. Everyone is trading with Singapore, everyone wants to do business with Singapore. Singapore has a population of about 4 million people, and a total area of 651 square kilometres. It is 2,500 times smaller than Quebec. Let us stop talking about Quebec being small and start talking about

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real things. Quebec is one of the largest countries in the world in terms of its territory.

Second, some people talk about isolation. They would like to build a fence around Quebec. Every time we talk about making Quebec a sovereign country, they say we want to cut ourselves off. I would like to quote from an article published quite recently in the economic section of *La Presse*, on February 5, 1996. What I am going to quote was written by an American university professor, Kenneth Holland. This article appeared in *Quebec Studies* and was done at the University of Memphis, in Tennessee. He is not a member of the Parti Québécois or the Bloc Québécois.

What does he say about Quebec? He says: "The unwavering support given by Quebec to free trade with the United States at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s was the catalyst that made possible the remarkable chain of events that changed forever the global trade system".

• (1805)

It is all very well to talk about people wanting to isolate themselves. And by the way, the comparison he makes with Ontario certainly does not reflect well on that province. Quebec has always been open to all markets, and there would be no North American Trade Agreement today if Quebec had not been on side.

I do not see a society that wants to cut itself off but a society that is as open as can be. The hon. member asked why we did not think it was worth being part of the Canadian federation? The reason is that we are a political minority. Even if all Quebecers voted to send members to this House, we would never be able to form a government. Every time the interests of Quebec clash with Canada's, as often happens, we will always be on the losing side. That is what Quebecers realized in the last election. That is why they sent the Bloc Québécois here, to get real power, as much as they could get in this Parliament, because we cannot form the government in this Parliament. We are a minority. Which means what? It means that when Canadians decide, for a number of very good reasons that are in line with the interests of Canada, to make decisions for all Canadians that go against the interests of Quebec, they can never prevent that.

Earlier, someone mentioned political uncertainty as one of the factors responsible for the current economic decline affecting us. First of all, this political uncertainty was created in 1982 by the patriation of the Constitution. This is not an attempt to dredge up past events, it is the truth: the contract that united this country was torn up, and Quebec was excluded from the Canadian Confederation. That is where the political uncertainty started.

I think we should look at all that in the light of these new factors. Quebec is not a small territory. It is an immense territory. It is not a

closed society. It is a society that is opening up, a society that will go the full democratic route to do what all other peoples in the world have done: become a country.

[English]

Mr. Reed: Mr. Speaker, I did not know I had any time left.

I appreciate the words of my hon. friend but I point out to him that Israel is probably not the best choice in the world, if we consider that Israel is now surrounded by the enemy. There are those outside of Israel who are determined that no peace shall ever exist there.

This is precisely what I was trying to say when I talked about my grandfather five times removed leaving Ireland, to get away from the strife and come to a land of peace.

I understand that the separatists in Quebec consider themselves a political minority and they believe that decisions taken in the interests of Canada go against them. However, I believe if together we are looking for the greater good of the whole, we will all realize that the decisions of the House in which Quebec has an very important role to play, are not only good for Canada but are good for Quebec as well.

That is where I think we part company. I am rapidly becoming a minority in Canada. If we go to Toronto—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I deeply regret interrupting any of you but I must resume debate with the hon. member for Okanagan Centre.

• (1810)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne is a plan, a sense of the direction the government is taking. Hon. members opposite have said very clearly that is what the speech from the throne is to designate.

I read the speech from the throne. I listened when the Governor General read it. I came away with a single sentence that I think describes accurately the leadership that we are seeing evidenced here in this House and it goes something like this. It is vague enough to be confusing but specific enough to dash any hopes of a better day at the end of this session.

I wish to address my remarks to exactly those kinds of things now. What is it that we need to do to govern ourselves successfully? I want to approach it from four specific points of view: First, the specificity of the speech; second, the fiscal responsibility that is or is not demonstrated in it; the economic and industrial development that is being proposed and the unity that is addressed.

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First, let me look at the specificity of jobs. The Prime Minister said that we should have jobs. In fact that was the hallmark of the election campaign. It was a threefold election platform; jobs, jobs, jobs.

Two years later unemployment rates have not changed very much. Many of the jobs that do exist are part time and many of the other jobs that are not part time are temporary. People want stable full time jobs.

What does the speech say to that particular issue? It begins by addressing the question for young people. It says the government will double the number of federal summer student jobs this summer. They are temporary jobs. They are really bubble gum jobs, here this summer and gone the next. The emphasis is on getting our young people into the job market. However, what happens to the parents of these young people who are unemployed?

The challenge is for government and the private sector to work together. But there are no ideas of what the endeavour should be or the sectors that should be involved.

The government challenges business and labour leaders to find new approaches to assist young people to find jobs. What a finger pointing exercise that is. Talk about shifting blame from government policy to business and industry. As long as the tax burden continues to increase, and it must, given the kind of deficit picture that we have, the tax burden alone will discourage the creation of jobs.

There is the section stating that we want enduring jobs. There is a suggestion of how we might achieve these: investment and knowledge technology. Three specific areas are mentioned: aerospace, environment and enabling technologies like biotechnology.

The second major area proposed is a predictable policy and a regulatory framework for the information highway. The last proposal is to expand the school net and community access programs to use technology to increase the knowledge base of workers.

We need knowledgeable workers. We need them in this new economy. We need them to grow, we need them to develop, but there is no indication as to how this is to be accomplished except with one little statement "to use the technology to increase the knowledge of workers". Is the federal government going to institute training programs? Is some kind of special superfund going to be created in the form of subsidies and grants to industry in terms of developing biotechnology and these industries in aerospace, environment and so on? It is not clear.

There is no suggestion of what sort of institutions or programs of study, or internship programs or other mechanisms by which workers might develop their skills. There is no indication of the

kinds of measures, and I would like to underline that, that will be employed to monitor the quality and success of any of these programs.

Millions of dollars have been spent in the last number of years to develop programs, to retrain unemployed people. What has the success measure been? Where is the monitoring program that these programs are working, the people are actually getting to work and their skill level has increased? There are some notable exceptions, but generally speaking it has not worked.

On the information highway there is no specific direction as to what we are talking about. Are we talking about telecommunications? Are we talking about broadcasting, radio, television, cable, satellite? What is it? Do we address the question in terms of convergence of these various media to get involved in how they will work together, or the adaptation and application of new technologies that are particularly conversant with digitization of information and can carry that very well, making obsolete the transmission systems that are dedicated to analog formats of information distribution?

There is one little paragraph on financial institutions which states that the government will update legislation governing financial institutions to ensure that they continue, or that the legislation continues to be relevant to the emerging needs of business and consumers.

Businesses need capital, especially small businesses. Those that are being established now, particularly in the new economy and in the knowledge based industries need fair access and timely access. They need it in large amounts; they need it in small amounts. The speech does not even seem to recognize that these are some of the needs of businesses.

On the other hand, consumers need competitive prices for the services offered to them. They need privacy, they need confidentiality and they need confidentiality of personal communications. Current legislation allows significant intrusion into the personal information and confidentiality of an individual's financial affairs. Is the legislation that is being proposed going to change that? We do not know. It simply states that the government will do something.

When there is so much ambiguity can we trust the government to do what we really need and what we want? Or is it really as Mr. Gibson pointed out in his article in the February 27 *Globe and Mail* where he says: "Our system effectively provides for a four-year elected dictatorship with an astonishing concentration of power in the Prime Minister's office and cabinet. Not unnaturally those enjoying this power think it is a pretty good system".

Will this legislation governing not only the banks but financial institutions include the insurance companies, the credit unions, the

The Address

trust companies? Will it allow them to expand into these areas? Will it have to do with the confidentiality, the cross selling and the tied selling which is currently taking place? Will that be allowed to continue? Will conflicts of interest that currently exist be allowed to continue? Questions on all of these vague matters have been unanswered.

If we are going to determine how we are going to govern ourselves, if there is going to be a direction here, then it has to be very clear there is a direction. However, there is not a direction and it is dangerous to get into that kind of situation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Since we are voting today on the subamendment this will close this portion of the debate.

It being 6.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the subamendment now before the House.

Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 3)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Chatters
Epp	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Harris	Hart
Hill (Macleod)	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Penson
Ramsay	Ringma
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
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NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélangier	Bélisle
Bellehumeur	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brien	Brushett
Bryden	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Canuel	Caron
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Cohen
Collette	Collins
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Crête
Culbert	Dalphond-Guiral
Deshaies	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dromisky	Dubé
Duceppe	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Finestone

Finlay	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Galloway
Gerrard	Godfrey
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)
Grose	Guarnieri
Guay	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laurin	LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Lincoln	Loney
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massey
McCormick	McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)	McTeague
Ménard	Mercier
Mifflin	Milliken
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunez	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Paré
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Pomerleau	Proud
Reed	Regan
Robichaud	Robillard
Rock	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Serré	Shepherd
Sheridan	Simmons
Skoke	St-Laurent
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Thalheimer
Torsney	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Ur	Valeri
Vancielief	Verran
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Wood
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Bachand	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Caccia
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Clancy
Daviault	de Savoye
Discepola	Fewchuk
Gaffney	Gagnon (Québec)
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	Loubier
McKinnon	McWhinney
Paradis	Plamondon
Rideout	Sauvageau
Speller	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the subamendment defeated.

It being 6.42 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6.42 p.m.)

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