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Monday, September 29, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 29, 1997

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1100)

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by welcoming you to your new position. I know that you will bring distinction to the Chair as you have as a critic for your party in the past. As I recall, part of the time you were criticising my portfolio, but always in a very positive and constructive way.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the constituents of my riding of Ottawa South for re-electing me for a third term. It is a great honour to be able to represent them again here in the House of Commons.

I am also grateful to the Prime Minister for giving me the opportunity to continue as Minister of Industry. In fulfilling this role over the last four years, I have had the opportunity to meet with business people across Canada in all sectors of industry. I have had a unique opportunity to see firsthand the entrepreneurship and dynamism of Canadians at work from coast to coast.

I am entirely enthusiastic about my portfolio and proud of the public servants who work in it with me.

[*Translation*]

My objective today, in setting out the government's program to this House, is to explain our vision of Canada's economic and social development in a global knowledge-based economy.

What our government set out in the Speech from the Throne is nothing more and nothing less than a new economic framework for Canada, a framework based on one idea: seizing the opportunities presented by the global knowledge economy in order to create jobs and wealth in all economic sectors, ranging from high technology to services and primary resources.

• (1105)

With our vision we will bring into the XXI century a Canada that is united and built on solid economic and social foundations. Our vision will bring Canadians, ourselves included, face to face with the challenge of being the best in the world.

[*English*]

A new global economy based on knowledge, technology and innovation is rapidly emerging. Led by dramatic improvements in computing and communications, this knowledge based economy is changing the determinants of success for individuals, companies, regions and countries. It is breaking the barriers of time and distance, and it is magnifying the role international developments play in our prosperity.

These changes are allowing individuals and businesses to operate across borders, around the world, at the speed of light: sharing knowledge, trading in goods, services and capital 24 hours a days, seven days a week.

In this emerging new economy, more than ever people and innovations are the keys to growth and wealth creation. The knowledge economy is transforming all industrial sectors from agriculture and natural resources through manufacturing to retail and services. As we move into the new century the new economy will affect the life and work of every person, every business, every community and every organization in Canada.

[*Translation*]

There is no question that change goes hand and hand with uncertainty. The changing world of work and the introduction of new technologies have left many wondering whether they and their children will occupy a productive and rewarding place in the new economy. But change goes hand in hand with new opportunities.

In an economy based on knowledge and innovation, many Canadians see outlets for their ideas and new horizons for their children. They see new ways of communicating with others throughout the entire world as well as right next door, and new ways of improving their community and enriching their lives.

*The Address**[English]*

A key objective of our economic agenda must be to ease the uncertainty of those Canadians who need to adjust to the changing economy and, at the same time, to help every Canadian take advantage of emerging opportunities and realize their full potential.

We have a solid foundation to build on. We are, as we often repeat, according to the United Nations development index, the best country in the world in which to live. With the help of all Canadians our economic fundamentals are now the best they have been in 35 years.

Our focus now must be to construct real opportunities on the foundations already laid. We are already positioned to be a world leader in the global knowledge economy of the 21st century. We have the people, we have the resources, we have the technology and we have the infrastructure.

But having such assets is not enough. We have to mobilize our resources toward a clear objective of being the best. Looking ahead to the millennium, we have an opportunity to explore new horizons, set new goals for our country and work together to reach those goals.

The government's agenda as outlined in the Speech from the Throne sets out clearly the actions that we will take and the partnerships we will forge to ensure that Canada realizes its potential in the new economy of the 21st century.

We are implementing an innovative strategy built on four themes. The first is that of connecting Canadians. Our goal is to make Canada the most connected country in the world, making sure that all Canadians can have access to the electronic highway and information economy by the year 2000. This is perhaps the single most important action that government can take to ensure success in the knowledge based economy.

Through a national strategy designed to provide access to the information and knowledge infrastructure we can enable individuals, rural communities, aboriginal communities, small and large businesses alike to find new opportunities for learning, interacting, transacting and developing their economic and social potential.

• (1110)

By connecting rural and remote communities through public access sites across Canada, we are giving these communities the tools to help further their economic and social development and make the most of their existing resources to tap new markets and create new job opportunities for their citizens.

By connecting all of Canada's 22,000 schools, libraries and learning institutions, we will make life-long learning an affordable reality for Canadians while Canada becomes a laboratory for the creation of interactive, multimedia learning software and networks.

By creating the best environment for electronic commerce, Canada can become a world leader in this emerging field, leading to increased investment in electronic networks and growth in areas such as electronic transactions, multimedia products and on-line services.

[Translation]

By connecting Canadians to the information highway, we will create a demand for digital content, which could strengthen Canada's cultural identity and create new economic opportunities.

By putting government services on-line, we can facilitate communications between government and the people like never before. Government services will be available to Canadians wherever they are 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

By connecting Canadians to each other, to their institutions and governments and to the rest of the world, we will all better understand who we are and Canadians will have the tools they need to maximize their potential.

These are only some of the many advantages we will enjoy when we link up with the new economy.

[English]

The second theme is realizing our international potential. Increasingly our prosperity is dependent on making the most of our international opportunities. One in three Canadian jobs depends on trade and every \$1 billion increase in exports generates 8,000 new jobs.

With team Canada we have improved our trade and investment performance but there is still much more that we must do to secure Canada's place in the global economy. Building on the team Canada success, we will consult with our industrial partners to further broaden our trading base outward in the world. We are already extending our team Canada approach to help Canadian businesses prepare at home to compete and win in international markets.

Through Investment Partnerships Canada, we are working with industry on a focused marketing campaign in priority markets to attract investment to Canada by multinational firms because investment equal jobs.

The third theme is investing in innovation and knowledge. Last year 12 of Canada's top thinkers on science and technology were appointed to the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Science and Technology. Part of their advice was:

A high level of investment, excellence in education, accelerated innovation through science and technology and an increased emphasis on the commercialization of science and technology, will spur job creation and generate increases in the standard of living for Canadians.

We are taking this advice to heart. We must promote those knowledge intensive sectors where we are already strong, where

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the opportunity for growth and global leadership is highest, and where the opportunities for young Canadians are the greatest.

Canada has winning sectors, sectors on which we can build and grow to world leadership, for example, aerospace, environmental technologies, biotechnology and telecommunications and information technologies. Together with industry we will set goals and targets to improve Canada's global ranking in these and other sectors.

• (1115)

We also believe there is enormous growth potential for traditional sectors such as forestry, mining and agriculture to innovate and adapt information technology and biotechnology to improve productivity, to reach new markets and to develop new products.

By investing in Canada's research facilities and government and university laboratories we will maintain one of the best research and development infrastructures in the world. We will also improve and expand the knowledge base that individuals and businesses need in order to succeed. We will see our \$800 million investment in the Canada foundation for innovation used to leverage additional private and public sector investments to renew and expand the research infrastructure at Canadian universities and teaching hospitals.

Last year the government established technology partnerships Canada to make fully repayable investments in innovative firms that are developing leading edge knowledge based technologies. We need to continue to use the leverage of this successful program to ensure that more products with high growth potential in key sectors reach the world marketplace.

We will build on the National Research Council's highly respected industrial research assistance program, winner of the prestigious Ernest C. Manning award, to help small and medium size businesses to develop and commercialize new technologies. We will increase the participation of Canadians in the new economy.

Supporting innovative companies and building knowledge infrastructure is not enough in itself. True competitive advantage in the knowledge economy is achieved only through developing the brains and skills of our people. The transition to the new economy is not automatic. Some Canadians will be better prepared than others to take advantage of these opportunities, and some Canadians will need help to rise to the challenges. The government is committed to making a difference so that all Canadians can participate fully in and benefit from the new economy.

Canadians are among the most well educated people in the world but the knowledge economy both challenges us and offers opportunity to ensure that quality education is accessible and affordable to

every Canadian. The prime minister announced a key part of our response to this challenge last week. The Canada millennium endowment fund will invest in academic excellence and will provide thousands of scholarships each year to help give Canadians access to universities and colleges.

We will also develop new programs to help young Canadians acquire the experience and marketable skills to take advantage of the opportunities in today's job market. We will focus aboriginal business investment programs on more long term strategic investment opportunities for all aboriginal peoples. This will help to develop and strong and resilient economic base and foster partnerships among federal, provincial and aboriginal governments and the private sector.

We will help rural communities diversify their economies and capitalize on new business opportunities by supporting their efforts to identify and build on their strengths to acquire and use new technology and to strengthen small and medium size businesses to create new jobs for rural Canadians.

[Translation]

Canada will prosper in the global knowledge based economy. We will have the opportunity to enrich our lives, create jobs, promote prosperity and ensure a future for our children.

If we look toward the future, we see a Canada in which the harsh reality of economic change gives way to new opportunities, a Canada where jobs and growth support a stronger society, a stronger nation.

[English]

We see Canadians connected to other Canadians. We see a Canada where children in an Inuit community in Nunavut can interact over the Internet with children in a First Nations school in Ontario, a Canada where an electronic trade information service connects a Nova Scotia telecommunications business with an Alberta partner to bring its product to market in South America, and a Canada where citizens in the Saguenay use their website to connect with fellow citizens in Manitoba on the challenges of rebuilding a community. We see a Canada where more and more Canadians can maximize their potential and realize their dreams.

• (1120)

Whether they live in rural Canada, in a city, on the east coast, on the west coast or anywhere in between, Canadians deserve a government that is innovative, ready to lead and ready to advance new efforts to secure their future in a new economy. By connecting Canadians, by realizing our international potential, by investing in innovation and knowledge, and by increasing the participation of Canadians in the new economy we are acting to turn the promise of a new century into new opportunity for all Canadians.

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Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in listening to the minister as he was speaking about advantages and the various things that the government is trying to bring into play. With his ministry being responsible for the CRTC, I find it somewhat incongruous that he would be speaking this way. Many of the people who try to bring new technology to the area of communications are thwarted time and time again by the CRTC.

The minister will know that there are a number of cases which are before the courts, some of which have been appealed directly to cabinet. He will also know, as industry minister in the last Parliament, that during the time that cabinet sat there were probably in the neighbourhood of half a dozen serious decisions involving the CRTC which cabinet looked at, many of which were overturned.

What is his government going to do? What is he going to do? What is the Minister of Canadian Heritage going to do to straighten out the CRTC, to get rid of the incestuous relationships which there appear to be between some people who have been in the CRTC, who are now out with companies which are presently applying to the CRTC or vice versa? What will he and his government do to make it workable so that the CRTC will be able to do what it should be doing?

Better yet, the CRTC should be completely revised from the bottom up so that we can get on with the business of building Canada as it should be built, as the technological centre that it could be in the world.

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, there is a broad range of issues in the question on which we could have quite a long discussion.

Let me say first that I do not share the hon. member's pessimism about the state of the CRTC as it currently exists. In fact, we are a party to the World Trade Organization's recent agreement on telecommunications. I will advise the member that there will be a bill coming to the House shortly to implement our obligations under the WTO with respect to the telecommunications agreement. Perhaps we can have some good debate at that time on some of these issues.

The CRTC, as an independent body with a transparent process, separate from the political process, is a model which we could only wish all of our trading partners had fully implemented. He will know that many Canadian companies find themselves thwarted in their attempts to obtain licensing in other countries by a process which is neither transparent nor subject to any appeal or judicial review.

The member will know that I have participated in giving direction to the CRTC in certain cases and in changing its decisions where I had the jurisdiction to do so. In Canada it is still a better process than that which exists, I would say, in virtually every other developed country. I am not quite as pessimistic as he.

Second, we have certainly experienced quite a few difficulties over a period of time. We have tried very hard to make wise appointments to the CRTC. Over the last year and a half we have seen in my view the effect of that. We will always have unhappy participants before the CRTC because somebody wins and somebody loses.

• (1125)

I suggest to him that really key to the process is that we have a system in which the decisions are made by an independent body whose decisions are subject to judicial review and policy appeal to cabinet. It is not done behind closed doors by politicians, and I think that is a desirable way to adjudicate these issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to point out right off that the Minister of Industry recently aroused my sympathy and that of a number of my colleagues when he said the monarchy should be abolished. I congratulate him because he was involved in the same struggle as that fought by our forebears. He expressed his pride in being a member of the Canadian people. We support his cause.

I would ask him to arouse our sympathy a little more. I have two questions for him. First, could he say he also believes in the existence of a Quebec people. Second, could he say this people has the right to be free, as he put it so well in the case of the Canadian people being free of the monarchy? The Quebec people therefore have the right to be free of the tutelage of a majority that is not of its own.

The Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, I must say to the hon. member that, as industry minister, I had the opportunity to travel around the world; I have seen for myself that, as far as the quality of products, services or technology is concerned, Canadian entrepreneurs and businesses are recognized all over the world. The maple leaf is a well-known trademark. It is a great asset in international trade in every part of the world.

I do not understand why a country like Canada which has benefited so much from its diversity of cultures and languages would even discuss a change which could weaken the partners of a country that is such a global success story.

I will add that, in the areas we are trying to help, that is to say international trade and technology, a third company like Bombardier would benefit Quebec far more than a third referendum.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the minister's outline this morning on the strength

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of our economy and the position that we are in to take full advantage of the opportunities of the future.

However, I think he embellishes the picture. Shining through all of this is the fact that 50 cents of every dollar that Canadians earn goes to taxes in one form or another. This perhaps has contributed to the fact that the report is that one child in every five is living in poverty, that we have an aboriginal lady who has to live in a van in Alberta on one of the richest reserves in Canada.

Could the minister comment with regard to his glowing picture of the position that our economy is in and our society is in with regard to these particular issues? There are other issues but I see I do not have time to touch on them. Could the minister address those two issues, the rate of child poverty in this country and the fact that we have aboriginal people living in worse than third world conditions?

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member puts his finger on two of the big problems that we have to address in Canada. No one would seek to describe a picture in which everything is perfect or all the work is done.

• (1130)

I think that in relative terms compared to anywhere else in the world, where would the hon. member prefer to live? Where are the problems more manageable than they are in Canada at a time when we have our economic fundamentals finally improved to the point of being the best in 35 years?

I would not disagree with him that the mountain of debt which was accumulated over 20 years is one of the causes of the problems that he has identified. It is the cause of the level of taxation which he knows is still lower in Canada than in most other developed countries other than the United States. But at the same time, what we know and what the theme of the remarks was meant to point out is that we are at a point in time where the global economy is changing. It is changing for Canada and for all other nations of the world. We are positioned to not only succeed but to succeed beyond the possibility for anybody else to succeed. Let us seize that opportunity. It will undoubtedly hold the key to reducing child poverty and aboriginal isolation in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I intend to share my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, in congratulating you and the other Speakers, I want to thank first the voters of Palliser for the confidence that they extended to me on June 2. Without offending the Bloc members, it

was a unique experience to enter the House of Commons for the first time a week ago today. It is an honour not only to represent them but also to work hard on their behalf over the life of this 36th Parliament.

To the members on the opposite side I would like to take a few minutes to explain the riding of Palliser, which is in south central Saskatchewan. Palliser is a riding that is centred around the city of Moose Jaw and includes small towns, farm lands, ranches as well as the southwest quadrant of Regina.

If there was ever a riding that the Liberal Party should have won on June 2 in the province of Saskatchewan, surely it was the riding of Palliser. Since the Saskatchewan voters are at least as sophisticated as those in the rest of the country, I want to take a few minutes to explain why it did not win in Palliser. Some of the answers are contained in what is and is not in the throne speech of last Tuesday.

There is for example nothing on national transportation and only the barest of references to agriculture. On social policies there is a very thin veneer but almost without any substance to it. This is particularly surprising especially because the government has 65 percent of its members from one province. I would have thought the government would have recognized this deficiency and have begun to address it in the initial throne speech but that was not to be. The government quickly needs to get out of the Quebec City to Windsor corridor so it can hear from the people in the rest of the country and begin to address their concerns.

In the area of transportation it is ironic to have heard in the last week so many references to Sir John A. Macdonald and his vision for building a new country and note there was absolutely no reference in the throne speech to the matter of transportation. On that point I would like to read a part of a letter which came to me from a Saskatchewan person following the throne speech:

The one item that intrigues me about the Speech from the Throne was the fact that 130 years ago the leaders of this country saw the necessity of a national transportation link.

The fact that transportation was entirely ignored in the throne speech would indicate to me that instead of preparing for the 21st century the Liberals aren't even up to speed with 19th century leaders.

We see this through the dismantling of so much of our transportation system, whether it is the privatization of air and sea ports, the privatization of the CNR, the abandoning of branch lines in western Canada or the doubling of freight rates in the post Crow era.

There is also no commitment to a national highway system despite the fact that this government enjoys \$5 billion per annum from gasoline taxes. Canada is the only OECD country which does not have a national highway system. That makes it harder for our companies and our workers to compete in the global market.

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• (1135)

Saskatchewan as everybody knows is a landlocked province and good transportation is absolutely essential to move our products to port, to create and retain satisfied customers and to feed a hungry world. I would have thought that in all the talk about partnerships in last week's throne speech, this is one way to work with the provinces and territories to develop a true national transportation policy.

On the subject of agriculture, it is one of Canada's best export earners. Here again a national strategy is required. We need to build for the future through trade expansion and value added products. At the same time we note that R and D in agriculture has been cut by billions of dollars in recent years.

I do want to sincerely extend best wishes to the new minister of agriculture who was here a little bit earlier and his elevation to cabinet. Our hope is that he will work with the opposition parties to help farmers and rural Canadians across the country. On a personal note may I say that I know the area of the country that the minister comes from and I am sure he will be conscientious of working with all of us.

Let me turn quickly to the social safety net and particularly the subject of intergenerational transfers and what it has meant in the past to be a Canadian. It was an unwritten agreement which stated "as a young person let me pay a reasonable tuition fee and I will help you in your retirement". Certainly that was there when I was at university but now the social safety net is being torn apart. It began under the Tories and has been continued by the Liberals. The result is that tuition fees are going through the roof and nobody in their right mind is going to come out of university with a \$35,000 or \$40,000 bill for his or her education and say "Sure, I will pay that off and then I will be glad to help you with your pension".

Successive governments have tinkered and cut social programs under the rubric of a user pay mentality with the result that they are breaking social contracts between generations. We can all cite examples, the CHST, employment insurance, CPP, and that contradiction in terms called the seniors benefit.

We are going backwards in our quest for social justice and fairness. This regression is aided and abetted by the false start program of the Reform Party.

Last week there were lots of tributes paid to Stanley Knowles, the late member of Parliament for Winnipeg North Centre. If Stanley had been around he would probably have had another arrowroot biscuit and a cup of tea in quiet celebration of the fact. We could honour his memory better by introducing progressive changes like affordable tuition, a decent pension plan and a fair and equitable tax system.

Stanley's lifelong friend Tommy Douglas said it very well a number of years ago, "The measure of a nation's greatness does not lie in its conquests, its GNP, its gold reserves or its skyscrapers. The real measure is what it does for the least fortunate and the opportunities it provides for its youth to lead useful and meaningful lives".

Finally let me try to encourage the government House leader and the members opposite to do the job that all of us were elected to do in this Parliament. Regardless of our political affiliations, we are all here to represent our constituencies to the very best of our abilities. I would say to the government House leader and the government, do not frustrate but rather ensure that standing and select committees have sufficient powers and are vested with sufficient authority to carry out the work ahead.

We have five recognized parties in the House and that means we require a mature and modern approach to deal with it. It is the first time that we have ever had five parties. If the government follows that advice, it will be very good for this 36th Parliament, it will be good for Canadians and it will be good for the future of parliamentary democracy.

I will close by moving our party's subamendment in this throne speech debate. I move:

That the amendment be modified by adding after the words "legislative program that", the following: "in failing to set targets and timetables to reduce unemployment and in failing to strengthen national programs such as medicare which promote the equality of all Canadians and the unity of the country is an affront to fundamental Canadian values".

• (1140)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The amendment moved by the hon. member for Palliser will be checked by the table officers. We will resume with questions and comments.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the New Democratic Party agrees that this government should send a team Canada group into the Atlantic region so that there will be a better understanding of the needs of our people in the Atlantic region, and find a way to create the jobs for all those mature people who are out of work, the moms and dads who want to work, who want to feed their families and pay for the education of their children and get back their dignity.

I would like to know if they agree with that.

Mr. Dick Proctor: Mr. Speaker, I do not think this caucus would oppose that in any way. I would also want to acknowledge the fact that the people from that region sent a number of opposition members, including eight from this caucus, to Ottawa to voice their concerns about what was not happening in that part of the world. I appreciate that there is a reasonable delegation from the member's party also.

The point that I was trying to make at the outset was that I would hope this government would be listening to people who live beyond the Quebec City-Windsor corridor and reaching out so that we can move this country ahead into the 21st century.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the industry minister chose earlier not to answer a question a Bloc Quebecois member was asking him.

The hon. member was asking whether or not the House recognizes the existence of a Quebec people; given the importance of that question, I will turn to the NDP member and ask him if, as a representative of the New Democratic Party, he can give us an answer.

Does his Party recognize the existence of a Quebec people? I would really like him to give us a clear answer because this question is closely linked to the Speech from the Throne, when it comes to national unity and the unique character of Quebec society. We in Quebec believe this is not enough.

Even some federalist Liberal organizers say it is an empty shell. I would like to know in no uncertain terms whether or not the member from the New Democratic Party recognizes the existence of a Quebec people.

[English]

Mr. Dick Proctor: Mr. Speaker, I think the question that the hon. member from the Bloc is asking was in effect answered by this House and this caucus on Thursday last when we voted against the Bloc amendment. There is really no need for us to delve into that further at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The amendment moved by the hon. member for Palliser is in order.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to take part in this debate.

[English]

First I thank the people of Beauséjour—Petitcodiac for electing me to represent them. It is certainly a great honour. I want to talk a bit about the throne speech and what was in it for the people of Beauséjour—Petitcodiac.

I am here today as a member of Parliament representing people who felt it was time to put a stop to the painful cuts caused by the Liberal government.

It was time to elect someone they called one of their own: one who knows what having to borrow money for post-secondary

education is; one who knows what poverty is; one who knows what having to look for a job means; one who knows what it is to be a single mom; one who knows what fishing lobster is all about; one who knows what wood cutters do; one who knows how people survive on social assistance because some of them are my friends.

Maybe some time we should stop and think about how they live. Many of my friends on social assistance do not know what it is to have gifts under the tree at Christmastime. Many of us here have never been in that situation. Many of my friends do not know how they will feed their children or where they will be tomorrow.

Some know what it is like not to wonder if they will be able to feed their children or be able to pay the \$100 registration fee for a six year old to join hockey. Some know what it is like to live in shelters for battered women. There are many of us out there and no facilities to accommodate the need.

Some know what impact sun and rain has on tourism in the Atlantic. Does everyone understand the impact a rainy summer on the Atlantic region when the tourists do not come? Not only does it affect workers. It also affects businesses.

I am one who knows the impact of government cuts on small and medium size business. When people do not have money to spend businesses do not sell. I am one who knows what it is to be a seasonal worker.

I am proud to stand before the House on behalf of the people of Beauséjour—Petitcodiac and on behalf of seasonal workers. Seasonal work is important in Atlantic Canada but misunderstood by the Liberal government.

Seasonal workers have been called every name in the book by the Liberal government, from being dependent on the UI system to being lazy and drunk in taverns and not wanting to look for work. This is from the ex MP for Beauséjour, the prime minister himself.

It is interesting when we think about it that they are the same so-called lazy people he so proudly came to beg for support to get his one way ticket to Ottawa. I take part of the blame for his being prime minister; the people of Beauséjour elected him and gave him that opportunity.

[Translation]

Members may be wondering today what the riding of Beauséjour—Petitcodiac got from the Prime Minister in return for electing someone who is not from the area. It gives me great pleasure to tell you all about it.

First, we got cuts in health care, which have resulted in an unacceptable situation for our seniors. We all heard about the two employees who spoke up against the unacceptable situation in nursing homes caused by the cuts in transfer payments to the provinces. I must denounce the disciplinary measures taken by the

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management of the Providence home in Shediac against two employees who tried to pressure the federal and provincial ministers into putting more money in health care so that they could properly care for our seniors. These are the people who fought for our country during the Second World War. The present government shows absolutely no respect for our senior citizens.

• (1150)

We also saw cuts in unemployment insurance, now called employment insurance, a name I do not agree with at all.

Even though the Prime Minister had promised during the 1991 election campaign to shorten the qualifying period, today we find ourselves with a system that no longer meets the needs of the unemployed. People call us in our riding offices crying and saying their employment insurance benefits have run out and their seasonal work is not due to start for another two or three months. There are also people who do not qualify at all for employment insurance, such as part time workers in hospitals, schools, plants, and so on.

They even closed employment centres like the one in Bouctouche. Instead of helping rural communities overcome the lack of jobs, the federal government is taking away from the unemployed the necessary tools that could help them rejoin the labour market.

They also cut the staff of other employment centres, like the ones in Shediac, Sackville and Richibuctou, at a time when there is a surplus in the employment insurance fund.

Cutting jobs in our rural communities does not only translates into lost services. It has a disastrous economic impact on these communities because these jobs are the only ones that pay reasonably well.

We must start trying to understand the situation in which rural communities find themselves. In our region, jobs are not found on every street corner.

[*English*]

Let us see what Sackville received from the Liberals. We no longer have an animal pathology lab. Approximately 60 employees lost their jobs at Maritime Atlantic. The armouries is on the way out. Can we imagine that in a town of 5,400 residents Sackville is fighting to keep its post office open? After going door to door during the campaign I call Albert County the forgotten land. It has been absolutely ignored in every way imaginable.

We must not forget jobs, jobs, jobs. The Liberal government forgot a word in its promise of jobs, jobs, jobs, and that word is cut. The Liberals meant job cuts, 45,000 federal jobs. Not only were the jobs gone but the service with them.

In New Brunswick we are getting job creation at \$6.25 an hour. Has anyone calculated how much money a person makes at \$6.25

an hour for 35 hours a week and how much that person is paying for child care? I have talked to those people. I have had single mothers around me crying because they just do not work.

The \$6.25 an hour jobs are for a maximum of 26 weeks so they can go back on EI. It is a vicious circle. They end up poorer in the end than when they started working. Now the Liberals are wondering why there are so many poor families.

As I look across the floor I can see who is responsible for the increase in poverty. It is the Liberal government. While it caters to the bank, families are suffering. This is not acceptable. Liberals should be ashamed. They should be setting targets for the reduction of unemployment just as they have set targets for deficit reduction.

Then we have the GST. We are rid of the GST in New Brunswick. We have the HST instead. We now pay 15 per cent tax on children's clothing, electricity, heating, and it goes on and on. Again it attacks low income families. When will it stop? The young people graduating from high school have lost all hope in post-secondary education.

All the cuts came with an extremely high price. Poverty has increased. Businesses are closing. People are losing their jobs. Families cannot take that stress any longer. Many families depend on the fishing industry as a way of life. The failures of past and present government policies have driven them to complete despair and destroyed their proud and historical way of life.

The throne speech mentioned a deep concern for aboriginal issues. If the government were so concerned about the first nations, why is the Big Cove Reserve suicide situation not recognized as a crisis? Two more young first nations people have died over the last three months since the help line was cut due to insufficient funding. Unfortunately there was nothing in the throne speech to give hope to the elderly, the students, the sick, the unemployed and the small and medium businesses of Beauséjour—Petitcodiac. Let us not forget we got one thing: we got a senator.

• (1155)

I thank the people of Beauséjour for paying off the deficit and all the other unemployed, sick and students of the country who paid the deficit. If members do not believe me they can ask the banks.

In closing, if a mother starves her child it is called child abuse, but if the Liberals starve a million children it is called balancing the books. The pain has to stop.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac for her excellent speech. It was her maiden speech in the House of Commons and I congratulate her.

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I met the member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac a few years back, when the Standing Committee on Finance was travelling across the country. She always represented the most disadvantaged members of society with dignity and in her speech today she is once again standing up for those who do not have a voice in this Parliament.

My question for the member for Beauséjour-Petitcodiac is not about her undeniable social commitment, but about the existence of a Quebec people in Canada. Does the member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac share the point of view of her colleague, who just replied that the New Democratic Party had voted against the amendment proposed by the Bloc Québécois—that the existence of the people of Quebec be recognized—and that it had nothing else to say, given the vote? Does the member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, in her great wisdom and as an Acadian representative, share her colleague's opinion, or does she recognize the existence of a Quebec people?

Ms. Angela Vautour: Mr. Speaker, it is true that we voted against the motion because we have a great belief in national programs. But we most certainly recognize Quebec as a unique people. You have your language and culture, in your country, as do we Acadians. But that does not mean that we want to drop our national programs. That is why I believe strongly that we should keep our country together.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I also add my congratulations to the NDP member on her first speech.

I have a very short and succinct question to ask. She mentioned in her speech the little phrase “paying off the deficit”. That is a total misnomer. There is no such thing as paying off the deficit. The deficit is an amount of money that one borrows. At best one can reduce the amount that one is borrowing.

The increased spending promoted by the member, and I presume her party, would require additional borrowing. Thereby more and more taxpayers' dollars would be sent to the financial organizations of the world instead of financing and paying for needed social programs. There is a tremendous contradiction in the NDP platform. The more borrowed money we spend on social programs, in the long run the more money we send to financial institutions and deprive it from being available for social programs.

Ms. Angela Vautour: Mr. Speaker, I guess the member is not understanding that we have a problem and that is who pays that deficit.

I said it is the unemployed. It is the sick. It is the elderly. Did any banks pay on that deficit? Did any of the very wealthy pay on that deficit? He should check with the people who cannot feed their children any more.

• (1200)

What the hon. member should understand is who is suffering today because of deficit reduction. We have no problem with deficit reduction, but why should everyone not pay their fair share? We have not seen that from the Liberal government.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that we have not paid off the deficit because that is a physical impossibility. The deficit is the amount of money which is being borrowed.

The member is confusing it with the reference to debt. The fact is as long as there is any deficit the debt will increase.

Ms. Angela Vautour: Mr. Speaker, try to explain that to a mother who cannot feed her children or to the person who just lost his or her job. Believe me, at this point no one is worried about that.

What I am worried about—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time allotment this morning with the hon. member for Oxford.

I rise to address my colleagues in the highest forum in our country and in so doing I acknowledge with considerable humility the great honour and privilege which has been bestowed on me by the people of Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford.

[*Translation*]

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your appointment and offer you my best wishes.

As the Prime Minister pointed out in his speech in reply to the Speech from the Throne, this Parliament will be the last one of this century and the first one of the new millennium.

[*English*]

As such, the opportunity to participate in this Parliament is an historic occasion. I will spare no effort to meet the challenges it will present.

I am here today by the grace of God, by the support of my husband and family, and the commitment and hard work of many volunteers and friends. I am most grateful to them, as I am to all the citizens of Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford for their trust and their support.

My riding is balanced, with the city of Barrie to the north, Bradford West Gwillimbury to the south and the towns and farms of Innisfil in between.

The northern portion of Barrie and Innisfil have not sent a Liberal member to Parliament since Duncan F. McCuaig, the father of our current mayor in Barrie, Janice Laking. He represented the

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riding from 1935 to 1945. It is an honour and a great privilege to bring this part of Ontario back to the Liberal fold after some 52 years.

The city of Barrie is an exciting phenomena of explosive growth, combined with a superb geographical location that affords its citizens an enviable quality of life. It is situated on the shores of Lake Simcoe and enjoys all the amenities that top recreational facilities and dynamic economic growth provide.

While its early settlers hailed mainly from Britain and northern Europe, including such historic figures as Lord John Graves Simcoe and the legendary Sam Steele of the Northwest Mounted Police, Barrie now joins other cities in reflecting the multicultural diversity of Canada today. Indeed, one of the country's fastest growing cities, Barrie will double its population by the year 2001, largely due to many of Toronto's immigrant families moving north.

The workforce in Barrie is well educated, highly skilled and diversified. The city has a strong automotive manufacturing sector, plastics manufacturing and a strong industrial automation sector. The city is well represented internationally by companies like Albarrie, Yachiyo, Canplas and Alloy Wheels.

• (1205)

Bradford West Gwillimbury in the south of my riding has a population of 17,000 and has outpaced Barrie in developing a strong, multicultural mosaic. The municipality is home to 450 businesses and is impacted greatly by the Holland Marsh, the heart of Canada's vegetable industry, the salad bowl of Ontario. Over 90 percent of the produce of the Marsh is processed and packaged in Bradford West Gwillimbury where the agri-industry is a major contributor to the local economy.

The town of Innisfil is a mixed urban-rural community in south Simcoe. Last year the celebration of Yonge Street as 200 years old held special significance for Innisfil as much of its history was impacted by the development of what was known as Penetanguishene Road and later Yonge Street. This was the route used by the settlers who came from Europe to clear the land and develop their farms.

Today Innisfil has a population of 26,000 with many skilled workers who commute to nearby urban centres and many who work in the industrial manufacturing sector of the municipality.

It is then with great pride that I come to Ottawa to represent this diverse yet typically Canadian part of Ontario. The citizens of Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford supported my election to the House of Commons because they strongly endorsed the government's track record on reducing the deficit and moving the country into the requisite of fiscal responsibility.

Everywhere I went during the June election I was told that the pain had been real but worthwhile since the strategy of achieving a

balanced budget had been successful. This was what my constituents had accepted as a very real priority. I was told by many that to fail to continue along the road to debt reduction following the elimination of the deficit would be very erroneous indeed.

The businesses in my riding count heavily on the government to stay the course and provide the stability that allows for reinvestment in the economy that will contribute in the long run to the long term creation of jobs. While I agree with that plan, I also believe it is very much incumbent on business, large and small, to partner with us in the creation of these jobs by providing internships, providing youth with the skills and mentoring that gives them the experience and life skills to help them obtain gainful employment.

Youth and adult unemployment are not the responsibility of governments alone. They are the responsibility as well of business and industry that are able to grow and prosper in an economy turned around by the courage of this Liberal government.

The people of Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford also believe that the reinforcement of our social programs is a major goal for the government and it is one that I heartily endorse. The delivery of the Canada Health Act is vital. Addressing the causes and cures of child poverty are also vital. The willingness and flexibility to work with the provincial governments as our partners to achieve these goals is very much a part of the government's approach.

To reconcile the dilemma that the continued support in Quebec for sovereignty, however diminished as the polls suggest, is a personal goal and one that contributed greatly to my decision to run for Parliament.

As a new member of Parliament, the walls of my office are bare except for one framed poster I brought with me. The poster reads "If you want peace, work for justice"—"si on veut la paix, il faut travailler pour la justice". It is an activist slogan but then we are all activists or we would not be here.

Indeed we want peace, the peace that results from a resolution to the current dilemma that some Quebecois are unconvinced that their future is best realized within the framework of the Canadian Confederation.

• (1210)

The road to that peace is through justice. We must determine what is a just sharing of powers, what is a just treatment of a unique culture and unique province within the constitutional framework, what is a just guarantee of minority rights within the part and within the whole.

[*Translation*]

It is my firm belief that we are capable of giving, of taking risks, of finding the just solution. I am not naive; I know we still have a ways to go. But it is very important to remember that the principles of social justice have long been a part of the Liberal Party's

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philosophy. That is why the majority of Canadians chose a Liberal government and that is why I am a member of that government.

[English]

The concept of social justice is what gives Canada its reputation for compassion and tolerance. It is partly why we are considered the very best country in the world today.

[Translation]

Do not forget, my friends from Quebec, that as a Canadian I share your history and your dreams, and that I will share your future. I will do everything in my power to see that we share this future together. I came to Parliament to help keep this country together.

[English]

I look forward with great anticipation to the challenges and victories we will achieve in this, the 36th Parliament. I have a sense that the goals we all share will move us forward in our common quest for the betterment of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment as deputy chairman of the committees of the whole House. I am also taking this opportunity to thank the voters of West Nova for asking me to look after their interests—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I am sorry, but this is questions and comments.

Mr. Mark Muise: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking as an Acadian from Nova Scotia and I wish to comment on the remarks made by the hon. member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford. In 1994, the then leader of the opposition said, in a speech to the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, that the Bloc Québécois was the voice of francophones outside Quebec in the House of Commons.

More recently, in an interview with the daily *Le Droit*, the Bloc Québécois critic on official languages said that the Bloc would always defend francophones outside Quebec. This is why I am very surprised by the events that took place in recent days. I am surprised that the Bloc Québécois did not make mention of its support for francophone and Acadian communities in its action plan for the year 2000, which was tabled last week—

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Would the hon. member put the question to the member on questions and comments.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since this is questions and comments, I will refer to the remarks made by the member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford. She

spoke of Quebec's unique character. I am pleased to have this opportunity to ask her, as a member from Ontario, a question on this specific issue.

As we know, the Ontario premier, Mr. Harris, said shortly after the Calgary declaration that Quebec was just as unique as Pacific salmon is.

• (1215)

The hon. member claims to be in politics for the purpose, among others, of saving this great country. This is fine rhetoric, but nothing concrete is ever done. Still, Quebecers are patient as they approach the new millennium.

The hon. member, who is a government member, told us she shares our history. If, indeed, she knows Quebec's history—not the one told in Ontario schools, but Quebec's true history—if she knows about the traditional claims made by Quebec premiers since the fifties, will she tell this House whether or not her government does recognize the existence of the people of Quebec?

This is very short. Aboriginal peoples are recognized. So, as a government member, will the hon. member tell us whether Quebecers are a people, yes or no?

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Chair apologizes to the hon. member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford. I should have gone back to the hon. member after the comment made by the member for West Nova.

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my friend on the opposite side of the House. I listened carefully and found it a little meandering. I hope to conclude that I do not have to defend people, other than the government, in their views.

Although Mr. Harris may have made that comment I have not heard it. I believe that Mr. Harris has participated in Calgary with other premiers who have moved forward in their attempts to achieve the just resolution which I spoke of earlier in recognizing a uniqueness in the province of Quebec and a uniqueness in its society. They have been joined by our government in moving forward.

I have great optimism and I believe there has been a variety of versions of history frequently dependent on the author. We have to reach across those perhaps slanted views. It is difficult today to get across the media of each language and speak with one another, but we have this forum to come together and resolve perhaps what has not yet been resolved. In this Parliament over the next few years we will resolve it.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your appointment as one of our deputy speakers and I wish you well.

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I would also like to thank my colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for sharing her time this morning and I would like to thank my constituents for re-electing me to serve another term in the 36th Parliament.

In 1929 I was born in the Dominican Republic to British parents. After a short return to England my parents emigrated with our small family to Canada. Like millions of other immigrants who have built our great country, my parents came to Canada in search of a better life for themselves and their children. They watched as my brother became a successful lawyer in Vancouver, while I spent my career in education in Oxford Country, retired and was first elected to the House in 1993.

It is difficult to put into words my feelings as I was recently sworn in, for the second time, as a member of this esteemed Chamber. In addition to constituents, present at the ceremony was my father, age 94, who resides in a retirement home here in Ottawa. No matter how old we get we each want to gain the approval of our parents. My presence here as the member of Parliament for Oxford is an incredible honour for me but it has made my father, who came to this country so many years before with a wife and two young sons in tow, a very proud man.

Family ties are precious things, whether it be in our families at home where parents and children work together for the common good or in our Canadian family.

The Speech from the Throne talks of building a stronger Canada for all Canadians. It states that the overriding goal of our government is to strengthen and unite this country by joining in the common purpose of keeping Canada one of the best places in the world in which to live. I think this is a goal of most of here in the House on both sides. While we may disagree on the process we all want to effect change that will improve the lives of all Canadians.

• (1220)

In my first term as the member of Parliament for Oxford I asked myself what I could do to assist in unifying our nation. To me one of our biggest problems is a lack of understanding between various regions of our country. In other words, it seems that the “two solitudes” of Hugh McLellen are still evident. Our young people, the next generation of Canadian leaders, need to increase their knowledge of the different regions of Canada. This is especially true of our linguistic and cultural differences.

I felt that we could make a difference if our young people were given an opportunity to spend some time in Quebec improving their French and getting to know the people of Quebec. I approached the member for Brome—Missisquoi about beginning a student exchange in which five students from my riding of Oxford

would spend their summer in Magog, Quebec in his riding, and Oxford would host five students in return.

I am happy to say that after two summer exchanges with the assistance of the Canada employment centres in both ridings, VIA Rail and Heritage Canada, this project can be termed a success. In fact, the member for Brome—Missisquoi took the initiative to organize exchanges between ridings from across Canada and towns and villages in his riding. Students from all regions of the country were able to visit Quebec, while Quebec students were able to increase their awareness of Canada outside Quebec.

This past summer the Department of Canadian Heritage was more heavily involved and over 200 students were able to take part in similar exchanges between Quebec and the rest of the country. It is my hope that young Canadians will be able to benefit from this type of program for many years to come.

Will this program alone solve our unity problems? No, it will not, but it can increase the understanding Canadians have for each other and work together with other initiatives at local, provincial and national levels to keep our country united. As the throne speech stated, we would all be forever diminished, forever changed, should we fail to maintain the example Canada provides to the world. Our future as a country is too precious for us to risk losing it through misunderstanding.

I was relieved to hear that the provincial premiers have agreed on certain principles to recognize the uniqueness of Quebec. I point out to my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois that in English, unique and distinct are synonyms. It is a relief also to hear that the people of Quebec have shown in most recent polls they would rather accept the declaration worked out in Calgary than separate. It is now incumbent on us to work together as a Canadian family to build a better and stronger Canada for our children.

How else can the federal government bring Canadians together? It can ensure that future generations are not burdened by overzealous spending by our generation.

We have, of course, seen the Liberal government take firm action to ensure that the federal government spends within its means.

Sound economic management and the best federal finance minister in Canadian history are restoring balance to the nation's finances. In the very near future the government of Canada will not have to deal with a crushing deficit. With a common sense of purpose we as legislators can begin the process of paying off the national debt while making strategic investments in our children and our youth, our health, our communities and our knowledge and creativity. We must ensure that all Canadians can benefit from this economic success. We must not leave anyone behind.

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This government must give all Canadians access to the tools of economic growth, as the Minister of Industry said earlier this morning in the House. We cannot allow rural regions of the country to suffer from a lack of technology while urban regions prosper.

As the member of Parliament for a rural country in southwestern Ontario, I have told my constituents that I will strive to ensure that the rural way of life is protected and that they will continue to have access to the tools they need to be competitive in this global economy.

• (1225)

The community access program, CAP, is connecting rural areas in this country to the information superhighway. By putting Internet access points in rural communities we are giving rural citizens the same opportunities to access information and resources that urban Canadians enjoy. We are also giving our students in places like Knowlton, Otterville or Cambridge Bay the same advantages provided by the computer age as students who may be studying in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver.

The people of Oxford are taking full advantage of the CAP program. When Industry Canada made its first round of approvals for this program, 15 of the 271 winning bids across Canada were in Oxford County. To understand the magnitude of this we must consider that the approvals within Oxford represented nearly 25 percent of the total approvals within the province of Ontario. This success is a testament to the commitment of Oxford's citizens to take advantage of the programs that can benefit them as we prepare to enter the new millennium.

I have also pledged to my constituents that I will fight for a strong, influential department of agriculture. Canadian farmers need to know that their interests are being considered when decisions are being made by the federal government. I am confident that our new minister of agriculture from Ontario will serve Canadian agriculture with the same level of distinction as did his predecessor.

Oxford County has been my home for over 40 years. It is where I worked as a teacher, principal and superintendent of education. It is where I helped raise a family and where my heart is. You cannot visit Oxford without being struck by the beauty of its farmland and the generous hospitality of its citizens.

When I was re-elected this past June 2, I was mindful of the responsibility that the people of Oxford had once again given me. Each day I serve on Parliament Hill and in this magnificent Chamber I seek to ensure that their voices are heard, that their views are known and that their values are represented. The people of Oxford have sent me here as their representative, a responsibility I do not take lightly. I will do my best to ensure their trust in me has been well placed.

Our work in this place over the next four years will be difficult. At times tempers will flare but we must always remember that

together we are representatives of the Canadian family. Canadians, regardless of their political persuasion, want us to work constructively and co-operatively to solve the problems of our nation. Let us get on with the business at hand so that we can enter the 21st century confident and united.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to my colleague, the hon. member for Oxford.

Most of his speech was about the Calgary proposal and national unity. Members will recall that, when Canadians and Quebecers were asked to vote on the Charlottetown accord in 1992, Quebecers rejected the accord as clearly not enough, while the rest of Canada rejected it because, in their estimation, it was giving far too much to the people of Quebec.

Just this morning, it was reported in *Le Journal de Montréal*, *Le Journal de Québec* and *The Globe and Mail* that a poll by Léger & Léger indicated that 45 percent of Quebecers said the Calgary proposal was clearly not enough, while another 35 percent could live with it.

Also, this morning's press summary shows that there are already people in English Canada who are openly saying that too much is being offered in the Calgary proposal.

• (1230)

How can an agreement, which I feel is impossible, ever be reached? English Canada will say it is far too much. French Canada, Quebec will say it is clearly not enough.

Again this past weekend—and I will conclude on that—former Liberal Party leader Claude Ryan raised serious doubts. André Tremblay, who was former premier Bourassa's adviser for several years, said there was too little in there to say it was not enough. There is also Senator Rivest, who was also an adviser to Robert Bourassa, who said that the Quebec Liberal Party should distance itself from its friends in the Liberal Party of Canada.

Could the hon. member for Oxford tell us, as the representative of the views of the people of Oxford, whether his constituents feel that what was offered to Quebec in the Calgary declaration was enough or not?

[*English*]

Mr. John Finlay: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments and the question from my colleague from Frontenac—Mégantic whom I worked with for some years on the environment committee in the last Parliament.

Simplification and oversimplification are things we have to guard against. I am quite aware of the results of the Léger poll. I think it shows some way to the future that my hon. friend has

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ignored. It said that 44.4% of the people who responded said the two phrases are equivalent. He is quite right. About one-third of those who would vote yes for separation thought they were equivalent, whereas 55% of those who would vote no said they were equivalent.

We have to continue to work toward a solution, a compromise, something that will work in this country. I supported it as a member of the yes committee in the last attempt in Oxford county. It was not overwhelmingly defeated by everyone outside Quebec. It was a very narrow defeat. People can change. People learn. People develop.

Therefore I would encourage the hon. member not to take it as the final word. That is what we are here to do, to work toward a solution.

Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to share my time. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Burin—St. George's.

I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your position as Acting Speaker.

It is a great pleasure that I join in the debate on the Speech from the Throne, representing my electorate of Markham.

I believe and I am sure many members of this House will agree that the government's plan is an attempt to move forward to the past. This government through the 29 spending proposals outlined last Tuesday is seeking to take Canada back 20 some years to the period of tax and spend Liberalism, a time of ballooning deficits, the Trudeau years, a time our current Prime Minister remembers with great fondness. Why then is this government willing to throw away all the sacrifices made to eliminate the deficit?

In a free market system like Canada, the private sector has always operated under budget constraints. It is a fact of life, a reality that forces companies to make tough choices, choices that are both efficient and effective.

Since 1984 the federal government accepted budget constraints and in turn made tough choices, choices that have led us to the other end of the deficit tunnel. Budget constraints force us as a nation to set priorities and find efficiencies. This is clearly difficult for Canadians.

The continued effort however has been that our nation is moving from intrusive big government to one that supports individual aspirations of our citizens. Today we see provinces like Ontario having to make similar tough choices in the face of intense budget constraints, choices affecting health care and education, tough but necessary choices.

The throne speech of last week says to Canadians that the future will mean new spending, new programs and by that, sabotaging what we have been doing for over a decade. By telling Canadians that the federal government no longer has to make tough decisions, we risk going back to the welfare state where entrepreneurs who brought about innovation will become lobbyists in search of government goodies.

• (1235)

We know that in a world of inflation, individuals find it profitable to enter financial professions that benefit from inflation rather than technological and scientific ones that promote growth. Why then would the government encourage the practice of making new promises of dispensing taxpayers' dollars which gives an incentive for individuals and companies to invest in seeking those dollars rather than in technological innovation?

For all intents and purposes we have achieved a national consensus on the need to rethink the role of government, to set priorities in support of economic growth in employment through innovation. The Speech from the Throne threatens this consensus and risks all that has been achieved. We cannot allow the government to go back to the tax and spend seventies.

The government talks a lot about the new economy but understands little of it. The new economy is about innovation which in turn is dependent on a stock of highly skilled workers, workers who are as mobile as the companies in which they operate.

How do we encourage these domestic and foreign workers to choose Canada? With attributes such as low taxes, quality education and health care and a safe and clean environment.

We do not have to research economic theory to know that broadly based rather than targeted government programs provide the bigger bang for the buck. This is common sense yet it escapes the thinking of the government.

We know that taxes are too high in this country. While progress has been made in lowering the deficit, it has come at the expense of jobs through higher taxes. Since 1993 this government has increased taxes no less than 40 times: 12 hikes in the 1994 budget, 11 hikes in the 1995 budget, 10 in the 1996 budget and more in the budget of this year.

The widening tax gap between Canada and the U.S. continues to damage our standard of living. Taxes in Canada now account for almost 40 percent of GDP. The outlook is not encouraging given the CPP hikes proposed by the government without corresponding cuts in EI premiums.

To add insult to injury, the proposed CPP premiums will hit self-employed workers hardest, those workers of the new economy, yet will do nothing to address the unfounded liability facing

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younger generations. Together the CPP and EI premiums will reduce, not create jobs in the country.

The EI account is expected to reach \$16 billion this fiscal year. This is far from the \$3 billion to \$5 billion EI surplus the Minister of Finance talked about in 1995. To put this in perspective, working Canadians will have contributed over \$110,000 to the EI surplus during the short 10 minutes it takes me to debate the Speech from the Throne.

To justify the current surplus the Minister of Finance must be forecasting future unemployment in the 10 percent to 15 percent range, requiring a recession of immense proportion. The reality however is that the most pervasive tax, the tax on jobs, has less to do with being prudent and more to do with eliminating the deficit by taxing jobs directly.

Now as we approach the other end of the deficit tunnel, this government chooses to continue to forgo jobs and tax jobs at a rate of \$2.80 per \$100 of insurable earnings, nearly 30 percent higher than necessary. Members should ask how much more employment is this government willing to forgo.

This mandate holds little hope for tax relief. Furthermore only the party to which I belong is calling for immediate tax cuts. Now unshackled by deficit, the Liberals talk of new spending while other parties speak of debt reduction before tax relief.

We on the other hand choose to speak about priorities. By legislating balanced budgets, by holding the line on spending, by directing surplus to tax cuts, the debt will fall to 45 percent of GDP within 10 years as a result of the growth in the economy.

The other parties are wrong when they say that tax cuts can only come at the expense of the debt. This is why the PC party is calling on the government to reward Canadians for enduring years of high taxes by reducing income taxes immediately. Only then can we increase our competitive edge with our trading partners, notably the U.S., having economic growth and employment growth in this country.

The Speech from the Throne does little to promote growth in employment. The government pays lip service to promoting jobs for young people but its actions do not support its promises.

• (1240)

I see examples of this government's hypocrisy every day in my riding of Markham. As the government calls on small business to generate jobs for young people, small businesses will see their tax bill increase by about \$7,000 under the proposed CPP plan for a company of 10. This represents about the same cost as one or two

summer jobs for youth in my riding. This is typical of the hypocrisy of this government.

Innovation and the economic growth that it generates is not produced by any particular program but by fostering a society that encourages innovation and change. Government programs and government money do not do this. Putting computers in schools and hooking them up to the Internet does not do this. Creating economic incentives and opening up markets while eliminating regulations, monopolies and protected markets helps to foster a new economy.

Unlike the 29 proposals found in the throne speech, these are changes that do not cost the government money. In other words, growth-promoting economic policies can in many instances be implemented independently of the fiscal position of the government. The federal government however chooses to view everything in terms of revenue and expenditures.

As we move into the next millennium, profound changes will continue to take place in the economy. This government had the opportunity in last week's Speech from the Throne to choose one of two paths: move forward to the future using the tools of tomorrow, low taxes, a government that encourages innovation and economic growth; or move forward to the past using the tools of yesterday, high taxes, interventionist government. Unfortunately, the government chose the latter and missed the opportunity to offer Canadians real leadership.

I would just like to leave members with one thought. We must spend all our energies planning the future because that is where we are going to live the rest of our lives.

Ms. Elinor Caplan (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a new member to this House, my colleague from Markham, my next door neighbour, offers me an example to clearly and loudly say in this House how different our views of the world are.

I listened very carefully as he talked about the tough choices the government had to make. He used as an example of his and his party's policy the Government of Ontario. I would say to him that the deep cuts to health, education and the important programs that people care about are directly a result of the commitment that the Government of Ontario made to cut personal income taxes by some 30% before the budget was balanced.

We know that is a similar policy to the Conservative Party as the member has just outlined. However, it is in stark contrast to the balanced and fiscally responsible approach of the previous Liberal government which made a commitment to first balance the budget, protect important social programs and then in a climate of fiscal prudence look at the balance between enhancement and maintenance of the programs that we value in our society and those which have made us number one in the world and a 50% approach to using surpluses for the purposes of debt and tax relief.

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The member should note a study which was just done for the Bank of Nova Scotia, certainly not a partisan institution in this country. The study was done by the Boston Consulting Group. The study states that quality of life issues are extremely important in the greater Toronto area and metropolitan Toronto in particular to attracting jobs and growth.

I would ask the member for the reason that his party is the fifth party in this House. Perhaps it is because the voters of this country have recognized the result of having an irresponsible tax cut before the books are balanced and before the country is in a state where we can then see tax cuts implemented in a way which will still protect those valued programs and the quality of life that we have come to expect in Canada.

As the member sticks to the rhetoric of the campaign, and as my neighbour we share such different views, would he acknowledge that perhaps the reason his party is in fifth position is because Canadians have seen the dramatic results of irresponsible tax cuts that have taken place in Ontario and have resulted in dramatic and drastic cuts to programs which impact on the quality of life.

• (1245)

Mr. Jim Jones: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague.

I think we all realise we are in a very competitive world today. We are in the global economy and in order for us to create jobs and be competitive against the rest of the world we cannot afford to continue with high costs.

Everybody knows in this House that some of the reasons why the provinces had to make very drastic cuts in the last three or four years to health care and education are the reductions in transfer payments the federal Liberals gave to the provinces.

Also, I am not here to defend the Ontario government but the Ontario government, with its tax cuts, is creating 30,000 to 40,000 jobs a month in the last four to six months. It goes to prove that low taxes create jobs and high taxes cost jobs.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Markham on his maiden speech here in the House, and I would also like to congratulate him on his victory at Markham.

I have spoken in his riding several times, supporting the Reform candidate there. Unfortunately the Reform candidate did not make it this time around, but the next time is going to be another story.

I find interesting some of the statements the member for Markham made. I also find very interesting the comments of the

member for Thornhill on the first question. The member for Markham indicates that sacrifices have been made to eliminate the deficit. He is referring to the government side.

I sat in this House for four years listening to the rhetoric of the other side of the House, the government side, and really when it comes down to it I never noticed too many sacrifices being made at all.

In fact, the sacrifices made were by those that the load of debt or spending was dumped on through the different provinces, transfer payments and the like. The member for Markham made reference to that.

In other words, the government has failed to transfer money to the provinces and again the provinces have to pick up the slack.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for questions and comments has expired. I wonder if the hon. member could put his question very briefly, and we will allow the hon. member to reply.

Mr. Art Hanger: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if he would like to reflect on what his party views as sacrifice. I know the leader of his party does not really accept the general premise that their membership may want at an assembly. It is open for debate and discussion. What does the member for Markham really consider to be a sacrifice?

Mr. Jim Jones: Mr. Speaker, what I was alluding to here is that the public has made a lot of sacrifices as we have balanced the budget, or we are close to balancing the budget. There has been a benefit of \$17 billion in taxes from free trade.

Many people have had to cut costs. Corporations have had to cut costs. If I said the government has made sacrifices, I am really saying that the public has made sacrifices within the last four to five years to help the government balance its budget. I am not so sure that the government has made the same type of sacrifices that private enterprises made. There are two things that we can do.

We can try to grow revenue, and that is what this government is relying on, growing revenue. The other side of the coin is that we have to continue to reduce costs and find better ways of doing the job. I am not so sure that the government has done that.

I am saying that the public has made the sacrifices, that the public will continue to make the sacrifices and it is the government that has to make the sacrifices on its spending habits.

• (1250)

Mr. Bill Matthews (Burin—St. George's, PC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment and all other members who have been appointed to similar positions. I also congratulate the

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Speaker on his re-election as Speaker of the House of Commons for the 36th Parliament. I would also like to congratulate all members of the House of Commons who have been elected for the first time and those who have been re-elected and are back for the second or consecutive times to this Chamber.

Having served in a provincial legislature for a number of years, I can say that coming to the House of Commons in this 36th Parliament is certainly a very special feeling. I thank the people of Burin—St. George's for electing me and shouldering me with the enormous responsibility of representing them here.

It is the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne so I will try to make my remarks pertinent to the throne speech itself. Over the last few days I have listened intently to the various speakers and to the questions and comments that have been put in the House of Commons.

I refer to the comment in the throne speech on the child tax benefit increase that the government is proposing to bring into effect on July 1, 1998. It is good to see that there will be an increase in the child tax benefit allowance. However, I take exception to what I have found out during that past couple of days. The federal government has entered into agreements with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and other provincial governments that families that are receiving social assistance will not see any of the child tax benefit increase at all. Their incomes will not be increased by one cent. A clawback agreement has been entered into by the federal government and certain provincial governments that will keep the poor in essence poorer in this country.

I have stood in provincial legislatures and now in this federal Parliament where I have heard people talk about child poverty, the need to address this very important issue and the impact of hunger on education and learning levels. Yet I now find out that this very federal government and provincial governments have entered into agreements which in essence will see hungry children remain hungry. I take exception to that.

I was pleased to see a reference to home care in the throne speech. The government is taking measures to support Canadians in responding to the expanding needs for home care. I am sure all hon. members on a daily basis receive representation from families that have aging parents or grandparents, that have a legitimate need for home care. There are aging people who want to be looked after in their homes. With the cutbacks to health care budgets from the federal government to the provinces, more and more aging people are receiving inadequate home care. They are just not getting enough hours of home care. In today's society where most families have both spouses out working, it is more and more difficult for families to contribute to the home care of their loved ones. I was glad to see a reference to that in the throne speech and I look forward very much to seeing the specifics of the anticipated support mechanism for improved home care.

Too often over the last four years we saw this government make reference to initiatives it was considering. Too often it has only been that, empty rhetoric. It has been something written on paper, but government has not shown us the meat after the promise. I look forward to that. I am encouraged that at least there is a reference in the throne speech to the issue of home care.

The throne speech states that government will continue to address the serious problem of international foreign overfishing. I come from Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canadians sent this government a very strong message on June 2, that the Liberal federal policies are not working for Atlantic Canadians. They wanted to show the prime minister and the government how poorly they are working on behalf of Atlantic Canadians.

● (1255)

I am really not sure that the prime minister received the message. If he did, he is ignoring the message. We need quick action in Atlantic Canada. We need job creation initiatives, we need lower taxes, we need to get people back to work. The people of Atlantic Canada are suffering from a crisis which for the most part was imposed by mismanagement by successive federal governments. Successive federal governments have mismanaged our most important resource in Atlantic Canada, our fishery.

This government said it would continue to address the problem of foreign overfishing. Let me say that as we sit here today there are still foreigners who are flagrantly overfishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. The government in the last couple of weeks has entered into agreements with those who have violated our fishing treaties and contracts to give those violators more fishing inside of the 200-mile limit. It says it will continue to deal with foreign overfishing when those very people are again abusing the situation and the government obviously is rewarding them for taking our fish inside of 200.

Another fishery situation in the country which is very volatile surrounds the Pacific salmon treaty. I have been monitoring the situation over the last couple of months and what really jumps out at me in this situation is that in essence the government is treating the people of British Columbia and Premier Glen Clark and his government as the villains in this situation. The government has decided to stay friendly with the Americans and in essence take it out on British Columbia. From everything I have heard from the debates and in following the situation over the last few weeks, it seems to me that it is the Alaskans particularly who are at fault in the salmon dispute in the province with this treaty.

Another thing worth pointing out in the debate today is that each year there is supposed to be a fishing plan agreed to by the U.S. and Canada. In the last four years there has not been a fish plan, the only four years when there has not been a fish plan agreed to by

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Canada and the United States. Guess who has been the government for the last four years—the Liberals.

I say to the prime minister and to the minister of fisheries that they should really get involved in this B.C. situation and try to resolve it. There are many fishers in British Columbia on the brink of bankruptcy, many who need some flexibility in the area licensing plan they were promised but have not been given, flexibility that would give them viability and sustainability in their fishery.

While the prime minister and the minister of fisheries seem to be so caught up in remaining very friendly with the Americans, our own people are entering financial crisis. Many of them will go out of business if something is not done very soon. Therefore I ask the minister of fisheries, the prime minister and the parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries to please move quickly on this very volatile situation which needs their immediate attention.

While the the prime minister was calling on President Clinton to get involved in the problem, President Clinton wrote to the Alaskans saying that he would not tolerate any more actions such as the blockade of the ferry we saw in B.C. It shows how seriously President Clinton takes the prime minister.

It is a pleasure and an honour to be here in the House of Commons. There are some very serious problems that need to be addressed. I am pleased to take part in the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and I look forward to spending another few years representing the people of Burin—St. George's.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Burin—St. George's, a Newfoundland riding.

We know very well the important role that Newfoundland played in the aborted Meech Lake accord, which mentioned that Quebec was a distinct society.

• (1300)

Given that the Speech from the Throne mentions the unique character alluded to in the Calgary declaration, I would like the hon. member from Newfoundland—and I am sure he knows what happened, he knows the role played by Clyde Wells in the failure of Meech Lake—to tell us whether, in his opinion and the opinion of his party, the expression unique character of Quebec society as used in the meaningless Calgary declaration has the same meaning as the expression distinct society had in the Meech Lake accord.

This is a simple question to which I would appreciate a simple and clear answer from the Conservative member.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I remember Meech Lake very well. I remember Clyde Wells very well, sometimes with pride and sometimes with not so much pride. I sat in the provincial legislature with the former premier for a number of years.

My thoughts on Meech Lake are well known. We took opposing positions in the Meech Lake debate. We had a very thorough debate in the Newfoundland legislature at the time, as did most if not all legislatures across the country. To me the result was devastating. We are still reeling from the effects of the demise of Meech Lake throughout the country. I really believe that.

The hon. member asks a question about unique character and distinct society. I have listened to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs a number of times through the media. My belief is if distinct society is the same as unique character, then why are we changing the wording? That is the question I ask myself. If both are the same, then why are we changing the wording? That is my own personal thoughts on it. I thank the hon. member for his question and that is my answer.

As I reflected and watched the hon. minister on the news a number of times that was my first question. Why are we changing it to unique character from distinct society if both mean the same thing?

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for Burin—St. Georges this. I know that in the Conservative platform on which he ran in the last election two promises were made on agriculture that disturbed me a lot.

The first was that they promised to destroy the marketing boards for the farmers. The second promise was to do away with the department of agriculture.

I wonder if the hon. member would talk a bit more about those Conservative promises.

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

If she is disturbed with a couple of the promises that we made in our election platform, can she imagine how disturbed we are with most that they made in theirs? If she can only take exception with a couple of ours, I can assure her we can take exception with dozens of hers.

I know her question is a serious one on agriculture. She has the same concern with agriculture as I have about fish. I can only go on record and say in this Chamber what I have said publicly, that I personally did not support a proposal in the policy platform for a department of sustainable development. I supported it at the time and said publicly during the election campaign that my preference was for a separate truly Department of Fisheries and Oceans and I still stand by that. I am sure she probably feels the same about agriculture.

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I can only answer here what I said in the campaign. I will not say one thing in the campaign and then come here and say something different, as many on the other side cannot stand in their place and say.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to begin with I would like to advise you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Guelph—Wellington.

Mr. Speaker, like a number of my colleagues I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as deputy chairman of the committees of the whole House.

• (1305)

I also want to congratulate our Speaker. As a career educator and seasoned parliamentarian he earned our trust through an election process I particularly appreciated not only as a newcomer in this House, but also as a former member of the Quebec National Assembly. I will always remember that the first thing I was asked to do when I arrived in Ottawa was to vote rather than having a decision imposed on me from above, which had been my experience in the past. This augurs well.

I would also like to salute voters in Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies and thank them for the mandate they gave me last June when they sent me here to represent them and serve them in co-operation with my team of assistants.

My riding of Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies is located in the northeastern part of Montreal island. It comprises the city of Anjou and several areas of Montreal, including the fast growing district of Rivière-des-Prairies. It is a riding where the business community is very vibrant, where businesses are increasing in number, creating more jobs, upgrading their facilities and exporting more and more. My riding is home to dozens of volunteer organizations serving our young people, the elderly, our families, and providing recreational activities, as well as various cultural communities, which by the way are increasingly diverse and numerous since 32 percent of my constituents are not of francophone origin.

It is therefore an honour and a great privilege to be able to represent and to serve that population, one with a rather exceptional voter turnout of 78 percent, 47 percent of whom voted for me as the candidate for the Liberal Party of Canada.

If I may, I would also like to thank the active Liberal party members in my riding, and the party executive, for their warm support of my nomination as a candidate. I wish to send particular greetings to the more than 3,000 members in good standing of our riding association who supported my progress to this seat right from the beginning.

I have listened attentively to the throne speech, the Prime Minister's address and those by the four leaders of the opposition parties. I must say that I am very pleased to be sitting on this side of the House at this time, and I am very proud to have heard the message from the government and the Prime Minister, for a number of reasons.

First of all, the Prime Minister has clearly explained the direction he plans to set for our team now and during the next mandate. In setting a path toward a more humane and more just society, he is adhering to the most profound and the most permanent Liberal values. This I find fitting, because it corresponds to the expectations of the people of Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, whom I represent.

In recent years, tough decisions have had to be made, ones that have been both hard to make and hard to accept in some ways. I am thinking of our unemployed, our seniors, our disadvantaged families. I am thinking of the volunteer organizations which have had to do more, often with less.

While maintaining its commitment to improve public finances, the government can now say it can once again respond to Canadians' priorities without exceeding our means. It has indicated that it is now again able to invest not only in economic growth, which it will continue to do, but increasingly in the development of Canadian society and of its human resources—men, women, and young people—the primary capital of Canadian society.

Investing in our children, investing in health, building safer communities, offering young Canadians greater opportunities, investing in knowledge and creativity, these are some of our government's priorities. I think these commitments, once translated into laws, budgets and programs and put into effect, will take Canadian societies to new horizons of development and growth and will enable Canada to remain at the forefront of the international community.

• (1310)

The throne speech also warrants praise because it basically reflects the commitments made by the Liberal Party during the last election campaign in red book II, *Securing Our Future Together*.

From time to time I hear the criticism that this speech contains nothing new, nothing dramatic, that it is a rehash. Had the throne speech contained anything other than the red book commitments, the same detractors would be accusing the government of losing sight of and turning its back on the commitments it made during the election campaign.

What counts most for this country's future, for its unity and prosperity, for its men, women, young people and families, for its businesses? A government committed to fulfilling its promises or a

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government that is easily distracted and borrows buzzwords from the opposition parties?

Over the summer, like many of my hon. colleagues, I consulted people in my riding, business people, representatives of voluntary organizations, and union organizers from the private sector. They told me they wanted the government: first, to continue to support job creation and economic growth; second, to reinvest in social programs; and third, to settle the issue of national unity by taking into account Quebec's distinct and unique reality, but in co-operation with the rest of the country.

These three main concerns expressed by my constituents are high priority items in the throne speech. I look forward to helping implement measures in response to these needs and concerns shared by my community and many other communities in Quebec and across Canada.

In conclusion, I must say that I became involved in federal politics under the banner of the Liberal Party of Canada because I believe that this country can not only survive but prosper provided that the central, regional and provincial powers find a way to join forces instead of squabbling or even trying to split this country up, as the PQ government in Quebec and its prophets of doom and division, the Bloc Quebecois members, are currently doing.

I got involved in federal politics because I believe that the federal government has a unique responsibility to bring together and mobilize every part of this country, that is to say every generation, every region and every citizen of this country, to respond to the question the Bloc Quebecois is obsessively asking with ambitious plans, mainly by ensuring that each and every one of us can achieve our full potential within the Canadian democracy while making an important contribution to the international community.

[English]

During the course of my years of professional activity in teaching, the union movement, the environment, in consulting and in international co-operation, I learned that as Canadians we have many more similarities than differences, whether we are teachers, or engineers or unemployed, young and old. I learned that among Canadians there is an important desire to work together in a shared political framework. I learned that by working together as Canadians from Quebec and elsewhere in this country we can ensure a better future for ourselves and our children and make a most significant contribution to the well-being of the international community.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all my friends in the teaching profession across the country, and their representatives, and to the union organizers. I would like to pay tribute to the sustainable development promoters and supporters of the country, to the people concerned with international co-operation, and to the business people who I rubbed shoulders with in my

career lives. I do not only wish to pay tribute to them, I also want to thank them for showing me that we have everything to gain by getting to know one another and by working together, with respect to our differences certainly, but also with the profound conviction that our membership in the Canadian family is a guarantee of security, fairness and prosperity for everyone in this country.

• (1315)

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me. It cannot have been an easy decision.

I would like to begin by congratulating my hon. colleague on his speech. In it, he spoke about the Bloc Quebecois's obsession with national unity.

Does he mean by this that it is not by asking our fellow citizens on a daily basis whether we are unique, whether we are distinct, that we will succeed in improving national unity? Or does he mean, as they have always said, that the issue will be sorted out within Quebec, following formal resolutions from the rest of Canada?

I look forward with great pleasure to my colleague's reply to this question.

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Chicoutimi for raising this question.

My remarks were in reference to the Bloc Quebecois' unwavering question as to whether the members on this side of the House recognize the people of Quebec.

It is the only question they have asked since the beginning—

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: You still haven't replied.

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: —the most obsessive. I replied in advance, with reference to the people that make up Canada, of course, that this included the people to which we belong in Quebec, and as French Canadians as well.

In return, I would also like to hear them tell us sometime whether they recognize that there is also a French Canadian people, or whether they think that the contribution made by francophones in this country does not extend beyond the borders of Quebec. I would very much like to hear what they have to say about that.

These people are crawling backwards across the Plains of Abraham. They are trying to climb back up the cliffs at the Plains of Abraham in their search for their identity, when the place to seek our identity is in what lies around us, in our own experiences, in the people we encounter and in what we do with our lives, not just in wondering what our origins are and who did what.

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I intend to move in a forward direction and that is why I joined the Liberal team here on this side of the House.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I would ask hon. members to keep their questions and responses short.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it could take me quite some time to respond to this, but I shall try to be brief.

Since this morning, we have been hearing all sorts of things. We heard about such things as the homeland of culture, having a unique character and being a distinct society. The hon. member referred to distinct realities in the case of Quebec, etc.

We had Meech, we had Charlottetown, now we have Calgary and tomorrow we may have Canada's Wonderland. Had Walt Disney been a Canadian, Mickey Mouse might be the one making the premiers' declaration. Members opposite should get serious.

One thing being overlooked is Quebec's historical perspective. I am thinking of Quebec's premiers, in particular of Maurice Duplessis. The hon. member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies certainly remembers that, in the fifties, Mr. Duplessis said the Canadian confederation was a treaty of union between two great nations. Not a treaty between typical, unique or distinct societies, or whatever else. Later, Jean Lesage spoke of two founding peoples.

Will the member opposite, who is boasting because he is a government member, tell us here whether or not his government recognizes that Quebecers are a people?

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: Mr. Speaker, I am not the type of person who engages in semantics. People want to know what we will do for them in the future.

We, Quebecers, are a people, and just about everyone in this House agrees with this statement. There is also a French Canadian people, and a Canadian people.

I wonder if, conversely, our friends from the Bloc Québécois recognize that there is French Canadian people and a Canadian people.

• (1320)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask our colleague a question.

He says he is proud of being with the Liberals, because the Liberals have made promises in the red book. I just hope he is talking about the promises contained in the second red book and not in the first red book, because those promises were not kept, and a minister was forced to resign and to seek re-election and another

member was forced to join us here in the back. They made promises that they could not keep.

As a member, did you and do you still agree with the employment insurance reform that imposed cuts on the workers of this country? You talked about that in the past as a union organizer. Did you and do you still agree with these cuts that our people were subjected to in the regions?

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate my colleague on his election, and we all know in what circumstances he was elected. It is with a very definite purpose in mind that I begin my answer with these words.

I think his voice here will echo the concerns of Canadian workers, and there are other people who can play a similar role within the government party. We must all be sensitive to the problems workers are experiencing and this will be one of the mandates that I will be fulfilling in this House.

[*English*]

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne which opened Canada's 36th Parliament. I begin by thanking the people of Guelph—Wellington for the trust and confidence they gave me and the Liberal Party on June 2.

The June 2 general election marked the first back to back victories for a Liberal Party candidate in 45 years in my riding. I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve the people of Guelph—Wellington for a second term, a term that will end in the next century.

Before I begin to speak about the present and the future I want to quote a newly elected member of Parliament, speaking in the House for the first time on May 23, 1963. I quote from the members own reply to the Speech from the Throne when he said "I am very glad to be a member of a party which has a leader of the calibre of the prime minister". Those words were spoken almost 35 years ago by our current prime minister. I am proud to echo those words, and as they were used to describe Lester Pearson they apply quite equally to the prime minister.

Some parties in the House like to refer to the Speech from the Throne and the government's agenda as a return to the past. Let us compare their record to ours. Was it not the same parties that said we could never balance the budget? We will and our country's finances are currently in the best position in decades.

Did these parties not predict when the Liberals were elected in 1993 that there would be more of the same? Instead we have witnessed in four short years record low interest rates and low inflation, the restoration of public confidence in our finances, and the beginning of hope for the unemployed. I will compare our record of hope, opportunity for growth and confidence against their dire predictions any day, for we have delivered.

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We can always point to the positive results of records in the 35th Parliament. Exports have increased to records never before imagined. Social programs have been maintained and Canada has been judged by the United Nations, time and time again, to be the best country in the world. Still there is something happening in my community which goes far beyond enthusiastic forecasts and strong growth. I have witnessed a transformation of the people of Guelph—Wellington in the years between 1993 and 1997.

• (1325)

The people of my riding are optimistic again. Let me quote from the September 16, 1997 edition of the Toronto *Star* and an article written about the technology triangle which includes Guelph—Wellington. It says:

What's so often overlooked is that communities and regions have enormous human resources capable of providing the energy, commitment and leadership skills needed to create a new attitude and direction.

The article continues by saying that Guelph—Wellington:

provides one example of how people at the local level in business, government, education, social agencies and unions helped this region make a transition from old industrial Ontario to a new knowledge based one.

Sadly these communities are often overlooked for their leadership and commitment but not, however, by the Liberal government.

In knocking on doors throughout the general election of 1997 I experienced that transformation of optimism. That optimism is witnessed every day by Guelph—Wellington citizens like Luiz Danninger, president of Trodat Canada Inc., producers of self-inking office stamps. Luiz employs more than 30 people and works hard to succeed. This summer he became a Canadian citizen and represents the spirit of co-operation and partnership underlined in the Speech from the Throne.

Another example is former Guelph Liberal member of Parliament, Jim Schroder. Jim has given up some of his retirement time to raise funds for the new River Run Centre, an arts and entertainment complex which will officially open this week.

Jim represents our support for the arts, which was announced in the Speech from the Throne. Dr. Larry Peterson of the University of Guelph was recently awarded the Helsinki medal for his work and represents the support for knowledge promoted by our government.

There are more examples. Paul MacPherson is president and general manager of Valcom, a growing and successful company in Guelph—Wellington. Paul and his employees know firsthand the importance of the Technology Partnerships Canada and represent the support for technology that has been committed by our government.

Recently Constable Wayne Hummell of the Guelph police force was awarded a Canadian banks law enforcement award for his

efforts in combating crime against banks. Constable Hummell and members of the police forces that help protect Guelph—Wellington can only serve better because of our commitment to building safer communities.

Finally, the work of Mindy Ternan, the campaign director for the United Way community services in Guelph and Wellington county, can be helped through our commitment in investing in children and young people and the equal commitment in quality care and good health.

The people of Guelph—Wellington have rejected the doom and gloom spouted by the nay sayers. On June 2, 1997 they said yes to hope, growth and opportunity. They understand that Liberals throughout the history of Canada have never looked back, except to remind the opposition time and time again of the realities of Liberal success. We have always appreciated and comprehended the present while looking forward to the future. We have always worked with Canadians to find solutions to our problems.

The government will face many challenges in the 36th Parliament. We must still eliminate the deficit spending and we must still tackle an enormous debt. We must continue the transformation of our social programs in response to new and difficult circumstances. While investing in our future we must still ask for sacrifices to secure a quality of life for our seniors, our families, our young people, and each and every Canadian.

I look forward to those challenges. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve with the Minister of Labour as his parliamentary secretary. However, most important, I look forward to serving the people of Guelph—Wellington, a community that I describe as the best in Canada.

In conclusion, I again quote that newly elected member of Parliament speaking in 1963 and saying: "The people of Canada will find in the Liberal program the solution to their problems". I believe that is true today, a solution that can only be found through optimism, co-operation, partnerships, hope in our future and belief in ourselves, a solution that will keep Canada the best country in the world.

• (1330)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. member for Guelph—Wellington has to do with the throne speech and what is lacking in it, which is that there is absolutely no reference whatsoever to veterans or the merchant navy veterans.

The hon. member's government took \$182 million away from the veterans programs in the last three and a half years. The merchant navy veterans have never been treated equally. Five years ago \$100 million was put into a fund that was allocated for them to become equal. However, the government legislation made them

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ineligible to have access to it. They came to me and asked for help. There are only 2,100 of them left out of the 12,000.

What is the hon. member's government going to do to correct the error it has made and help those veterans become eligible for the veterans programs? It should put more money back into the last post fund and all the programs it has removed.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question.

I do know that as we speak the government is in discussions with the merchant marine veterans. We believe that we can solve the problem.

I share the member's concern. However, I have never, ever believed that the Conservatives would put more money into a program so I have no faith in that area. But I do share the member's concerns.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, another member from the province of Premier Harris, who claims to recognize Quebec as unique in the same way the Pacific salmon is unique.

The hon. member has heard her colleague for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, in answer to my question as to whether he, as a member of the government, recognized Quebecers as a people, reply "Yes, of course". He even went on to add: "Everyone does".

I am therefore asking the hon. member, a member of the same party as the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, whether she recognizes the existence of the people of Quebec. If so, why did she vote against the Bloc's amendment to the motion on the throne speech.

So there are two questions: Does she recognize the people of Quebec and, if so, why did she vote against the amendment we moved in this House?

[*English*]

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, first the hon. member has asked if I recognize the people of Quebec. I certainly do. First and foremost they are Canadians and Quebeckers. They are a part of Canada.

We all know that by being a part of the federation of Canada we get a great many benefits by being Canadian. Quebeckers enjoy health care, unemployment insurance, welfare and all the social safety nets. They enjoy being Canadian. They enjoy not needing a

passport to travel from one province to another. They enjoy the use of national defence.

There are many reasons why Quebeckers have, as the polls are telling us now, chosen to be Canadians. I certainly do recognize Quebeckers. I believe we all love and want Quebec in Canada.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be here this week and also to congratulate you on your appointment to the Speaker's chair. It is with great delight that I see you there.

I would also like to take time to thank the voters of South Surrey—White Rock—Langley for allowing me to continue as their member of Parliament. I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve them for another term.

I am delighted to lead off the debate today for the official opposition which will focus on the issues of national unity and parliamentary reform. These two issues are directly related. If we are ever to resolve Canada's unity problem we have to make significant changes to the way Canada is governed.

• (1335)

My Reform colleagues who will also be speaking today will be examining various aspects of these issues in more detail. I would like to reinforce the Leader of the Opposition's response to the throne speech of last Wednesday. The throne speech contains a great deal of rhetoric and platitudes about the value of Canadian society.

Most Canadians know that Canada is a wonderful country to live in. The international community knows that Canada is the best country to live in, but the reality of today is that the majority of federal and provincial politicians from Quebec want to leave Canada. Yet there is very little in the throne speech on how the Liberal government intends to address the threat of separation from these Quebec politicians.

In the throne speech the government makes a commitment to work with the provinces and territories to advance the progress made in Calgary two weeks ago toward the full recognition of diversity inherent in the federation, including the unique character of Quebec society. Unfortunately the Liberal government chose to ignore other parts of the Calgary declaration, which recognize the equality of citizens and provinces. The government also chose to ignore any mention in the throne speech of the premiers' pledge to involve the public before advancing their proclamation.

If it is the intention of the Liberal government to pursue its national unity strategy by promoting the concept of Quebec's unique character while ignoring the equality of Canadians and provinces and the commitment to involve the public in the process, its strategy will not work, nor will the official opposition support such a strategy.

The Address

Our support for the Calgary declaration as a starting point on unity discussions was based on the total package, not just one item out of seven. In the past, discussions that centred on the unique character of Quebec have been met with suspicion in British Columbia and other parts of the country.

The two major concerns expressed by British Columbians have been that such recognition will provide Quebec with special rights, powers or privileges that are not available to other provinces, and second, that such recognition would diminish the notion that all Canadians are equal and all provinces are equal. The Calgary declaration explicitly acknowledges these two concerns, but if the government continues to promote the unique character of Quebec while ignoring the equality aspect of the declaration, British Columbians are apt to become even more suspicious of the federal government's motive.

British Columbians, indeed all Canadians outside of Quebec, will have the opportunity to express their feelings about the Calgary declaration over the next few months. After these public consultations, the premiers are then expected to introduce resolutions in their respective legislatures. I am sure the wording of these resolutions will reflect the sentiment of the various public consultations that have occurred in their provinces.

But will these resolutions make any difference? The Bloc Québécois says no. The Parti Québécois government also says no. Both of these parties say that the Calgary declaration is worthless and does not come anywhere close to addressing Quebec's grievances. They claim it is irrelevant, as was the Liberal government's Motion No. M-26 in the last Parliament. Some people may remember when the government quickly passed a motion to live up to the prime minister's promise to recognize Quebec as a distinct society.

The Calgary declaration does not involve constitutional change and as long as there is a separatist government in Quebec, any constitutional initiatives are futile. Not only would we have a repeat of the constitutional discussions of the early 1980s but in another ill-advised piece of legislation passed by the government in the last Parliament, the separatist government in Quebec now has a veto over any constitutional amendment. No matter how beneficial another proposed constitutional amendment may be, it is extremely unlikely that the Parti Québécois government would ever endorse it. Thus the Calgary declaration is not aimed so much at the Quebec government but for the Quebec people. Pollsters and pundits have been filling the airwaves and newspapers with their take on the reaction of the people of Quebec and they will continue to do so even after all the provincial resolutions have been tabled.

• (1340)

We hear today of a poll out of Quebec suggesting that the majority of Quebecers do not believe that the Calgary declaration

is sufficient to address their concerns. However, the first real tangible evidence of the feeling of the people of Quebec may appear in the next Quebec provincial election which is expected some time next year.

Will the Calgary declaration and the resulting provincial resolutions convince Quebecers to turf out their separatist government? On their own it would appear not, but hopefully these initiatives will be viewed as a starting point to convince Quebecers that Canadians from all across the country are prepared to resolve the country's unity problem within Confederation.

As the Prime Minister stated in the throne speech debate at page 43 of *Hansard*:

The day may come—I hope it will, and it will if Quebec ever has a government willing to work for those Quebecers who wish to remain a part of Canada and they are the majority—when there is a legal and constitutional text to consider as such. The words from Calgary are an attempt to express worthy Canadian values and that is how they should be welcomed.

After the next Quebec provincial election we will be faced with one of two prospects: one, a federalist government in Quebec which will require that Canadians be prepared for another constitutional initiative or two, a separatist government which will require Canadians to be prepared for another separatist referendum.

I will address both of these scenarios, but I will first address the more desirable scenario, one that will enable a strong and united Canada to live up to its potential in the 21st century.

If Quebecers recognize that they are not the only Canadians who reject the status quo and opt instead to elect a provincial government that is committed to renewing and revitalizing the federation, then Canada will undoubtedly enter another round of constitutional negotiations. If Quebecers show enough faith in Canada to elect a federalist government, that faith must be rewarded. However, while this constitutional debate should address Quebec's concerns about the federation, it cannot deal exclusively with Quebec's concerns.

Any attempt to have a Quebec only round will result in widespread opposition, especially in British Columbia. While Quebec is naturally a key to any constitutional negotiations, I can assure the House that B.C. will also play an equally pivotal role in these discussions.

In accordance with the Calgary declaration, the B.C. government will hold public consultations with its citizens like the other provincial governments with the exception of Quebec. While I would never be so presumptuous as to assume that what the people of British Columbia will tell their government, some of their sentiment on the issue is becoming more public.

Last week a senator from B.C. made national headlines by stating that British Columbia should renegotiate its role in Confederation and that secession should be on the table. In response to these comments the Minister of Intergovernmental

Affairs almost blew a gasket in condemning the senator. Was the senator reflecting the mood of British Columbians? I believe she was.

I will not ask the House just to believe what I think. The House should check with the people of B.C., just like the Vancouver *Sun* did with its readers. They asked British Columbians if B.C. should renegotiate its place in Confederation and if it should, they asked if secession should be on the table. The Vancouver *Sun* had 1,010 responses to these questions. Out of 1,010 responses 800 of them said yes, British Columbia should be renegotiating its role in Confederation.

As for the more controversial aspect of including secession in these renegotiations, 700 respondents said yes, it should be there. That is right. According to the 1,010 people who responded to the Vancouver *Sun*'s question, 70 percent said yes, secession should be on the table.

The senator was just reflecting the extreme frustration that British Columbians feel. If that is not a wake-up call for this minister and this government, then I do not know what is.

• (1345)

The task ahead does have some bright spots. British Columbians desire many of the same changes in Confederation that Quebecers do. One of these issues is the rebalancing of powers within Confederation.

I have often heard members of the Bloc Quebecois talk about how federal policies prevent Quebecers from becoming masters in their own home. A rebalancing of powers by defining which issues should be within the provincial government's jurisdiction and which should be in the federal government's jurisdiction would certainly go a long way to resolving many of the concerns of Quebecers and British Columbians.

One issue that is more of a concern to British Columbia than it is to Quebec is revamping federal institutions, especially Parliament.

British Columbia is the most under-represented province in both this House and the other place. In the Senate there are 104 senators. Using the 1996 census population figures, that works out to a Canadian average of 277,373 citizens per senator. When we look at the per capita representation on a provincial basis, there is only one province which is near the national average, Quebec, with 297,450 people per senator.

At the low end we have Prince Edward Island with only 33,639 citizens per senator; New Brunswick with 73,813 people per senator. At the opposite end of the scale we have Ontario, with 448,065 per senator, and Alberta with 449,471. At the top of the scale is British Columbia, with 620,750 citizens per senator.

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There is no equality in the other place now, either on the basis of equality of citizens or equality of provinces. What we have is an upper chamber which reflects the reality of over 100 years ago. Unfortunately there has been a litany of Liberal and Tory governments, dominated by central Canada, which have been quite happy to keep things just as they were back in the 19th century. We are about to enter the 21st century. It is time to bring representation up to date.

Of course I would be remiss if I failed to mention the illusion to Senate reform referred to by the Charlottetown accord. That is the accord that the prime minister always hides behind when he is asked about Senate reform. He claims that westerners had the chance for Senate reform but voted against it.

That accord called for Quebec and Ontario to give up 18 of their senators so that each province would end up with six senators. Did Ontario and Quebec give them up out of the goodness of their hearts? Absolutely not.

Under the terms of the accord those 18 senators would be resurrected as 18 new members of Parliament each for Quebec and Ontario. Thus British Columbia's under-representation in this House would be even more significant. Is it any wonder that two-thirds of British Columbians rejected the accord? Did they really think we were that stupid?

There is another piece of information for the prime minister's attention when he says that the Charlottetown accord would have elected senators. It is true that the accord allowed for the election of senators, but clause 4 of the accord, which amended section 23(2)(a) of the Constitution Act of 1867, allowed for the indirect election of senators by provincial legislatures. In other words, instead of being appointed by the prime minister they would be appointed by the premiers.

As we approach the new millennium any rules that permit the appointment of any representatives are archaic and should be forever consigned to the 19th century, not to the 21st century.

Returning to the numbers in the Senate for a moment, these numbers are assigned on a regional basis which, as in the Constitution, recognizes four distinct districts or regions. Yet when this government passed Bill C-110 in the last Parliament and handed out vetoes it recognized five regions. It finally acknowledged that British Columbia is unique from the prairie provinces.

How can this government recognize four regions in the Constitution and five regions in parliamentary legislation? It is an inconsistency that this government must address.

• (1350)

The Calgary declaration acknowledges the equality of all citizens and all provinces. If this declaration is to mean anything there must be true equality in Parliament. In the Senate, the equality of

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provinces should be recognized and in this House the equality of citizens should be recognized. To accomplish this equality we must have true representation by population in the House of Commons.

Earlier I mentioned British Columbians' under-representation in the Senate. B.C. is equally unrepresented in this House. Using the population census in 1996 the Canadian average is 95,836 people per MP. Once again, only Quebec comes close to that with 95,184 people per MP. The range in representation goes from 33,639 in Prince Edward Island to 109,544 in B.C. Is this equality? I do not think so. It is due to a little heralded constitutional amendment made in 1985 that guaranteed that no province would ever lose seats in redistribution. What that means is today we have six provinces that have this constitutional protection. Six provinces have an average of 73,900 people per MP. Meanwhile, three provinces are significantly under-represented in this House and they average 105,366 people per MP. With the 1985 amendment, this inequity is likely to be permanent unless the Constitution is changed again.

One thing that B.C. will likely be asking for is to be treated equally, nothing more, nothing less.

Just in case members are wondering why this is important to B.C., we happen to believe that if we had our due representation in Parliament then maybe we would not have a government that handles foreign overfishing off the Pacific coast by taking the B.C. government to court. Maybe we would not have a government that closes the only military base on the mainland of British Columbia which just happens to have the highest risk for a major earthquake in a populated area. Maybe we would not have a government that gives Quebec over \$3,000 per immigrant while giving B.C. barely \$1,000 per immigrant. Maybe we would not have a government that immediately gives Quebec millions of dollars when it receives a large number of refugees, yet when British Columbia receives a large number of out of province welfare claimants the government not only fails to provide any additional funds, it penalizes the B.C. government for taking steps to deal with this problem on its own.

Before I conclude my comments I would like to briefly mention what will happen if Quebecers opt to re-elect the Parti Quebecois, the separatists. I am certain that the people of British Columbia, as well as members of the official opposition, will want to make certain that Quebecers know the consequences of what a vote for separation will mean.

First and foremost, I would like to dispel the myth that separatists like to spread that after separation there would be a friendly equal partnership between Quebec and the rest of Canada. I would like to inform the Quebec separatists that there is no such thing as the rest of Canada. The separatists have no idea what shape the remainder of Confederation will be in after a yes vote. If Quebec votes to separate rest assured that British Columbians will review their options.

Do not get me wrong, British Columbians love Canada and will do everything in their power to have it remain united. However, we expect that when Canada enters the next millennium it will be a country where all Canadians and all provinces are treated equally, fairly and with respect. British Columbians are asking for nothing more and will settle for nothing less.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very intently to the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley. I am very disheartened by her tact today.

I am from Ontario and I have never in my life stood up here and talked about the fact that Ontario feels gypped by Confederation. I have also lived in British Columbia and I can assure the member that the people of that province do not think the way she is talking today.

• (1355)

I have heard her party time and time again talk about the need to transfer powers to the provinces. We have the social health and safety transfer which is block funding to the provinces which allows the provinces to spend the money in any way they want.

Recently I read something from the Fraser Institution, one of the think tanks that the member quite often likes to quote, showing the time between when people have been diagnosed for cardiac surgery and the date of surgery. In the province of British Columbia it is three months. The same diagnosis in the province of Manitoba is half a week.

What you tell me about the equality of people and how we are going to maintain basic national—

The Speaker: Colleagues, I remind all of you to please address your remarks to the Chair.

Ms. Val Meredith: Mr. Speaker, it is no great surprise to me that Ontario does not feel cheated by Confederation when it seems to control the country. Unless it happens in Ontario it seems that it does not matter.

How does the member expect to understand what British Columbians are thinking when he does not even listen to what they are saying? Seventy per cent of the people in B.C. who responded to a survey said that secession should be on the table. Is it because you do not want to hear this message or is it because you feel that if it is good for Ontario, it is good for all of Canada?

The Speaker: Once again, with all respect, I remind you to address your remarks to the Chair.

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

*S. O. 31***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS****BRITISH COLUMBIA***[English]***HYBRID TURKEYS**

Ms. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will have pleasure of attending the facilities expansion celebration of Hybrid Turkeys in Kitchener.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to Canada Henk Bakker, the chief operating officer of Hybrid Turkeys' parent company, Nutreco, from the Netherlands.

He, together with Hybrid's company president Paul Jeenes, will celebrate the completion of their recent expansion. Hybrid Turkeys is Canada's only primary breeder of turkeys, one of only three worldwide, exporting over \$15 million in large white turkey breeding stock to over 40 countries.

I would like to recognize the contribution of Hybrid Turkeys to Kitchener. Through its expansion and building of new facilities, including a new production hatchery, new administration offices and a new diagnostics lab, its investments have created long term jobs and will have a sustained, positive economic impact on the Kitchener area.

This is the kind of success story that comes through the co-operation and partnership of business and government to the benefit of the communities involved.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week's throne speech had little to offer Canadians on the justice platform. It mentioned, and quite rightly so, alternative sentence provisions and crime prevention measures. However, it was completely silent on section 745. Victims continue to have to relive the memory of their violent loss through early parole applications.

It was silent on conditional sentencing. Violent sex offenders and even those who take life are still able to avoid jail terms. The throne speech was particularly silent on two issues the Minister of Justice had said concerned her, violent young offenders and victim rights.

Our citizens cry for changes and improvements to legislation but the Liberals do not appear to me listening. The Reform Party is listening and I pledge to my constituents and fellow Canadians that we will be continually pressing the government to address these and other important justice issues.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hearing Conservative Senator Pat Carney of British Columbia last week making statements that frustrated provinces should not rule out separation from Canada made me very angry and very upset not only as a Canadian, not only as a parliamentarian, but as a parent who, along with my colleagues, is working diligently to make sure we make this country of ours prosperous, strong and united for us, our children and generations to come.

Pat Carney, an unelected and it would seem unaccountable appointee, made a statement about how tired she was of the bias shown by the federal government toward B.C.

● (1400)

Let me point out that there were six Liberal members elected from B.C. of which four are ministers and one is a parliamentary secretary. I say bravo to the prime minister and shame on Pat Carney. I was glad to hear the other members of the Conservative Party, including their leader, not support her views.

Why is it that every time the federal government does not agree with the provinces these types of tactics have to be used? Today Sir John A. Macdonald would be turning in his grave. Long live a strong and united Canada.

* * *

*[Translation]***SENATOR PAT CARNEY**

Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week Conservative Senator Pat Carney stated that the sovereignty of British Columbia ought to be examined as a valid alternative.

Like many Canadians and Quebecers, the Conservative senator is dissatisfied with the status quo and realizes that the federal government, whether Conservative or Liberal, is totally incapable of reforming and renewing the Canadian Constitution. The words of the Conservative Senator are in contrast to those of her leader, who has nothing to contribute in response to the backward step represented by the Calgary declaration.

Even in the west, the political elite is starting to come face to face with reality. Senator Carney's statements are part of a far broader movement. Whether viewed from the west or from the east, Canada in the 21st century will surely not resemble the dream the Prime Minister describes in his throne speech.

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[English]

THRONE SPEECH

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week's throne speech has once again proven to Canadians that this government is a caring and responsible government.

Thanks to the government's efforts and to the sacrifices of Canadians over the last four years, a balanced budget is within sight for the first time in decades. A balanced budget not only provides economic stability for our nation's finances but peace of mind for all our citizens regarding the future of our valued social programs.

Canada's economy is producing impressive employment growth. Interest rates and inflation remain low but more needs to be done to ensure that all Canadians in all parts of our country are able to fully participate in this economic renewal. This is particularly true for rural Canada.

To this end, our government has committed half of future budget surpluses to the reinvestment in strengthening our society, families and communities. Our government will continue to focus resources wisely in key areas of the economy creating a better environment for our children and ensuring that our health care and public pension systems continue to be among our country's greatest assets.

Our government has demonstrated its commitment to responsible economic management. It has also shown care and compassion for ensuring that all Canadians are able to share in the economic benefits of a growing economy with healthy public finances.

* * *

THE SWEET HEREAFTER

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the presence in the gallery of one of Canada's most well-known and internationally acclaimed film makers, Mr. Atom Egoyan. Mr. Egoyan, who is a guest of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, is here with his wife, Arsinée Khanjian, who also appears in her husband's most recent and critically lauded film *The Sweet Hereafter*, and their son Arshile.

Atom Egoyan was the most decorated film maker at this year's Cannes International Film Festival, with *The Sweet Hereafter* taking home three awards, including the Grand Prix, the highest international honour ever awarded to a Canadian feature film.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the producers of *The Sweet Hereafter*, Alliance Communications Corporation, and to thank Telefilm Canada for its financial contribution to the film.

On behalf of all Canadians I would like to say to Mr. Egoyan that we are all extremely proud of what he has accomplished for Canadian films and for Canadians.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: My colleagues, you will note that Mr. Atom Egoyan is here with us today. Mr. Egoyan, would you please stand and be recognized.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

PARLIAMENT

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker,

Democracy was under strain
 In parliament 35
 For some it was a struggle
 To keep those principles alive.
 Committees without consensus
 Made it tough to co-operate
 With just one point of view heard
 The results were great.
 And major legislation
 Quite seriously flawed
 With no one who would listen
 It really seemed a fraud.
 This session could be different
 More difficult you see
 To ram bad legislation
 Down the throats of you and me.
 Fewer attempts at closure
 To stifle honest debate
 And well thought legislation
 Wouldn't that be great!
 This 36th sitting of the House
 It really could be choice
 An opportunity once more
 To listen to the voice
 Of those who chose to send us here
 Who expect us to deliver
 More than MP trained seals
 Whipped until they shiver. And to the backroom Liberals
 Stop making shady deals
 Reform is pushing for improved democracy
 And we're snapping at your heels!

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

CULTURE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the statement made in this House by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the film proposed by Pierre Falardeau depicting the death of Chevalier de Lorimier will not be funded by Telefilm Canada for political reasons.

In the light of this politicization of culture, a group of men and women has started a campaign to find popular funding to produce this film, which will revive an important moment of Quebecers' history.

The repression of 1837-38 led to the sacking of a half dozen villages, the hanging of a dozen patriots, the exile of thousands of people and the incarceration of 400 in a city of 60,000.

The Bloc Québécois would today like to congratulate the men and women of Comité du 15 février 1839 on their initiative and calls on all members of this House, regardless of their political allegiance, to make a contribution as a show of their commitment to freedom of expression.

* * *

[English]

POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday on Parliament Hill the 20th annual police and peace officers memorial service was held.

It was a solemn occasion to pay tribute to the men and women who have given their lives over the years to protect Canadians. It was an occasion for families and friends to remember their loved ones. It was an occasion for all of us to remember that part of the reason why we live in this secure and safe society is because of the dedication of professional police and peace officers who work across this country.

Unfortunately it is ceremonies such as the annual memorial service that make us realize our safety has come sometimes at the cost of those who are working, the best and the brightest that we have in these forces.

Being a peace officer is a very difficult job full of many challenges. In Canada we are fortunate to have police forces who carry out their daily work with honesty and integrity and dedication.

It is a time when we should all pause to reflect on the contribution of our police and peace officers, who they are and what they make as a contribution to our Canadian society.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC PREMIER

Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are upset by the attitude of the separatists. The priority of all Quebecers is to get the economy moving once again. The Government of Canada is doing its share, but if the Bouchard government continues to represent the interests of the separatists only, Quebecers will never reap the benefits.

By continuing to represent only the interests of the separatists, Lucien Bouchard is showing that he does not care about all Quebecers. On his arrival in France for a so called economic mission, the first thing he did when he got out of the plane was to talk to the French about separation again. Now we have even the Conseil du Patronat français acknowledging that the temporary removal of the threat of referendum in Quebec has permitted a settling of interest rates, with all due respect to Mr. Bouchard.

S. O. 31

It is high time that the separatists of Lucien Bouchard started working for the welfare of all Quebecers.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Coquihalla to bring to the attention of the House another failure of the Canadian justice system.

On September 7 my hometown of Summerland was shocked by the news of a double homicide. Cecilia and Tammy Grono were shot to death in front of Tammy's 2 and 4-year old children. The prime suspect is the ex-husband of Tammy who was on day parole.

Kevin Machell failed to report to his halfway house in Calgary. Corrections Canada policy is for tardiness to be reported within 10 minutes to one hour but because of the solicitor general's lax guidelines, this violation was not acted upon until 24 hours later.

Tammy Grono had written Corrections Canada and requested that she be notified of any changes in his status. The Gronos would be alive today if the solicitor general's department had acted. Kevin Machell is still at large.

Canadians are demanding a parole system that is limited, earned and tightly monitored. The Liberal government has failed to ensure that Canadians are secure in their homes and on the streets of their communities.

* * *

• (1410)

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Mrs. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the recent donation of \$9.7 million to the University of Toronto chemistry department by Mrs. Edna Davenport and the estate of her late husband John Davenport.

The surprise announcement of this generous gift came at a dinner last night honouring six Nobel laureates from around the world, including our own John Polanyi of the University of Toronto.

Mrs. Davenport is originally from Owen Sound, Ontario and a graduate of the University of Toronto in 1929 and was represented at the dinner by her son Peter Davenport for the announcement.

The chair of the chemistry department at the University of Toronto, Dr. Martin Moscovits, has said that the gift will be used to build state of the art molecular science laboratories at the university's chemistry building and will ensure that the University of Toronto and Canada remain world leaders in research in chemistry.

Oral Questions

Philanthropy of this type is rare and greatly appreciated. I hope one day it will lead to future Nobel laureates from the University of Toronto.

I know that I am joined by the University of Toronto community, members of this House and indeed all Canadians in thanking the Davenports for this spectacular act of generosity.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to light the current crisis concerning the negotiations between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. It is due to government interference that this situation has developed into the state it is in now.

I refer to a memo that describes a meeting between the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and the president of the Canadian Direct Marketing Association. According to the memo the minister suggested that the government might use conciliation to delay negotiations, blame the unions for a strike and then introduce back to work legislation within eight days of any strike action.

This strategy by the government and the management at Canada Post makes a mockery of the collective bargaining process. It suggests the conciliation process was never intended to resolve the major issues and is tantamount to denying the postal workers their legal right to strike.

I suggest to the minister that he remove the threat of back to work legislation and allow the union and management to seriously negotiate a collective agreement.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC PREMIER

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Lucien Bouchard has barely started his sovereignist pilgrimage to France to find symbolic support for his separatist cause and already the truth he refuses to see is hitting him right in the face.

A document released at a press conference held by Lucien Bouchard and French business representatives states that the temporary removal of the referendum threat has resulted in lower short term interest rates in Canada.

French business people too recognize that the political uncertainty generated by the sovereignist threat is hurting Quebec's and Canada's economy.

What more does Lucien Bouchard need to hear to put an end to such a costly threat to our economy?

SEARCH AND RESCUE HELICOPTERS

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, the need to replace our aging and unreliable search and rescue helicopters was established over four years ago. We hope the government's decision to postpone the replacement of these helicopters, at an enormous cost to Canadian taxpayers, will not have unfortunate consequences.

[*English*]

If there are any further accidents, injuries or losses due to the prime minister's callous partisanship in delaying this purchase, Canada will hold him personally accountable.

[*Translation*]

For the safety of the men and women who fly these helicopters, we sincerely hope we will never reach that point. Party politics have no place in the managing of our Canadian forces.

[*English*]

The Speaker: My colleagues, I want to thank you very much for last week. It seems that the question period is progressing very well thanks to you because you want it, not because I want it. I would encourage you in the name of the House to please continue to keep the questions right on time and the answers also. With this I am going to recognize the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

● (1415)

[*English*]

CALGARY DECLARATION

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the papers are quoting opinion polls in Quebec in which Quebecers were asked their opinion on the premiers' declaration from Calgary. However most Quebecers have no way of knowing what is in that declaration, that it is primarily a commitment to consult the public and that what it is seeking to do is to balance acknowledgement of uniqueness with acknowledgement of equality as citizens and provinces. All Quebecers have heard about this agreement is some negative attacks by the Premier of Quebec.

My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. What specific steps will he take to inform Quebecers about the content of the Calgary declaration?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to have the same kind of process in Quebec as in the other provinces since the Premier of Quebec is

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not interested in consulting the people of Quebec about the Calgary declaration.

We will continue to make the case for the Calgary declaration everywhere in the country including Quebec. I would say this about all the principles in the declaration, about the declaration as a whole.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week when the government indicated that it might consult ordinary Quebecers with respect to the Calgary declaration, a hostile Premier Bouchard said "I dare you".

Meanwhile Bouchard is off consulting the Government of France and Quebecers are kept in the dark concerning what Canadians in other parts of the country are proposing to make the federation work for the benefit of all.

Will the minister mail a copy of the Calgary declaration to every household in Quebec, or will he be intimidated by the Premier of Quebec on this vital issue of consultation?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I may have shortcomings, but being intimidated by the premier of Quebec is certainly not one of them.

[*English*]

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if the government is not to be intimidated by the Premier of Quebec and is not prepared to say exactly how it will consult with Quebecers on the premiers' declaration, could the minister at least make the simple commitment to mail a copy of the Calgary declaration to every household in Quebec so Quebecers will at least know what is being talked about in the rest of the country?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Calgary declaration has been released widely by the media in Quebec, but the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition is welcome and we will study it.

* * *

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government professes to be concerned about the unity of federation, yet when a B.C. senator commented on the topic last week the minister responded with disdain.

Today the Vancouver *Sun* reports that almost 70 percent of respondents support Senator Carney's comments, including her suggestion that B.C. should not rule out separation.

Could the minister explain why he and his government are so insensitive to the concerns of British Columbia?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a common practice of separatist leaders in Quebec to describe anyone who is fighting separation as someone who is fighting Quebec.

If the hon. member is now starting to put forth the same kind of argument, she will receive from the Government of Canada the same answer we have always given to the PQ Government of Quebec. Quebec and British Columbia, yes, yes and yes. Secession, no, no and no.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, neither British Columbians nor I are calling for secession. What we are calling for is a little respect from the government.

• (1420)

The government responds to foreign overfishing off the west coast by taking the B.C. government to court. It closes the only military base on mainland British Columbia. It withholds millions of dollars in transfer payments because it claims the B.C. NDP government is too hard on welfare recipients.

Would the minister agree it is because of the government's mishandling of west coast issues that so many British Columbians do not feel at home in Confederation?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member started by talking about the Pacific salmon treaty, as she did last week with the same preface to the question.

We wish to have a treaty with the Americans which guarantees proper management of west coast fish stocks, whether they be in Canadian rivers or in others.

The issue with the province of British Columbia is defence, the Nanoose base which we believe to be extraneous.

I would remind the hon. member when she talks about the closure of bases that bases have been closed in Quebec, in the maritimes, in Alberta and in Ontario.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CALGARY DECLARATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the leader of the official opposition, whom

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the Prime Minister himself views as a key player in the debate on Canadian unity, sent an ominous message inviting western Canada to get involved in the consultations on the Calgary declaration so that the notion of Quebec having a unique character does not lead to the constitutional recognition of Quebec as a distinct society.

I would like to know if the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs agrees with the leader of the official opposition, who—must I remind the hon. members—is considered by the Prime Minister to be a key player in the debate on Canadian unity.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): It is a pity, Mr. Speaker, that the Bloc leader cannot put the question to the leader of the official opposition.

What I understand of the official opposition leader's position is that he wishes all principles, including the recognition of the unique character of the society in Quebec, to be discussed.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): It is a pity, Mr. Speaker, that the minister cannot answer the questions put to him. My question was quite clear. We want to know if he agrees with the leader of the official opposition, who is against any recognition of distinct society.

The leader of the official opposition was not the only one to comment on the Calgary declaration over the weekend, as Quebec Liberals stated that, as far as they were concerned, the Calgary declaration was not enough, that it needed to be fleshed out.

My question to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is this: Does he not agree that Canada is headed in the same direction as with the Charlottetown accord, which the people of Quebec felt did not offer enough to Quebec, while the rest of Canada felt it gave too much to Quebec?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Calgary declaration was very well received in Quebec. I can see how this would concern the Bloc leader.

Quebecers regard it as a step in the right direction, but when asked if it is enough, of course they say it is not. Is the economic situation good enough right now? Is the social situation good enough?

The public wants improvements and one way to improve this federation would be through the principles set out in the Calgary declaration, including the recognition of the unique character of Quebec's society.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one wonders whether the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs lives in Quebec. We read the papers and we see—

An hon. member: That's a cheap remark.

Mr. Michel Gauthier: It is not. One wonders whether he still lives in Quebec, because he misinterprets what is going on there. He badly misinterprets it.

Last weekend the federalists in the Liberal Party of Quebec—they are federalists in Quebec's Liberal Party, not sovereigntists—found the Calgary declaration wanting, given Quebec's traditional expectations.

My question for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is this: Does he realize that even the most modest demands from Quebec's federalists place the bar so high that the premiers of the other provinces cannot make it over?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, the member has it all wrong.

• (1425)

Mr. Johnson explained that it was a step in the right direction, that it was a good start and that he also had other demands. I know of no other province that does not have other demands. They all have demands for improvement. The Government of Canada also has demands, and we are working together, in partnership. This country offers the best standard of living in the world. And we will continue to do so, regardless of the member.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs realize that the only Quebec federalists who still hold any hope for the Calgary declaration are those who think that "unique character" means the same thing as "distinct society" and that it will be in the Constitution, exactly the opposite of the message delivered by the Leader of the Opposition on the weekend to the rest of Canada? Does the minister realize this?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I do realize is that the very great majority of Quebecers want to stay in Canada. And I realize that the Bloc Quebec finds this continued and inescapable state of affairs annoying.

That is why they are always trying to disguise their option. They know that if they put the question clearly their support would disappear. We are going to go on improving Canada in various ways, particularly by strengthening the recognition of Quebec in the Canadian Constitution.

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Oral Questions

In 1992 at the Rio earth summit Canada agreed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. In 1994 the deputy prime minister and former environment minister committed to further cut CO₂ emissions by 20 per cent. Yet in today Canada it is almost 10 percent above those levels.

When will the government finally show leadership and live up to its promise to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is very concerned about meeting realistic, legally binding targets at the meeting we are to have in Kyoto, Japan, in December.

We made commitments at Rio in 1992 to try to achieve reductions by the year 2000. We have admitted that we are not able to achieve those targets, but we are trying to work with all our partners in Canada and abroad to make sure that we achieve realistic targets for the future.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are getting very concerned that all we hear from the government is concern but nothing in the way of solid, detailed plans. Even the prime minister has said that he supports legally binding targets, but where is the plan?

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Could she assure us that she will take to Kyoto in two months time a specific detailed plan that lives up to Canada's promise to reduce emissions by 20 per cent from 1988 levels by the year 2005? Will the environment minister commit to this today?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, I will not be committing to that today in the House.

The government has a commitment to work with our partners in Canada and with the international community to meet realistic targets.

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the health minister.

In 1993 the prime minister described the decision to purchase much needed maritime helicopters as a colossal waste of taxpayers' money. On national television he told Canadians "I will take my pen and I will write zero helicopters".

Canadians know the government has wasted an obscene amount of their money to delay the purchase of helicopters that Canada needs.

Will the Minister of Health agree that the colossal waste of money cancelling the helicopter contract would have been better spent on health and education transfers to provinces?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a health question in terms of making sure that the people who operate our search and rescue helicopters have the best possible equipment because they do save lives.

For someone from the Conservative ranks to be raising an issue like this one after they were prepared, when they were in government, to spend an exorbitant amount of taxpayers' money to buy helicopters that were far in excess of our needs, is a little bit of gall.

• (1430)

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is now for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The Liberal government has spent close to a million dollars cancelling a helicopter purchase, which it now admits it will have to go through with anyway. It argues that spending \$90 million to create 3,000 jobs will reduce the excessively high youth unemployment rate.

When will this Liberal government stop wasting the taxpayers' money for petty politics and start assuming its responsibility to deal with the crisis of youth unemployment?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, and I can tell him in reply that, of necessity, governing implies assuming responsibilities in a great many areas.

Of course we have responsibility for defence, since we are a large country with defence responsibilities. We also have a foreign policy, and social responsibilities.

As for the youth situation, I believe that the youth employment strategy announced by 12 of my colleagues and myself this past February is beginning to show some very promising results. I am extremely pleased to see the Prime Minister of Canada and the premiers have specifically addressed the situation of our young people—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. minister. The member for Athabasca has the floor.

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[English]

VOISEY'S BAY

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Voisey's Bay nickel project has already produced \$4.3 billion worth of investment and promises thousands of highly paid perma-

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ment jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of resource royalty revenue for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I spent four years in this place listening to this government make commitments to maintain existing regulations once a mining company has invested substantially in a mining project.

My question for the natural resources minister is why is the government threatening the viability of this project by constantly changing the regulation.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the objective of the Government of Canada, as with all the other players in the potential Voisey's Bay development, is the development of an environmentally sound project whose benefits are shared in a responsible manner by all the key stakeholders. The Government of Canada has been working with all the other partners to facilitate the necessary agreements among all the players to allow the project to go forward in a proper manner.

The hon. gentleman will know that there are a number of players. The Government of Canada is only one of several that are participating.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, all that warm fuzzy talk has simply served to delay this project two and a half years and place it in jeopardy. All of the industry knows that the precedent set in a Newfoundland court last week will put in jeopardy resource mining development all over Canada.

Again I ask the minister will his government fast track the needed changes to legislation and regulation or will he simply admit that mining in Canada really is not important to this government?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mining in Canada is important not only to the government but to all Canadians. It is a major engine of economic growth, one we intend to promote.

Over the course of the last several years we have moved on at least 60 different cases of eliminating overlap and duplication in mining regulations. I am working with my provincial colleagues to continue that momentum.

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[Translation]

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Certain information has it that the President of the Treasury Board plans to introduce a bill whose objective would be to side step Canadian human rights legislation on pay equity in order to impose his position in this matter.

Would the minister confirm that he is preparing, through legislation, to impose his settlement in the matter of pay equity without awaiting the decision of the human rights tribunal, which may go against him?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government clearly supports pay equity, since it passed legislation on the matter in 1978.

What remains to be decided is the amount of the adjustments to be made to ensure pay equity exists in practice. The government has already paid out \$1 billion for pay equity and it has proposed nearly \$1.3 billion in its current negotiations, which it intends to continue.

• (1435)

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you will understand that I did not really get a response to my question, and so I will put it again a little more clearly.

Does the President of the Treasury Board intend to comply with the upcoming decision of the human rights tribunal in the matter of pay equity?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly it would be better to reach a negotiated settlement with the unions.

This is why we are continuing our negotiations. However, the government will look at all the options necessary so that our employees may have their money in their pockets without delay.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Last summer the Tax Court of Canada struck down a cruel effort by the minister's department to impose back payroll taxes on Mrs. Janice Collingridge, a severely disabled, low income, non-verbal quadriplegic. The minister's lawyers said that by contracting care givers to help her live at home she was running a business in her home and was therefore assessed nearly \$5,000 in back payroll and CPP taxes and penalties.

Is it the policy of this minister and government that severely disabled Canadians who contract home care services are in fact running businesses and will be dragged through the courts and encounter personal financial hardship to satisfy this government's insatiable desire for tax dollars?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. I would also like to inform the member that I could

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not comment on any specific cases. I have had representations from the member which I will look at.

I also want to ensure the member that we have a fairness code in Revenue Canada and we are committed to the fairness code. We abide by that code as well.

I can assure the member that this minister will take those representations and look at the matter. I can also assure him there is an Income Tax Act and we are supposed to follow that. I as minister will ensure we do that for all Canadians so that we have fairness—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Southeast

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, frankly I am shocked at that answer. This is a simple question. Can this minister not stand up in this House and say that it is not the policy of this government to pursue and chase down severely disabled Canadians in the courts to try to squeeze money out of them? Are they or are they not running businesses by employing personal care givers at home?

I do not see anything in the Income Tax Act about that. Is this minister in charge of his department and its policy or is this minister's department in charge of him?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the work we have done in the disabled community.

The solicitor general was involved in a one year task force which made recommendations to the government. If we look at the last budget we have made substantial commitments and this finance minister in his last financial budget made a commitment of over \$300 million for the disabled community.

We are proud of what we have done for the disabled community and we will continue it. It surprised a few on that side of the House. The members of the Reform did not support those items—

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[Translation]

MIRABEL AIRPORT

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Last week, the mayor of Montreal stated that he had met with the Prime Minister of Canada and solicited his help, adding that the business community was in favour of moving international flights to Dorval and that they had settled the matter between themselves with Ottawa's help.

How does the Minister of Transport explain the fact that mayor of Montreal himself said he met with the Prime Minister to discuss the Dorval issue, and a settlement was reached with Ottawa's help?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said last Friday, the decision to move flights from Mirabel to Dorval was made by Aéroports de Montréal. That was not a political decision. The Aéroports de Montréal group has that power and exercised it.

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us how the Prime Minister can agree to discuss the Dorval airport issue with the mayor of Montreal but refuse to discuss the Mirabel airport issue with the premier of Quebec, as he told us on Friday?

• (1440)

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has received from the premier of Quebec a letter to which he will reply.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada officials lied to obtain the personal protected files of Dr. Michèle Brill-Edwards. This scientist is a thorn in the side of the department, with personal allegations that there are problems where profits take precedence over safety.

The minister promised us a full report here in the House. What has he found about his officials?

The Speaker: Was the word "lied" used in the hon. member's question? I did not hear it. Would the hon. member be kind enough to rephrase the question?

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Speaker, Health Canada officials covered up the truth.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can use any words he chooses. The reality is he does not have the faintest idea of what he is talking about. Another example of all kinds of noise and fury.

Last Friday afternoon department officials explained why they had asked for the file in question.

As long as I am Minister of Health we will focus on the issues affecting the health system. We will not be involved in any smear campaigns. We are going to work to improve medicare in this country and make sure—

The Speaker: The hon. member for MacLeod.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have their feeble excuse for accessing this file too.

The fact of the matter is permission must be sought of the individual. It was not. A valid reason must be there to access the file. There is not.

Oral Questions

The minister has a choice opportunity here. He could choose to support out of control bureaucrats on a witch hunt or he could choose to support the scientist who has allegations of truth. Which will it be?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has taken the facts wrongly and then he has misinterpreted them.

What we are going to do is what I announced last week. We are going to work to renew and strengthen the health protection branch. I have already explained that we are going to appoint an arm's length science advisory board to get independent assessment. We are going to have a public consultation and we are freezing further cuts. That is the best way to respond.

* * *

[Translation]

FEDERAL DETENTION CENTRES

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Events in recent months have shown that working conditions for employees in federal detention centres in Quebec are extremely dangerous.

Will the Solicitor General respond to the request that I made of him at the beginning of September to establish an external inquiry into the volatile situation that prevails in federal detention centres in Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to reassure the employees of Correctional Services Canada that we are very mindful of the danger their job carries with it. We say this specifically after the recognition of peace officers which took place yesterday.

Yes, I would like to confirm to the member that we are very mindful of the dangerous situation which all correctional officers face, which is a part of what they do every day.

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[Translation]

POLICING OF AIRPORTS

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the safety of Montreal's airports.

The maintenance of RCMP services at Dorval and Mirabel continues to be the subject of a wide range of speculation.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. Can the minister tell the House, so as to clarify matters, who will be responsible for policing Montreal's airports?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety of air transportation continues to be the Government of Canada's priority. As the member well knows, there are two airports in Montreal, and international flights have just been transferred. There are also major renovations under way at Dorval.

For these reasons, the Government of Canada has decided to leave the RCMP forces in place during this period of change.

• (1445)

[English]

The RCMP will stay at Dorval and Mirabel.

* * *

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month one of the justices of the Supreme Court of Canada announced that he was retiring.

He publicly called on the Liberal government to select his replacement through an open review process. These comments are unheard of and ground breaking. The justices themselves are asking for reform.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Will the Liberal government hold a public review of any new justice appointed to the supreme court? Or will it continue on making its appointments in secret and behind closed doors?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I would like to point out, and I hope all members agree, that over the past 130-some years the appointment process by which supreme court justices have been appointed has led to some of the most distinguished and meritorious people serving on the Supreme Court of Canada.

I have indicated that there is some merit in considering how we could broaden the consultation process in relation to prospective appointments to the court. I will take that under advisement.

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this new justice of the supreme court will be determining whether Quebec has the right to unilaterally secede. This is perhaps one of the most important issues in our country's history.

Will the justice minister allow elected members of Parliament to ratify this new supreme court justice or will she simply consult her backroom dealmakers and continue to leave the Canadian people out of the process?

Oral Questions

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of chief justices in this country, on behalf of my provincial counterparts, the attorneys general, on behalf of presidents of law societies and distinguished members of the practising bar in Atlantic Canada and elsewhere, I fundamentally reject your characterization of those people as, what was it? Backroom dealmakers?

* * *

MINING

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The Cheviot mine proposal will place a large development in a pristine wilderness area across the divide from previous mine sites and adjacent to the Jasper National Park, a world heritage site.

Is the minister satisfied that all options, such as project relocation, have been explored to ensure that the ecosystem impacts are minimized and, at the same time, protecting important jobs in the area?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the proposal to put in place the Cheviot mine project in Alberta has been reviewed by a joint panel under the Environmental Assessment Agency which brought together federal representatives with provincial representatives.

Evidence was put forward by three federal government departments and many others from across the country who are concerned about this project. We have received a report from the panel and are reviewing its recommendations.

Our concern is to protect the environment to the highest standards and also allow—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended a memorial service honouring those law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty.

One way of ensuring protection for peace officers, indeed all Canadians, is to ensure individuals convicted of first degree murder do not receive early release. This summer the Olson hearing as well as the 300 murderers with the right to apply for early release highlight the need for change in this area.

Will the Minister of Justice stop worrying about the protection of the rights of criminals, do the right thing and repeal section 745, this offensive and potentially dangerous piece of legislation.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. He may not be aware, because he was not a member of the House in the last session of Parliament, but my predecessor as minister of justice made significant reforms to section 745.

I think we will see that those reforms strike the right balance between due concern for victims, due concern for the safety of society and due concern for a criminal justice system that reflects a balance of values.

• (1450)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should know that the modifications made in January 1997, of which the Liberals are so proud, do not prevent dangerous criminals like Paul Bernardo from applying for early release.

Will the minister stop attempting to bury this issue, revisit her refusal to strike down section 745, to prevent Bernardo and other killers from putting the families through this public, tortuous and senseless process of faint hope hearings?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that one of the amendments my predecessor made to section 745 was a device called judicial screening. Certainly Mr. Bernardo and any others who find themselves in his situation will now have to go through a process of judicial screening.

It would seem to me that judicial screening will ensure the safety of the public in relation to killers like Mr. Bernardo.

The Speaker: Forgive me for breaking the question pattern. There was a supplementary that I missed.

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MINING

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Cardinal River Divide has been virtually untouched since the last ice age, and the proposed mine 23 kilometres long by 3 kilometres wide will have a profound impact on its ecosystem. The government's own departments have drawn concern to this.

Will the Minister of the Environment assure Canadians that Parks Canada, Environment Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans environmental impact assessment concerns are addressed and a proper management plan initiated?

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recommendations of the panel are being very carefully reviewed by the federal government in preparing its response to the proponent.

Oral Questions

We are very conscious of the environmental concerns and environmental impacts in this area. We are doing everything to make sure those concerns are addressed.

* * *

INDUSTRY

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne the government indicated that it would help small and medium size enterprises develop and commercialize new techniques.

Can the Minister of Industry indicate how the government intends to go about this?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first step is to deepen and increase the resources available for the government's program of industrial research assistance of the National Research Council, winner of the prestigious Ernest C. Manning Award and a program which is at the forefront of helping small business develop and commercialize technology.

In addition we have refocused and broadened the mandate of the Business Development Bank of Canada. We have increased the funding available to small business under the Small Business Loans Act. We continue to see small businesses prospering as never before in the wake of interest rates at the lowest level in 30 years—

The Speaker: The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, one question.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. The minister has revealed that a year ago she set up an organized crime unit in immigration which, as she has said, has thousands of names on file, has a well staffed operation and has good international contacts.

Can the minister tell the House how Lai Tong Sang, the Macao Triad leader who received landed status in Canada, slipped through the stranglehold the minister has on organized crime?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that anyone who misrepresents his identity or his reasons for coming to Canada can be prosecuted by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

As for the case raised by the opposition member, you are well aware that, under the Privacy Act, I cannot discuss this case publicly. The individual in question has not yet been formally charged.

POLICING OF AIRPORTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Since April 16, 1996, the federal government has been withdrawing from policing airports. The RCMP has been gradually pulling out everywhere in Canada, except in Quebec. According to Richard Cacchione, president of ADM, the federal government is refusing to withdraw from the Montreal airports for political reasons.

• (1455)

Will the minister confirm in this House that his government is refusing to withdraw from policing Montreal airports over a flag, which has nothing to do with efficiency or security?

[*English*]

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered this question in full earlier. Because of the renovations, because of the change and because of the unique situation of having two international airports at Montreal, the government feels that the RCMP should stay there during this period of change.

* * *

HELICOPTERS

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is a simple one for the minister of defence.

There is a lot of chatter about helicopters, Mr. Minister, concerning what is been taking so long to conform to the contract. I would like an update on when the government is going to make an announcement about helicopters for the Canadian people.

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. No decision has been made yet. A very detailed analysis has been made that teams of officials have been pouring over to make sure that we get the best value for the Canadian taxpayer. We want to make sure that we get the kind of helicopter that will best meet the operational needs of the people who go out and save lives. Over 400 rescues a year are conducted and over 200 people are rescued in those endeavours. Therefore, we want to make sure that we get the best helicopters for the best value.

We hope to have that decision—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint John.

* * *

PORTS CANADA POLICE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Ports Canada police officers are specialists in their field. They are trained in national and international crimes such as drug trafficking, illegal immigration and

terrorist activities, as well as gun running. Security guards and local police forces are not.

Why is the Minister of Transport subjecting our communities to the possibility of increased crime by disbanding the Ports Canada police? Does the minister realize that a lack of national standards for policing our ports will make them much more inviting to criminal elements?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member, for whom I have great respect, is being very irresponsible to suggest that there will be an increase in crime.

This is about the devolution of authority to local organizations, councils and communities. It is a policy that the former Conservative government talked about quite a bit but never did anything about it. We put this regime in place.

I can assure the member that the quality of policing will not suffer and crime will not increase. It is going quite well across the country, including the Atlantic and the port of Vancouver.

* * *

JUSTICE

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the justice minister. When she was appointed and gave her first speech to the bar association this summer it was tough talk all the way. She was going to tighten up victims' rights, tighten up the Young Offenders Act even more and tighten up parole reform. There was not one word about any of that stuff in the throne speech.

What happened to all that tough talk? Who in cabinet vetoed her for the throne speech?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I respond to that question.

The three priorities I outlined in the speech to the Canadian Bar Association in August were, first, crime control; second, working with provincial counterparts and victims' rights organizations to see how we can define an appropriate federal role in the area of victims' issues; and in relation to the reform of the Young Offenders Act.

In relation to crime prevention, we are in fact in the process of developing a new crime prevention strategy with partners as it relates to victims. We have begun our consultations—

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the minister, but the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot has the floor.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, harmonizing the GST and the QST resulted in considerable costs estimated at over \$2 billion and paid for by the Quebec government alone.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. When will the minister treat the Quebec government fairly and pay the \$2 billion claimed as compensation for harmonizing the GST and the QST? This is a legitimate demand that even got the support of the premiers, when they met in Saint Andrews.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that we offered to compensate the provinces that lost money.

● (1500)

The fact is that some provinces, including Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta, would not have lost money if federal and provincial sales taxes had been harmonized. In fact, Quebec did not lose money.

Let me just quote some figures. In the first year following harmonization, Quebec experienced a 2.7 percent increase, but no losses; in the second year, a 20.4 percent increase in sales tax revenues and no losses; in the third year, an increase of 17—

[English]

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. minister, but this will bring to a close our question period.

I would like to invite all hon. members to a reception, which I will be hosting in their name, for Mr. Atom Egoyan in my chambers following the question period.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER REPORT

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the 1997 report of the privacy commissioner.

[Translation]

This report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PEOPLE'S TAX FORM ACT

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-214, an act to allow taxpayers to inform government of their views on levels and priorities for the expenditure of tax revenues and to provide for a parliamentary review of the results.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Calgary Southeast for seconding the people's tax form act.

Last week the prime minister defended his government's hand-outs: \$42,000 for a Latin song book, \$100,000 for a military golf course, and \$19,000 for golf balls. When I gave my constituents the opportunity to fill out the people's tax form they told me in no uncertain terms that they did not want their tax dollars spent on official bilingualism, funding for special interests groups, gun registration, foreign aid, multiculturalism, the National Film Board, subsidies to businesses and the CBC.

Today I am reintroducing the people's tax form act which will give all taxpayers the opportunity to tell the government what they think by voluntarily filling out a form which would be included with each tax kit distributed by Revenue Canada.

If passed, my bill would require the results to be tabulated and reviewed by the finance committee as part of its pre-budget consultations, a report that would be tabled in Parliament. This would make it much harder for the prime minister to defend spending which millions of Canadians have expressly indicated they oppose.

• (1505)

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-215, an act to amend the Criminal Code (Section 227).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce my private member's bill. I thank my colleague from South Surrey—White Rock—Langley for seconding the motion to amend the Criminal Code (section 227).

Section 227 of the Criminal Code now states that no person can be convicted of a homicide if the death occurs more than a year and day from the time of the offence. This private member's bill would allow murder charges to be laid if the assault resulted in death, no matter how long the victim was able to hang on to life.

I was pleased to hear that the Minister of Justice also planned some legislation to scrap this section. I urge her to facilitate this process by supporting my private member's bill. In fact it addresses the very issue. The work has all been done. I look forward to unanimous support from the Liberal government to pass this private member's bill.

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

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-216, an act to amend the Access to Information Act (Crown corporations).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill will make all crown corporations subject to the Access to Information Act. As it stands now crown corporations such as Canada Post, the CBC and the Canadian Wheat Board are exempt from access to information even though they are subsidized by our tax dollars. One must ask why the CBC and the wheat board should be exempt from access to information. The answer is that they should not and that is what the bill addresses.

During the last Parliament the auditor general published a scathing report on the operation of crown corporations. The bill will open crown corporations to the public and make them accountable.

It is my hope the House will recognize the right of all Canadians and support the bill.

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

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-217, an act to amend the Access to Information Act (disclosure of results of public opinion polls).

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing this Reform bill dealing with the rights of Canadians to know what their government is pulling on them. It is a bill that says Canadians have the right to know where their hard earned but easily spent tax dollars are going.

The bill would force the government to disclose the results of all public opinion polls to the public. Under today's system the government does not have to do this.

The government only releases the results of public opinion polls when it wants to. This is a blatant disregard for the rights of taxpayers. I believe those who pay for the survey must be allowed to see the results of the survey.

If the Prime Minister wants to keep the results of his public opinion polls to himself, he should pay for the public opinion poll himself.

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

* * *

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-218, an act to amend the Divorce Act (marriage counselling required before divorce granted).

• (1510)

He said: Mr. Speaker, this year the Vanier Institute advised Canadians that the divorce rate in Canada had now reached 50 percent and that 75 percent of common law relationships break down within the first five years. Sixty per cent of these relationships involve children. When they break down, 85 percent of the families are mother led.

As a result of family breakdown we are creating a most dangerous environment for our children. It is a new fatherless society that is filling up with children who are so emotionally damaged by their parents' behaviour they may have difficulty forming commitments and families.

The bill requires mandatory counselling prior to legal sanction or granting of a divorce, not to try to reconcile a broken marriage but rather to serve two purposes. One is to ensure an appropriate parenting plan is in place for children of a broken family and to address the serious issue of post-divorce acrimony.

I am proud to introduce the bill. I look forward to debating it with colleagues in the House.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present the following petition.

The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the fact that Canadian consumers are deeply affected by the price hikes in gasoline. Though gasoline is a Canadian natural resource, Canadians have little control over this important resource.

Therefore they request that Parliament encourage the establishment of a gas price review commission to keep gasoline prices and other oil products in check.

The Address

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a good number of constituents in the Wetaskiwin riding who are concerned with the sustainability of the Canada Pension Plan.

They are also concerned with the tax hike foisted upon them by the increases in the pension plan and that they will be paying in more and getting back less.

I present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present seven petitions today on the same topic.

The petitions contain 100 signatures from Medicine Hat, over 300 from Lethbridge, 132 from Winnipeg—Selkirk, 62 from Regina, and hundreds more from the St. Catharines area of Ontario.

The petitioners call upon the government and draw attention to section 43 of the Criminal Code that says every school teacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child who is under their care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

They request Parliament to affirm the duty of parents to responsibly raise their children according to their own conscience and beliefs, and to retain section 43 in Canada's Criminal Code as it is currently worded.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Milliken): When the House broke for question period the hon. member for South Surrey—White

The Address

Rock—Langley had eight minutes remaining in questions and comments following her speech. Questions and comments. There being none, we will resume debate.

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity first of all in participating in this debate to express my sincere gratitude to the prime minister for the confidence he has placed in me by appointing me as the Solicitor General of Canada. I am particularly honoured and proud to have been given this task.

I also want to express my regrets to those members particularly from New Brunswick who served in the 35th parliament and were not re-elected. Their leadership will be sadly missed.

Last week we listened with interest and with optimism to the Speech from the Throne opening this the 36th session of Parliament. This occasion was particularly significant to me as a newly appointed minister. This is a parliament with a unique and historic opportunity to provide leadership on national issues to secure the social and economic future of Canadians as we approach the next millennium.

As solicitor general I am responsible for providing national leadership on issues relating to federal corrections, policing and national security. As such I would like today to address this session of the throne speech dealing with building safer communities. I want to provide an overview of the direction my ministry will be pursuing to help protect the safety and security of Canadians.

Canadians identify their feeling of personal safety and security as the one overriding element that contributes to their definition of being Canadian. The notion of living in safe communities is a hallmark of the Canadian identity. We know that crime creates fear not just for our personal safety but also for the safety of our families and our communities. It undermines the very quality of life in our neighbourhoods.

Canada is a comparatively safe society with a crime rate that has dropped steadily over the last four years. Yet there are many indications that Canadians do not feel safe and that is a reality to which governments must respond.

Canadians are entitled to know and feel that their communities are as safe, as peaceful and as secure as we can make them. Since the government's first election to office in 1993, we have made public safety a priority for action. We have made solid gains.

Carrying through on our red book promises over the past four years resulted in an intensive focus on criminal law issues to improve public safety. In particular, Canadians told us loud and clear that they wanted the government to get tough on violent high risk offenders. Here are just some of the measures that we took to improve public safety in that way.

We strengthened the dangerous offender provisions in the Criminal Code, created a new long term offender designation and passed measures to make it easier to detain until the end of sentence sex offenders who victimize children. We devised a national flagging system to help crown attorneys identify high risk offenders.

We established a national volunteer screening system to help organizations screen out child sexual abusers who apply to work with children. We passed tougher laws on stalking and made peace bonds more effective in keeping abusers away from women and children. We passed laws allowing police gathering and use of DNA evidence. Just last week we introduced a bill to create a DNA data bank.

The overarching theme of our safe communities agenda in the second red book is that building safer communities requires a multidimensional balanced approach.

This government recognizes the importance of dealing firmly with those offenders who threaten public safety. Some offenders must be imprisoned and in some cases for lengthy periods of time. This is not debatable in order to protect the public. However, there are others who can be dealt with more effectively and safely without lengthy terms in prison.

Almost all offenders will ultimately return to the community one day. Our best long term protection results from their return to a law-abiding lifestyle in the community. Where this can best be achieved through community supervision, with adequate programs in residential communities this should be our approach. This approach does not mean being soft on crime nor letting criminals go free. It means making these offenders responsible and accountable for their crimes through other means.

• (1520)

The Speech from the Throne speaks to the issue of alternatives. The federal and provincial governments are committed to developing alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders who can safely and effectively be managed in the community.

Let me say also a few words about public attitudes on criminal justice issues as they relate to this subject. A recent Angus Reid survey demonstrated the remarkably strong consensus that exists among Canadians on the need for a balanced and comprehensive approach. According to that survey Canadians believe that the protection of the public and the rehabilitation of offenders are of higher priority than punishment as goals of incarceration.

The results of the Angus Reid survey suggest how we may further reform Canada's criminal justice system but they also speak to the need to involve citizens in the communities in the development of safe and effective solutions. This is nowhere more important than in our work to address the needs of aboriginal

offenders who continue to be overrepresented in our correctional system.

While dealing more appropriately with high and low risk offenders will remain a priority, it is imperative that we also work to prevent crime in the first instance. As stated in the Speech from the Throne, the government will increase funding for community based crime prevention initiatives to \$30 million a year. In our safe communities agenda we focus on crime prevention at the community level which is essentially a process of community building with local involvement over a wide range of issues.

There is a wide consensus that successful crime prevention must take a comprehensive approach to tackling the root problems that lead to crime, and that these efforts must start at the earliest stages of a child's life. Our efforts must bring together the expertise of those responsible for housing, social services, public health, recreation, schools and policing. Our efforts should include the contributions of the ordinary citizens who live and work in the very communities we seek to serve and protect.

In 1994 the National Crime Prevention Council was established as part of the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention. Together with the council and the Department of Justice, my department is targeting prevention programs where they are needed and will have the greatest impact.

These include aboriginal communities. In the coming months we plan to work more closely with aboriginal communities to develop crime prevention initiatives. This speaks directly to the red book commitment concerning the reduction of crime in aboriginal communities by assisting these communities in the development of community driven activities.

Another focus of our crime prevention activities involves young people. Issues related to youth crime including the victimization of young people, the most vulnerable members of our society, will continue as a priority in my ministry. We look forward to helping to renew and develop new partnerships between communities, the police, the voluntary sector and all levels of government.

Another area where partnership and co-operation are vitally important and one that is also aimed at improving the safety of our communities is that of information sharing among federal and provincial criminal justice agencies. Corrections staff and the National Parole Board need police and court information to make good decisions on handling offenders. In turn the police need corrections information to deal with released offenders. Here again gains have been made in recent years to bring about improvements.

I spoke earlier of the need for the government to provide leadership in policing. We have made a concerted effort over the last four years to consult with police to determine what tools we can develop to help them fight crime.

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To this end just a few days ago I introduced legislation to create Canada's first national DNA data bank. The data bank to be established and maintained by the RCMP will be a powerful investigative tool to help protect Canadians from violent and repeat criminals. With this legislation Canada will become one of only a handful of countries to have a DNA data bank.

Another area where police have said they need more and sharper tools is in the fight against organized crime. Organized criminal activities are clearly a matter of growing concern for the police, the general public and the government. The recent bikers war in Quebec underscores that organized crime is not something intangible, something that happens in dark alleys hidden from view, but can and does have a direct impact on our neighbourhoods.

The international trafficking in illicit drugs with associated money laundering continues to be the highest threat of all. Recognizing that organized crime knows no jurisdictional boundaries, our efforts to fight it are and will continue to be domestic, continental and international in scope. Nationally there is a strong and growing commitment among police and law enforcement agencies in all jurisdictions to work with my ministry and the Department of Justice to build stronger partnerships to combat organized crime.

● (1525)

This fall I will be making in the House of Commons the first annual statement on organized crime to report on the implementation of the anti-gang legislation, Bill C-95, and our efforts to improve co-ordinated enforcement. Also in this regard I will be meeting tomorrow with Janet Reno, the American attorney general, to review progress and identify the next steps in our co-operative Canada-U.S. efforts to fight cross-border crime.

Citizen participation in determining solutions is no longer an option. As far as we are concerned it is an obligation. We in government must not forget our obligation to keep Canadians informed of developments in the criminal justice system. We need to share information about issues of importance to Canadians in order that we can have fruitful and informed discussions on those very issues.

I would also like to speak briefly as a minister from the province of New Brunswick. The throne speech was clear in stating that in order to secure a strong Canada for the 21st century, governments will need to work more closely with others in partnership. We will have to welcome new ideas that are citizen based, pursue more aggressively the strategic alliances available to us and consider collaboration an essential ingredient for our national and regional success. These are important messages. Co-operation, collaboration, sharing ideas and talents and collective problem solving are

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the essence of our ever evolving democracy. It is about achieving together what we could not possibly do alone.

The issues are very complex and very numerous today and easy solutions are elusive, so elusive in fact that any chance for successful solutions usually requires collective thinking and action. Governments at all levels are becoming more mindful of this new imperative in the conduct of their business. As a result citizens can expect better decisions and more informed policy making from their leaders. This is important too in deciding what the state itself can do best and what the state should concede to the community as a better place for certain things to get done.

For example Canada's old age security and medicare benefits are regulated and funded by the national government and rightly so. The enviable success of these programs would not have been achieved without the resources and overarching presence of the federal authority. Regulating and distributing the country's wealth to achieve equitability among the provinces is a proper role for the federal government. However there have been other initiatives emanating from the nation's capital which have been more effectively implemented regionally or even better at the community level if that option were considered.

I earlier indicated my commitment to involve communities in the issue of crime prevention. Fixing crime in the different communities in our country will come only with the direct and meaningful involvement of those placed in and knowledgeable about the particular communities in which they reside.

The role of the national government in such cases should not be to prescribe solutions; rather government's role is to encourage and help facilitate a process of problem solving at the community level from the ground up. This approach to governing is not indicated only for crime prevention. Communities it turns out are the best places to address a range of problems from poverty and unemployment to human resources development.

Thanks to the foresight of the four Atlantic premiers an Atlantic vision conference is being organized next month in Moncton. The conference is planned as an important step in a process of sharing and discovery aimed at economic recovery in Atlantic Canada.

The federal government will participate in the proceedings. In fact I will attend the conference from start to finish. Other federal ministers will also attend. The deliberations will be conducted in a true spirit of partnership, federally, provincially and interprovincially. This is as it should be and the better will be the chances of success for the conference and for our region.

We know that economic growth solutions in Atlantic Canada will be found in Atlantic Canada if each of the four provinces seeks

solutions on their own for a stronger economy. The Atlantic vision conference will feature sharing, collaboration and consensus building. It aims for the crystallization of federal, provincial and industry participation in the region's future development.

• (1530)

While we recognize there is a great deal to be done, it is the beginning of a voyage toward economic recovery.

The Atlantic premiers deserve our commendation for their vision in undertaking this project. The leadership in Atlantic Canada recognizes it is a part of a larger community which is Canada. The challenge is to find ways for all Atlantic Canadians to both contribute to and share in our national bounty. The Atlantic vision conference plays quite largely in making this possible.

This will be a collaborative exercise, one which I understand very well. In my own constituency I have made it a practice to hold regular, broadly based, very visible community forums. I held a forum on aboriginal justice issues during the third week of August in Fredericton. Other consultations I have engaged in in the short time I have been solicitor general include meetings with IACOLE, the Canadian criminal justice system, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the aboriginal police chiefs and the national reference group which we established with some 40 organizations. We spent a day together here in Ottawa discussing the issues of importance to that community. I also visited the RCMP depot in Regina to discuss policing issues with members of the RCMP.

We approach the new millennium with great optimism, but we also recognize that difficult decisions will have to be made. I firmly believe that we are on track, that we are making progress and that we are well equipped to handle both the challenges and the opportunities which lie ahead.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to ask a parliamentary secretary a question about section 745. In her response she indicated she felt the legislation which the government had brought forward achieved a fair balance. I can tell the minister, man to man, that it does not.

I have had people visit my office who have been fearful for their lives. They are fearful because of a murder which occurred 15 years ago. The murder was so bad that the presiding judge said there would be no opportunity for parole for a minimum of 25 years. That was a condition of the sentence. My constituents have now been put in the position of being fearful for their lives.

I say this from the bottom of my heart. I have never been in the presence of people who have been so petrified, so scared for their lives. This was a case of first degree murder. The judge said it was such a heinous crime that the individual would not be permitted

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parole for 25 years. These people are being put through a eat grinder.

I would like the solicitor general to answer my constituents. How is it that this government can be so unfeeling and so callous toward the victims, the family members of the victims and the family members of the murderer himself? Why do they have to go through this?

Second, today when a judge sentences a first degree murderer and says this crime is so heinous that this individual may not have the opportunity for parole for 25 years, what do those words mean? They mean nothing. Under existing legislation he will be able to apply for parole in 15 years, notwithstanding the sentencing recommendations of the judge.

Can the solicitor general please explain to my constituents, indeed to all Canadians, why the government insists on giving this open door policy to first degree murderers at the expense of the people who are the victims in these cases?

• (1535)

Hon. Andy Scott: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to reassure the member of my own strong feelings about these issues as well. Surely all members of the House would recognize that each of us deals with people in the circumstances that the member has referred to in our activities as members of Parliament and each of us is moved by those stories. I am certain the member recognizes that of all of us.

In terms of the government's reaction to the circumstances that we found when we took office in 1993, actions were taken. They have been repeated often and I will repeat them again.

The reality is the likelihood of a person's being able to exercise what has become known as the faint hope clause in the Criminal Code has been limited by the fact that now there is a screening process where a judge would have to determine the likelihood of success. Originally in the legislation eight out of twelve members of the jury had to make that determination. Now it has to be unanimous. Those are just two things.

The bottom line is that the likelihood of that option being exercised, the likelihood of people having access to liberty, as I think the reference was by the member to an open door policy, is not really reflective of the likelihood of that happening. It is really more likely to be an extremely faint hope. That is the position of the government to this point. It is one that I believe does strike the balance that the Minister of Justice refers to.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the solicitor general for attaining one of the highest positions that any lawyer in this country can attain.

My question is a furtherance of a question brought forward by the hon. member from Saint John. It refers to the devolution of powers of ports police to municipal police officers and potentially RCMP officers. This has happened most recently in Vancouver. There are plans to do the same in the port of Saint John as well as the port of Halifax.

How does this sit in terms of its consistency with the government's position in terms of firearms. Trying to keep illegal firearms out of this country is going to be a huge problem when we have municipal police officers trying to do the specialized job of policing ports.

How does the policy that the government is putting forward in terms of firearms sit with its decision to devolve this specialized task presently performed by ports police?

Hon. Andy Scott: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his intervention. It is our first opportunity to engage in this place, and I suspect it will be the first of many. That is a healthy thing among maritimers, I am sure.

I should also correct the reference in his question to the fact that it is the highest office perhaps that a lawyer can hold. It is also the highest office a sociologist can hold, I think, since I am not a lawyer.

I would like to speak specifically to the question of port police. I have had occasion to meet with the authority in Saint John. We have discussed this issue on a number of fronts, having to do with questions of security and also questions of job security and so on. I know members opposite are concerned about that. I have begun an initiative to see what might be done in that regard.

We have to remind everyone that there remains an overarching criminal responsibility with the RCMP that is collaborative with whomever, local police authorities in our ports. The good work of the former mayor of Saint John to bring the municipal police force to the level it is will lend itself to a wonderful port authority and police authority in that city.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we just mentioned the devolution of powers from the RCMP to local police forces.

In the province of Quebec, we know that, for some time now, the Sûreté du Québec has been taking on a lot of responsibilities throughout the Quebec territory.

• (1540)

Earlier, during question period, when the transport minister was asked if the RCMP would remain in Mirabel and Dorval, he said

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that there would be no devolution of powers to Quebec police forces in that area. But that is just for the time being.

Has the solicitor general heard of a timetable for the transfer of police duties from the RCMP to the Sûreté du Québec or other appropriate police forces in Quebec? Could he tell us what we can expect in the future?

[English]

Hon. Andy Scott: Mr. Speaker, the presence of the RCMP at Mirabel and Dorval reflects changes that are going on with regard to those two airports that cannot be duplicated anywhere else in the country.

As far as the timetable is concerned, it really falls within the responsibilities of the Minister of Transport in terms of his responsibility to provide the security of those airports. The RCMP, in this case, is simply meeting the needs as they are identified by him. As to how long we will be doing that, I say quite honestly that will be really up to the Ministry of Transport to make that determination. The RCMP is simply there meeting that need as requested.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Scarborough East.

This government has delivered on its key 1993 election promise to restore fiscal responsibility to the nation after the record \$42 billion annual deficit we inherited from the predecessor Conservative government.

As the Speech from the Throne has noted, we are now well ahead of our own optimistic 1993 projections to balance the budget by the year 2000. We expect to achieve this budgetary goal no later than the fiscal year 1998-99.

We are putting the debt to GDP ratio on a permanent downward track and we have undertaken to devote one-half of the anticipated annual surplus to a combination of reducing taxes for Canadian citizens and amortizing the vast accumulated national debt left behind by the predecessor Conservative government.

The other half of the anticipated annual surplus will be addressed to the social and economic needs of Canadians. In striving over the period 1993-97 to get rid of those huge annual budgetary deficits that had become standard practice, we insisted on maintaining the integrity of our famed Canadian social security network and our pensions and free national medicare systems. We will continue these policies.

Members will note from the Speech from the Throne that the government has understood, better I think than governments in other countries, that the approaching 21st century will be a knowledge century dominated by those who have mastered the new

sciences and technologies and who have comprehended the informatics revolution.

In our last budgets we invested heavily in education capital from the \$167 million for the TRIUMPH advanced physics research project at the University of British Columbia, with its direct spin-off to major industrial export contracts abroad, to the foundation for innovation with \$800 million for modernizing advanced research infrastructures in health and medicine, environment, science and engineering, and the \$50 million a year for creating networks for centres of excellence.

Canada leads today in the aerospace industry, biopharmaceuticals, biotechnology in agriculture and fisheries and environmental information and telecommunications technologies.

Where our last budget offered \$137 million in post-secondary education support for 1997 and substantially increased scholarship and tax credits for post-secondary students and their families, the Speech from the Throne commits to a new millennium scholarship endowment fund intended to reward academic excellence and to open access to universities and colleges for the well qualified children from low and moderate income families throughout Canada.

In recognizing the key to national economic prosperity and access to meaningful long term employment for our young people lies in community investment in higher education and in advanced research, the government has learnt the main lesson from the ending of the cold war that dominated world community relations for half a century after World War II.

• (1545)

The old political military base of world public order where effective power was determined by the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles that one had in one's arsenal is completely out of date. Of what value are those remaining ICBMs in their silos and an aging nuclear powered submarine navy if one's economic house is not in order?

The new base of world public order in relations between states is economic-industrial. The use or the threat of the use of force as a solver of international problems has increasingly yielded to peaceful modes of dispute settlement that rely heavily on friendly co-operation and reciprocity and mutual advantage.

In the Speech from the Throne there is a renewed commitment to an activist, independent, internationalist role for Canada in the world community in the tradition of our one time Prime Minister and Nobel peace laureate Lester Pearson whose centenary we celebrate this year. In this spirit we are co-operating with like-minded countries in revitalizing and modernizing and also democratizing the United Nations by seeking to expand the membership

of the security council on a more broadly representative and legally egalitarian basis without any extension of those special privileges that were conferred on the five permanent members at the time of the UN's founding in 1945 and which seem increasingly out of date.

In addition to continuing our longstanding historical commitment to the protection of the international environment and to the conservation of the earth's diminishing natural resources, as part of, in the United Nation's own phrase, the common heritage of humankind, we have led in the achievement of a new international treaty signed by 90 countries recently in Oslo banning anti-personnel mines which have so cruelly killed or maimed hundreds of thousands of innocent non-combatant men, women and children around the world in the bloody civil wars of our times.

Rather than pursuing some far off larger international consensus that might have included also holdout superpowers at the price however of open-ended exemptions or delays or special geographical regional exceptions, our foreign minister has preferred to move now on behalf of a clear and unequivocal treaty text that really does have some teeth in it.

At the formal signing ceremony in Ottawa this December, we do expect other countries beyond the 90 who have already rallied to the cause to join and to help perhaps to educate by their own positive example the numerically small but still important and also politically disparate groups of holdout states.

We will continue our efforts on two oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific, to ensure respect and full compliance with existing international law obligations, both multilateral and also special bilateral as to the protection of endangered fish resources and their equitable sharing under law.

We will maintain the position that we have advanced in the international battle against the Helms-Burton law that a state in the application of its own national laws is limited as to any purported extraterritorial reach by the legal principles of international comity and the duty at the same time to respect the legal sovereignty of other states.

We are continuing our efforts to establish an international criminal court which as a court of universal and general jurisdiction would replace limited geographical sectoral bodies like the recent ad hoc jurisdictions as the former Yugoslavia and also Rwanda. It might necessarily extend also to cover United Nations peacekeeping forces and other regional or state forces operating under UN legal authority or under the UN aegis generally.

The end of the 20th century as an era of historical transition has seen a remarkable convergence of two contradictory historical forces: the movement toward supranationalism and political and sometimes economic integration on a regional or at least transna-

tional basis and the revival of local nationalism and ethnocultural particularism sometimes on a pathological basis that finds its outlet in internecine conflict within the one state.

Our renewed commitment in Canada to a strong internationalist foreign policy indicates our own Canadian, more optimistic view of the coming century and of the ability to achieve a genuinely one world outlook in a plural world community through the United Nations and related international institutions of the world community.

• (1550)

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed honoured to rise in the House today, the House that John George Diefenbaker, Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Tommy Douglas have spoken in. It is for me a great honour as the son of a market gardener to speak in this House in this country.

I represent the riding of Scarborough East which is bounded on the east by the largest urban wilderness park in Canada, the Rouge River Park, and on the south by the Scarborough bluffs which rise from the shores of Lake Ontario.

I have lived all my life in the riding. The riding was at one time a rural area of sleepy villages and was largely agricultural. Since that time Toronto has grown out over top of the riding. Had you said to my father or anyone else at the time that buses would be running up and down in front of his front door, he would have questioned your sanity.

It is a riding of about 100,000 people, 40 per cent of whom describe their mother tongue as something other than an official language. As a consequence in our constituency office we serve our people in at least eight languages.

The purpose of my speech is to talk about the role of a parliamentarian in this parliament which takes us into the millennium. It is a wonderful opportunity on the part of any parliamentarian to be able to participate in the process. During the time leading up to the writing of the Speech from the Throne, the prime minister invited members of our caucus to make submissions to him, both written and oral, concerning the contents of the Speech from the Throne. I was very pleased to see that the prime minister picked up on certain themes and ideas and wrote those into the Speech from the Throne. I would like to thank the prime minister for his willingness to listen to us as members of his caucus.

In particular the prime minister embraced the idea that this parliament and the government will be taking this nation into the 21st century. It is a monumental opportunity to foster a sense of nationhood, a sense of growth in our country and a sense of where we as Canadians can come together. We cannot simply expect that this will happen. Nationhood needs to be nurtured much like children need to be nurtured.

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We as members of the 36th Parliament will be given a privilege never afforded to any of our predecessors. We will take Canada into the new century and the new millennium. We can make it a noble time to build our nation or we can make it a destructive time.

Our citizens watch us daily and frequently they do not like what they see. For instance, the 26th Parliament engaged in an intense debate about the national flag and the result of that debate graces this Chamber today.

[Translation]

The 27th Parliament introduced full health insurance to Canada. It was hotly debated, but its defenders, Prime Minister Pearson, Minister Martin and MP Douglas, won out. As a result, Canada now has one of the best health systems in the world. This is one of the things which define our country and a source of general pride. It is an affirmation of Canadian values.

[English]

That parliament and that government also set this nation on a course to celebrate in a manner never seen before. Canada was strong. It was proud and it was united. I remember travelling with my family from what was then a relatively provincial Toronto to the sophisticated city of Montreal to see that great city for the first time and to wonder at Man and his World exposition and to ride on the metro. Every community in Canada celebrated its centennial in one manner or another. My own community raised a hospital and today it still serves our community well.

• (1555)

Those parliaments did great things. Likewise this parliament can also do great things as we distance ourselves from the financial doom and gloom of the past number of years.

I was delighted to see that a member of the 26th Parliament, namely our prime minister, has asked a member of the 25th Parliament, namely the deputy prime minister to initiate the organizational process required to appropriately mark our entry into the millennium.

[Translation]

The government will help strike partnerships between governments, communities and people in celebration of the new millennium. Many Canadians have original ideas and suggestions for millennium projects. Parliamentarians of all parties will be given the opportunity to suggest activities to mark the millennium.

[English]

He has invited members of Parliament to mark the millennium in ways that will celebrate our great nation. We will be able to go into our communities and ask our citizens for their input. It is a

wonderful opportunity for the House to make submissions to the government.

It has always been a source of disappointment to me that so few Canadians seem to appreciate or are aware of their history. I had a number of rather salutary experiences this summer which made me aware of that.

I attended Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu in the valley of the forts and I was instructed about the history of that area. I as a speaking Canadian was not aware of the significance of the role played by the valley of the forts in the preservation of our nation. There was basically guerrilla theatre between the Mohawks, the English, the Americans and the French.

I had occasion to attend a University of Ottawa conference on the constitution. What struck me forcefully was a presentation by aboriginal peoples and the dates of points of significance to those people of which I was not aware.

I was interviewing a candidate in my office, a Tamil woman. I asked her how and why she came to Canada. Little did I know that her answer would touch us both in such a profound way. She was married in a traditional Muslim ceremony and her husband thereafter immediately left for Canada. Her next communication was from her husband's family to indicate that he had died. She came to Canada for his funeral. She then was able to stay in Canada and by one means or another gain her citizenship. She returned home and her passport was lost. A Tamil woman in Sri Lanka is a vulnerable person. When the Canadian embassy was able to intervene and secure her, she at that point felt like she was a Canadian. She spoke with such tremendous conviction that I was absolutely astounded.

It brings me to the point that we do not speak to each other. We speak past each other, we speak around each other, but we do not speak to each other. I would offer to the Deputy Prime Minister the suggestion that we use means, both electronic and written to start the process of communicating to each other, that our history be recognized that there are at least four groups, aboriginal people, French people, English people and immigrant people who experience Canada in their own way. I ask that the Deputy Prime Minister explore ways in which that can be done.

I would suggest that we need to assemble stories and pictures from across our land so that we will be able to communicate to each other what is historically and personally important to us so that we can make our communities even stronger. I would suggest that is a fitting way to mark our millennium.

As well, Canada needs to develop its symbols of nationhood. I believe that one way to celebrate our millennium would be for our government to strike a millennium medal. That medal would be set out so that individuals in our country who have contributed to our nationhood would be recognized by the government and by Parlia-

ment. Similarly, a millennial stamp could be issued which again would mark the build-up of our nationhood.

• (1600)

Those Parliaments were great and those parliamentarians were great because they encouraged their citizens to do great things. I am hopeful that this Parliament will similarly encourage its citizens to do great things.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will start with a reply to each of the hon. members who have shared their time.

The first speaker referred to the deficit left behind by the Conservatives, which the government succeeded in cutting by \$42 billion. I would remind the hon. member that the Conservative reign was preceded by 21 years of Mr. Trudeau in this House, which makes the Liberal government primarily responsible for the debt.

The government is right to be concerned about the deficit. The Bloc Québécois will do everything in its power to help the government reduce its deficit. As we have been saying since our arrival in this House in 1993, we do not want to reduce the government's deficit by cutting assistance to the least well-off and hardest-hit members of our society, including the unemployed. It is, of course, easy to reduce the deficit by \$42 billion when the government does so, as I have said, by cutting benefits to the most disadvantaged and to the unemployed, and by such actions as helping itself to \$5 billion from the employment insurance fund.

The present government is increasingly concerned with other people's business, and less and less with its own. And how did it manage to reduce the deficit by \$42 billion? By pulling out of regional economic development, as I will explain. We know that the present government has pulled out of wharf operations. The federal government has pulled out of the wharves belonging to Transport Canada, Harbours and Ports Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, and Parks Canada. Why? To privatize its infrastructures and transfer them to provincial or regional authorities so as to avoid running a deficit.

Similarly, as part of its policy to hand over the operation of airports, the government is withdrawing from regional airport development. Charlevoix has struggled to maintain the Charlevoix airport, but the government refuses to refurbish this airport, which has been neglected for a number of years. No money has been spent on it, and today they want to transfer it to Charlevoix.

The federal government boasts of reducing the deficit by \$42 billion, but it did so by cutting employment insurance, by closing regional offices and especially by cutting transfer payments to the provinces. This forces provinces like Quebec to make financial

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adjustments by cutting in the sectors of health, education and social assistance.

I would like to ask a question in closing. Do members agree that we can reduce the deficit without cutting aid to the most disadvantaged and that we should continue to eliminate waste? Allow me to cite only two examples, since I have only five minutes. I could list several hours worth of examples of government waste, but I will mention only two: promoting Canadian unity and promoting the Canadian flag, which has been recognized for over 100 years.

[English]

Mr. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I think I saw that movie last week. It was not very good. I am seeing the movie again this week. It has not improved. I expect that I will see the movie again next week. The hon. member needs to know that as we enter into the millennium we can do it together.

• (1605)

We have been celebrating as a nation Canada's hockey victory over the Soviets 25 years ago. I would ask the member to think of a subsequent Canada-Russian series in which there was an absolutely sublime pass from the boy from Brantford to Super Mario and Super Mario deked the goalie and tucked it in upstairs. To me that is a metaphor for what we are as a nation, what we have been as a nation and what we can be as a nation.

I am sincerely hopeful that Quebec will be part of this nation. But the year 2000 will come and we will do it together in a stronger fashion.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I must make a comment regarding the order of speakers today. We are going to change this order immediately because members taking part in the debate must be in the House and must rise when the Speaker announces resumption of debate. There were some who were not here and I would like to change the order so as to enable them to take part.

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Charlesbourg.

I want congratulate you on your appointment as an officer of the House. I assure you of my complete co-operation in the proceedings of this parliamentary institution, in which I intend to behave with dignity and respect. And might I urge you, Mr. Speaker, and your colleagues to use your experience and your authority to make this House a place in which the debate will be as vigorous as it is courteous, but also a forum that the public will hold in esteem rather than contempt.

I would also like to take the opportunity of my maiden speech to pay tribute to the citizens of Beauharnois—Salaberry. This riding in the southwest corner of Quebec is graced by a majestic river, a

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seaway, vast lakes and fertile banks, and is proud home to the county town of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and the cities and municipalities of Beauharnois, Huntingdon and Napierville.

Those who put their trust in me and voted for me last June I thank from the bottom of my heart. I give my word to those who elected me, and to all those I represent here in Parliament, that I will carry out my public duties with deep and sincere respect for my new office.

I take this opportunity to pay my respects to my Bloc Québécois predecessor, Laurent Lavigne, to whom I wish a well deserved rest before another referendum on Quebec's political future is called and he is again called upon to help build a country, a plan that he must not have lost sight of in his retreat in Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka.

The Speech from the Throne was disappointing. As I listened to it in the Senate, last Tuesday, I could not help but be disappointed by a government program with so little vision, by a speech lacking consistency, apparently designed to lead us into the next century. It is a collection of empty words, cautious commitments and artful dodges.

My colleagues from the Bloc Québécois has already brought to light the weaknesses in this speech and they will continue to do so all week long. The proposed initiatives to promote Canada's economic, social and cultural development are far from innovative and unlikely to give hope and create the momentum required to get the men, women and children of this country excited about the 21st century.

• (1610)

The same goes for foreign affairs. Considering that our country paid tribute to the memory of Lester B. Pearson by mentioning the 100th anniversary of his birthday in the September 23 speech, the throne speech definitely did not put enough emphasis on foreign affairs.

The current foreign affairs minister, who may succeed Lester B. Pearson as a Nobel peace prize recipient, did not manage to convince his government to give foreign affairs the importance they deserve in its agenda. Merely listing a few measures will not provide a vision to our foreign policy.

Canada's initiatives to ban antipersonnel land mines, promote human rights and protect the environment are definitely good measures and will get the Bloc Québécois' support when, as in the previous Parliament, we feel they are compatible with Quebec's interests and those of the international community as a whole.

However, the Bloc Québécois will not hesitate to condemn the positions of a government that constantly reduces its official

development assistance, or whose approach is inconsistent as regards the linkage of human rights and international trade.

The Bloc Québécois will also condemn the fact that Canada is slow to ratify a treaty as important as the American convention on human rights and seems too reserved regarding the inclusion of cultural exemptions in international trade agreements.

You can also count on me, as the new Bloc Québécois critic on foreign affairs, to expose a government that puts its foreign policy at the service of national unity. I will display unprecedented vigilance in this regard, and I will not miss any opportunity to respond to those who seek to jeopardize Quebec's autonomy at the international level, to take away the voice Quebec has gained, after an endless struggle, with various states and international institutions.

Those who would try to keep the Bloc Québécois and its spokespersons from speaking to foreign officials in Ottawa and around the world about the political project of the Quebec government, a project shared by both the Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois, will not succeed in preventing us from doing so.

You are probably not surprised to hear me say that the throne speech has very little to inspire those who seek to put an end to the constitutional deadlock. I respect those who promote Canadian unity, who find some degree of comfort in the Calgary declaration and who believe in its potential to produce a reform satisfactory to Quebecers.

Like the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords, in my opinion the Calgary declaration does not contain the elements which would allow Quebecers to live with a Canadian federalism based on the equality of provinces and individuals rather than on the recognition and freedom of peoples.

I have less respect, however, for those who support Plan B, those who are anticipating the failure of Plan A. To the ministers and members of this House who wish to insure unity through basically undemocratic pronouncements and measures and who are setting us all on a collision course, my response is that the people of Quebec is sovereign and will, when the time is ripe, reject any plan intended to restrict its freedom to be master of its own destiny.

[English]

It is now time to acknowledge the diverging views of the peoples of Quebec and Canada on the nature and structure of the federation. It is time to reconcile Canada and Quebec in a new kind of partnership, a novel form of union between genuine sovereign states.

Why not consider calling it a Canadian union, just like René Lévesque did in 1967, an entity that could foster the possibility of going beyond the unsuitable and inappropriate federal structure that has bound the peoples of Canada and Quebec for the past 130

years. The challenges of Quebecers and Canadians will then be nation building, affirming the unique personalities of their two countries, and union building that is defining their common destiny within a novel body politic.

• (1615)

These new challenges will replace the old divisions, allowing both Canada and Quebec to understand and appreciate each other. This avenue might be chosen with great reluctance, but I cite the words of a poet, Robert Frost:

Ah when to the heart of man
Was it ever less than treason
To go with the drift of things
To yield with grace and reason,
And bow to accept the end
Of a love or season?

My answer, my answer to my Canadian friends, lies in a poem of Gilles Vigneault who in his *Balises* wrote, and so I conclude in French:

[Translation]

I came to you, bearing my country,
To sow it in your garden.
You need not be surprised
To see it growing in your neighbour's as well.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am greatly interested in my colleague's words.

Could the hon. member tell me if we must cut ties with the monarchy to renew Canada?

Mr. Daniel Turp: Mr. Speaker, for us Quebecers, for those who share the idea that Quebec ought to become a sovereign country, it is the people who will be sovereign. The people will determine the head of State. Discussions will be held on who this should be.

What I can tell you is that there are many sovereignists who wish to see Quebec remain in the Commonwealth, like other nations which have remained in the Commonwealth but do not necessarily have the Queen as their head of State. Quebec's anglophones will no doubt do a fine job of representing a sovereign Quebec within the Commonwealth's institutions, and we will be proud to have them representing all Quebecers there.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I say to the hon. member that his brilliant reputation as student and teacher has followed him here.

He quoted a poem by Robert Frost. I can quote another poem called *The Road Not Taken*. The poet indicated of the two options that life always offers. Dare I hope that, during his parliamentary career here, the member may consider the other path, that of renewed federalism, adapted to the needs of the modern world?

Mr. Daniel Turp: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary and I hope my behaviour in this House may be as dignified as his own.

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As you know, Quebecers have long debated the two roads, and continue to do so. With the Bélanger-Campeau commission, they once again agreed to debate renewed federalism. Since 1990, this road of renewed federalism has seemed to be a dead end.

When we hear, as we did again this weekend, major political personages from the rest of Canada saying that the Calgary declaration is unacceptable to the rest of Canada, the implication is that, yet again, the road of renewed federalism is a dead end.

• (1620)

In this context, the road to sovereignty and partnership is the most credible alternative. It is the most valid one for Quebecers and the one that will make Quebec a country that is open to the realities of the world and a player in the international community, desirous, to a large extent, of maintaining the economic and monetary union that the people and sovereign states of Europe, for example, have maintained while retaining their sovereignty.

To quote an internationalist you know very well, Emmerich De Vattel:

[English]

“Of all the rights that can belong to a nation sovereignty is doubtless the most precious”.

[Translation]

If sovereignty is precious to Canada, admit it—it is important to—so it is for Quebec.

[English]

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member of the Bloc understand that when the country was founded the aboriginal people were here and that when the francophone people arrived the aboriginal people said to them “come on to the land and we will continue to build Canada?” Then the anglophone people arrived and the francophone people and the aboriginal people shook hands and said “come, we will build Canada”.

We are all the same. We are all one and we form Canada. I say to you, sir, that we have to realize that. I ask you and your party to look at that. We formed Canada, we built it, and I am asking you to be part of it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Milliken): I must remind all hon. members that it is necessary to address the Chair in questions or comments.

[Translation]

If the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry wishes to say something, he has the floor.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Turp: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the hon. member. I appreciate her concern and her will to make Quebec part of Canada. However there are differences. There are things that have not functioned well. There are solutions other than federalism to bind the futures of people together.

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I believe we have exhausted constitutional remedies in Quebec. There will be evidence shortly that the Calgary declaration shows once again that the views of other Canadians and Quebecers are irreconcilable. We will see once again that those constitutional remedies have been exhausted. Then we will have to find a solution. We will have to find a solution to bind the future of people living on the same land together.

For me and for many Quebecers of all generations that solution is sovereignty accompanied by an offer of partnership which will be made and will continue to be made in good faith by Quebecers like myself.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with some emotion, and understandably so, that I address this House for the very first time. After ten years of militant action in favour of sovereignty, I finally have a chance to pursue my action as an elected representative.

First of all, I would like to thank the voters in the great and beautiful riding of Charlesbourg who have chosen me to represent them. I was born and raised in Charlesbourg and I still live there. It is a privilege for me to work for the people of Charlesbourg.

Great people have spoken in this House. One who comes to mind is a man who was first elected to this place and, later in his political career, went on to become the premier of Quebec. I am referring to Honoré Mercier.

• (1625)

Honoré Mercier went down in Quebec history as a man who asked Quebecers to set their partisan divisions aside. People rallied around him and his national party with the deepest conviction.

At the unveiling of the Cartier-Brébeuf monument in Quebec City, in 1889, he made a famous utterance: "Let us stop fighting among brothers and unite".

A century later, the Bloc Québécois has answered his call. While advocating a sovereign Quebec, the Bloc Québécois is asking all Quebecers, whether they are federalists or sovereignists, Socialists, Liberals, Conservatives, ADQ or PQ supporters, to rally around and join forces to fight for the democratic rights of Quebecers as well as for their institutions and their freedom to decide their future.

In the early 19th century, Louis-Joseph Papineau and the Patriot movement fought for democracy and for the rights of those who were called Canadians at the time and are now known as Quebecers. Papineau fought to ensure that his people, and not some unelected individuals, decide the future.

It is sad, a shame really, to see this struggle we thought was over resurface today. Once again, attempts are being made to take away

from Quebecers the right to democratically decide their future and ask an unelected body, namely the Supreme Court of Canada in this instance, to decide for them.

[English]

The point of view that the future of a nation should be decided by the people and not by elected officials was shared by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson said "I can think of no safer depository for the ultimate powers of society than in the people themselves".

I expect my colleagues from the Reform Party to agree with this statement as it is written in the conference room at their party's headquarters in Calgary.

We the sovereignists are the defenders of democracy in Quebec. Our goal is to ensure that Quebecers have the right to decide their own future. That future is one that we are confident will be as a sovereign and proud country, dealing as an equal with its friend and neighbour, Canada.

The Bloc is back.

[Translation]

Now, let ask ourselves if it is possible to reconcile justice and escalation. Let me use a practical example.

Imagine you have a dispute with a neighbour and that neighbour wants to have a third party settle the issue. It goes without saying that you would never accept that third party to be someone appointed and paid by your neighbour. Moreover, should the decision be based on a contract which you have always refused to sign, you would have another reason to object.

Yet, this is precisely what this government is attempting to do. Supreme Court judges are appointed by the federal government. They are paid by the federal government and, moreover, they will interpret a document that every Quebec government has refused to sign.

Is this what they call justice, Mr. Speaker? Not I. Justice will be done when Quebecers are free to decide, and they will.

The carelessness of the current federal government is obvious in the throne speech. There is nothing good in it for Quebec. The unemployment level for my generation is tragic. Some even refer to us as *generation x*. Still, there is absolutely nothing in the throne speech to solve this most urgent problem.

The fight against the deficit was conducted at the expense of the poor, including young people, and they will not forget, believe me.

As for the part of the speech entitled "Building Safer Communities", it hides another attempt by the federal government to encroach on areas of provincial jurisdiction. Once again, the federal government is acting like a bull in a china shop. But there is more.

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The \$30 million program to fight crime is a rehash. It was already public news on December 12, 1996, when the *Globe and Mail* published an article on it, on page A16 for those who want to go back and read it. There is nothing new. This is further evidence of this government's total lack of imagination.

• (1630)

Still in that same part of the speech, I am pleased to see that the government decided to develop alternatives to imprisonment for non-violent, low-risk offenders. The government has finally listened to the Bloc Québécois, which has always stressed the importance of rehabilitation. The Liberal government is once again proving the Bloc Québécois right.

Let me conclude by saying it is an honour for me to be here. I am convinced that this 36th Parliament will go down in history. Indeed, I will be able to tell my children that I was part of the last group of Quebec MPs elected to the House of Commons.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member.

Is it true that the term "Canadian" is inclusive and the term "Quebecer" exclusive, and that, accordingly, Canadians are a people and Quebecers a society?

Mr. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, had I rewritten the question to please myself, I would not have written it differently.

I believe that there are some things that must be made very clear. We are now speaking about the people of Quebec, a very inclusive concept that includes francophones, anglophones, allophones and the first nations. The advocates of partition are the ones who are using exclusive terms and who are dangerous.

We have long accepted that all Quebec's anglophones and allophones form part of the people of Quebec. Partitioners are the ones who have decided to equate national or ethnic boundaries with political boundaries. The Quebec we dream of and want to build will be inclusive and will include the people of all nations and all the immigrants who come here in search of freedom.

You may rely on the Bloc Québécois to make of Quebec a people who are open-minded, tolerant and generous, and not an ethnic group, as certain people would have us believe.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I begin by congratulating the hon. member for Charlesbourg on his first speech in the House of Commons. I listened carefully to what he had to say. I also listened carefully to some of the questions his colleagues asked of colleagues of mine earlier today with respect to

the understanding of the existence or non-existence of the Québécois people.

I acknowledge the history of that notion. It is fair for the member to notice the NDP, going back to its formation in 1961, has always been ready to acknowledge that dimension of the collective existence of the Quebec people. We continue to argue that can be achieved, recognized and enhanced within the context of a continuing Canadian federalism.

One of the reasons we invite members of the Bloc and other Quebecers to do that is that the minute we begin to give up on this notion and entertain notions of separation, we come up against the hard political and philosophical reality that it is not just the Québécois and the Quebecois who consider themselves a people but, for instance, the aboriginal people of Quebec are also a people. It seems to me that we invite an infinite reductionism of self-determination the minute we get into the question of separation.

• (1635)

Has the member not considered the difficulty that would be posed for Canada and for Quebec in the event of a separation and in the event the Cree people of Quebec decided that they, in their own democratic self-determining way, did not want to continue to be a member of Quebec as it is now understood but rather a member of what would be left of Canada after such a separation? How does he regard their democratic rights understood in that context?

Mr. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The Government of Quebec was the first government in Canada to recognize the existence of the aboriginal nations. We are proud to have done so. We continue to extend our friendship to the aboriginal people.

My dream of a sovereign Quebec is a Quebec nation working in partnership with the Canadian nation and in a partnership with the aboriginal nations of Quebec. Dealing with the Canadian people, Quebec people and the aboriginal peoples equally in that triangle is the key to the future of Quebec, Canada and the aboriginal people.

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

I, like other members, congratulate you on your appointment to the Chair. On behalf of the constituents of Dauphin—Swan River I wish you a very successful term.

I am honoured and privileged to be in the House of Commons representing the people of Dauphin—Swan River. I thank the people of Dauphin—Swan River for the honour. I pledge to them that as I take my seat on their behalf it is my responsibility to be accountable to them first and foremost.

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I would like to describe to the House the make-up of Dauphin—Swan River. It is as unique as the country itself. Dauphin—Swan River is located in west central Manitoba, the second largest settled area riding. It is a land of lakes, mountains and prairies. It is multilingual and multicultural. The people speak English, French, Ukrainian and Saukteaux. Culturally it is predominantly English, Ukrainian, French and aboriginal. The people of Dauphin—Swan River celebrate this diversity with enthusiasm throughout the year. We are all proud of our ethnic heritage but we are prouder to be Canadians first.

[Translation]

On a more personal note, I am a third generation Canadian. My Chinese grandfather came to Canada to help build the railway in the late 1800s. My wife Lynda, nee Burelle, is ninth generation. Her roots go back to 1660, to the arrival in Quebec of Étienne Burelle and Marie Tellier from the parish of Saint-Séverin in Paris. They settled near Varennes, in Quebec. The Quebec Burelles moved west to Manitoba only in the 1900s. We both still have relatives in Quebec.

I am sure that many Canadians are in the same position. Quebec is as important to us as any other province in which we have family members.

[English]

The people of Dauphin—Swan River sent me to the House to make sure their concerns are heard. They are not happy about the lack of jobs, the rising cost of post-secondary education, the dismantling of the health care system, the price of grain as announced recently by the Canadian Wheat Board, the cost of transporting farm products to market, the political manipulation of the grain transportation system over the last 40 years, an ineffective Young Offenders Act, and the lack of justice in that criminals appear to have more rights than law-abiding citizens.

• (1640)

In Dauphin—Swan River the issue of gun control implemented by the former justice minister is unacceptable to the people. This bill has been very divisive for Canada. It has put Canadians in two camps, those living in large urban centres and those living in rural settings. The gun control of the government will no doubt make criminals out of millions of otherwise law-abiding Canadians across the land.

As the deputy critic for national unity my role is to ensure that the grassroots at the municipal level are listened to and that they have a pivotal role to play in the future of Canada. I believe that we have failed over the last 40 years in the unity debate because we have used the wrong process.

Canada's vision was seen through the eyes of the Right Hon. Pierre Trudeau in the 1970s. In the 1980s the vision was through

the eyes of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney. In the 1990s there has been a struggle between the old school and the new school. The old school wants to stick with a closed door, top down approach to solving Canada's challenges and problems on unity and on most other issues as well. The new school wants to throw open the windows and let in the fresh air, open the doors and let the people bring their ideas to the table and have a real part in making the decisions. Sadly the old school is so far barely letting the windows and doors crack open.

[Translation]

I believe that the next millennium belongs to the people of Canada, without a doubt. During the last forty years, the politicians have failed miserably with their top-down approach to unifying the country. Now is it the citizens' turn to address the issues of the day.

In my opinion, Canadians are interested in their day to day needs—jobs, health care, housing—and not in constitutional disputes between parties and governments. My constituents have indicated to me that we must start by solving problems, and must treat all citizens of this marvellous country on an equal footing.

[English]

In past weeks I wrote to the provincial premiers suggesting the process of consultation be open and transcend political loyalties and partisan politics. I also asked the premiers to encourage the municipal leaders to participate in holding town hall style meetings in each community open to the residents. The community meetings would be assisted by facilitators, information provided by provincial governments, input from experts and include the participation of local MLAs and MPPs. In short it would put the town back in the unity town halls.

In closing, the key to this process is open discussion. Only then would the people of Canada have an opportunity to discuss and debate the issues on the future of their country. The House belongs to the people as so does the future of the country.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be making my maiden speech before the House today. I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to make my debut appearance earlier last week during question period. I am a little overwhelmed at the idea of participating so directly in one of Canada's most important institution.

The transition from the old Strathcona coffee guru to parliamentarian is no small adjustment. I only hope that I am part of a parliament that will begin to reshape Canada and that I may in some modest capacity be a part on that process.

Before I become too involved in my speech I would like to congratulate you on your election to the Speaker's Chair. I am confident that you will uphold the integrity and the proud tradition of this position.

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I would also like to take the opportunity to thank my constituents of Edmonton—Strathcona. It is a great honour to be entrusted with the responsibility of representing a constituency that includes the prestigious University of Alberta, an academic institution poised to become one of the finest in the world.

• (1645)

I am proud also to represent the area of Old Strathcona, a wonderfully unique Bohemian community of small business, artists and students. I represent a large number of senior citizens and am proud that now I may serve these people who have spent a lifetime building this great nation.

I want to thank all my constituents for having the courage to place their trust in a man of only 25 years of age who belongs to a party only 10 years old. I will take my election mandate to mean that it is a change that the people of Strathcona desire and I will work tirelessly to ensure that change occurs in this House.

I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional love and support. It has not been easy for them to take the sole responsibility of running our family owned business in my absence. While their eldest son is engrossed in the adventure of his life, they are carrying the burden of running the daily operations of our family owned coffee shop.

I think my parents were a little skeptical when I first threw my hat into the political arena, but despite their skepticism they supported and encouraged me over many long months of campaigning and are truly the unsung heroes of my political success. I would like to thank my parents also for teaching me the values I now bring to political life.

My family arrived in Canada in 1972. They were penniless refugees who fled Uganda and the brutal regime of Idi Amin. They came to Canada to rebuild their lives. They came to escape tyranny and embrace Liberty. They came to find a haven from racial prejudice in a country renowned for its tolerance and equality. With a belief in hard work and with a commitment to meritocracy, they began to rebuild their lives.

Like all children do, I learned from their words and their deeds. I saw that with hard work comes success. That was the opportunity Canada offered.

I saw that my parents were allowed to pursue business opportunities and were allowed to keep the fruits of their labour. There was no dictator who could confiscate our property because he did not like the colour of our skin. That was the freedom Canada offered.

I saw that my parents, even though they were small business owners, were treated with the same respect as other Canadians. That was the equality Canada offered.

Opportunity, freedom and equality. These are the values I have come to cherish and these are the values I bring to this House. Canada is the best place in the world to live. We do not need the United Nations to tell us that, but we risk being complacent if we continue to pat ourselves on the back.

Canada does have problems. Canadian families and small business suffer under a heavy tax burden. Young people, normally full of hope, fear the future holds nothing but disappointment, chronic unemployment and debt.

Canadians every day face the uncertainty of whether or not their country will remain united. This uncertainty weighs heavy on all Canadians and is the cause of so many political problems. It is this issue that I would like to address today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I have a message I would like to send through you to the very proud people of Quebec. Quebecers are justifiably proud of their history and culture. It is my belief that this culture will continue so long as there are people—sovereignists or federalists—wanting to keep it flowering.

I fear, however, that Quebecers will once again in the near future be asked to decide whether they wish to remain in Canada. Separatist leaders will ask them if they want to retain their cultural identity or be swallowed up by an all encompassing federal government. Given this choice, I too would vote sovereignist.

These, however, are not the only choices available to Quebecers. There is a third choice, that of a renewed Canadian federation. This choice will change totally and utterly the relationship between the federal and provincial governments. It will give the provinces the latitude they need to develop the cultural and economic institutions that best reflect their particular values.

[*English*]

The third choice is embodied in the political movement calling for renewed federalism. While it is a movement that began in the west with the Reform Party it is fueled by frustration shared by people all across this country.

• (1650)

Our first ministers are among those who share this frustration. They have given us the framework from which to begin a nationwide discussion on Canada's constitutional future. This should be an exciting time for the people of Quebec and all across Canada who are looking for fundamental changes to our federation. We should all look with hope at the possibilities that lie within the Calgary declaration. Our premiers have learned a lesson from both Meech Lake and Charlottetown and are going to the people of Canada to hear what they have to say about their country.

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I would ask that the people of Quebec insist that their voices be joined with the millions of other Canadians who will soon be discussing Canada's constitutional future.

[*Translation*]

I would also ask Quebecers, who are so proud of their culture, to look at this way of remaining within a renewed Canada, which will respect the cultural and economic diversity of its provincial partners.

Although the idea of a renewed federalism holds out promise and a future for Quebec, there are those who will oppose it because they do not believe that Quebec can or should be an equal partner in the Canadian federation. Some believe that, without inequalities enshrined in the Constitution, Quebec will never be an important component of Canada.

[*English*]

There are people who told me that I would never make it in the Reform Party, a party without official racial preferences for its candidates. There are people who told me that a young minority would never make it on his own in a political world dominated by the old boys club, and yet I stand here today, the proud representative of Edmonton—Strathcona.

I think that what my personal experience helps to illustrate is that in a truly free country merit is the only requirement for success. Equality is no threat to individuals of merit. Equality is no threat to the rich and unique culture of Quebec.

I hope the province of Quebec will demand to be an equal and vital member of the Canadian confederacy and will reject the false promises of separation.

It is said that Canada finds strength in diversity. If this is true, a renewed federalist system may bring this country together as a strong unified country as never before seen, a nation ready to face the challenges of the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the new member from the Reform Party on his maiden speech in this House.

I understand where the hon. member is coming from. He is a member of a federalist party, the Reform Party, and the Calgary meeting took place in his province. Fine, but the history of Quebec's plans for sovereignty goes back much further.

First, as we mentioned, the proposed Constitution was never signed by any Quebec government, whether federalist or sovereignist.

Robert Bourassa, a Liberal, was not a sovereignist but a federalist, yet he never agreed to sign the Constitution. Claude Ryan never

agreed to sign it either. More recently, a former Liberal provincial minister, Claude Ryan, recognized Quebec's special rights.

I represent a riding that once had a former Prime Minister as a member of Parliament. I am referring to Brian Mulroney, who was the member for Charlevoix and Prime Minister of Canada. He too made an attempt with the Meech Lake accord, the Charlottetown accord and other formulas. In the referendum on the Charlottetown accord, English Canada voted no because they felt it gave too much to Quebec, while Quebec voted no because we felt it was not enough.

I believe, as the hon. member will find out, that therein lies the constitutional problem and that, no matter what you offer, it will be too little, too late. Quebec sends \$28 billion to Ottawa and is not getting its money's worth in return. Quebec wants to manage its own services, eliminate overlap and duplication, take control of its destiny and become a country by the year 2000.

• (1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, I too share the frustration of the hon. member who just commented. That is the whole point of what has been happening in this federation to date.

The premiers of the various provinces have said it is time to consult the rest of Canada in order to have real change in the federation. We have seen that frustration in every region of this country.

With the premiers making the effort to make the change, now is the time for us to come together and build for the future. We have come a long way as a united country. I hope there is still a long way to go. The only way we can do it is to come together as one people of one nation, through equality in order to make the changes required for the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by telling the member for Edmonton—Strathcona how much I, and I am sure, my colleagues appreciate his speaking French in this House and speaking it very well.

I would like to ask him whether the citizens of Edmonton—Strathcona, whom he represents, feel that Quebecers are a people and whether they feel that this people has the freedom to determine its future and to have its own country.

[*English*]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, one of the things the people of Edmonton—Strathcona sent me here to try to accomplish is to recognize the view that, regardless of where people come from, regardless of their background, whether they are Quebecois or an Ismaili Muslim like myself, we are all equal. The way to build a strong country is not to recognize that each individual group makes

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a people, but to recognize that through our diversity we are equal. That will give us the base on which to build a strong country.

It does not matter what the people of Edmonton—Strathcona think in the sense of their recognizing any specific group as a people. They put equality first and that is what they have sent me here to do on their behalf. That is what they believe will build this country and lead us into the 21st century.

Mr. Carmen Provenzano (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Erie—Lincoln.

It is with great pleasure that I take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne, a speech which confidently outlines our government's ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility and social fairness.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to you on your appointment as acting speaker. I would also like to thank the residents of Sault Ste. Marie for giving me the honour of representing them in the House of Commons.

It is with a great deal of humility that I stand here as their member of Parliament. I sincerely hope that through hard work, honest conduct and devotion to constituency matters that I can repay Saultites for the confidence they have shown in me.

I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the previous member of Parliament for Sault Ste. Marie, Ron Irwin, who is now a special advisor to the prime minister. I have known Ron Irwin for a long time. He is a fair and honest man who, as an MP, served Sault Ste. Marie extremely well and as minister of Indian affairs also served Canadians extremely well.

Ron left some mighty big shoes for me to fill, workboots in fact. I thank him for his counsel, past and present, as I try to grow into those boots.

Returning to the matter at hand, I would like to focus my remarks on a few key issues raised in the throne speech, namely youth unemployment, the importance of exports to the Canadian economy and the need for a forward thinking approach to national unity.

• (1700)

Youth unemployment has become a serious problem in Canada and particularly in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Too many well educated young people are having a tough time finding that all-important first job. Still others are finding post-secondary education to be prohibitively expensive. It is for these reasons that the government is taking decisive action to help young people.

The Speech from the Throne reaffirms and in many cases expands the government's commitment to improved job creation, training and education for young people. The strengthening of federal internship programs will provide participants with real job experience, the lack of which too often prevents young people from finding meaningful work.

The establishment of the Millennium Scholarship Endowment Fund will help thousands of young Canadians access the education necessary to succeed in the knowledge-based society of the 21st century. I was especially pleased to hear that the millennium fund will be directed primarily at low and modest income students. This is welcome news indeed to a predominantly working class city like Sault Ste. Marie.

I have always believed that by investing in the future of our young people we invest in the future of Canada. Simply put, the Speech from the Throne is an example of this belief in action. Of course we will be in a position to do more in terms of social spending as our commitment to sound fiscal management yields larger and larger dividends. One particular area of interest to me is the creation of greater opportunities for physically and mentally challenged Canadians through wage subsidies and job creation initiatives.

The federal government now operates a \$30 million a year opportunities fund to this end, but it is my sincere hope that in the years to come more attention and more money will be directed at this often overlooked group of Canadians.

There are aspects of the speech that provide hope for unemployed Saultites. The emphasis on exports as a source of one in three Canadian jobs bodes well for residents in my riding. Sault Ste. Marie is a vibrant border city with a significant export economy. Sault Ste. Marie is a leading exporter of steel, wood and paper products. The city's exporting capabilities are second to none thanks in large part to its proximity to the United States and its strategic location along the St. Mary's River.

Tourism is another precious commodity in Sault Ste. Marie. Thousands of visitors come every year to enjoy the natural beauty of northern Ontario. They come to fish, hunt, ski and snowmobile. In Sault Ste. Marie they ride the Algoma Central Railway to the Agawa Canyon, tour the Sault locks and visit the magnificent displays at the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre.

It is for those reasons that Saultites should be pleased with the throne speech's recognition of tourism and exports as key economic generators. This recognition is not simply based on rhetoric. The government was quick to condemn a new American entry law which would seriously inconvenience Canadians crossing into the United States. The government will continue to fight this insulting legislation and it is my belief that it will soon win Canadians a well deserved exemption.

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I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the sacrifices Canadians have made the past few years. Like government they have learned to do more with less. However, now that there is light at the end of the deficit tunnel, we are, as the Speech from the Throne explained, in a position to make strategic investments. We will not, as some opposition members have charged, abandon the attitude of fiscal responsibility that got this nation's finances back on track.

• (1705)

On the other hand, we will not neglect to make the necessary social investments such as the ones outlined in the speech. We will stay the course of balancing the nation's financial and social priorities. This is what Canadians elected us to do in 1993 and it is what they re-elected us to do this spring.

Finally, I would like to offer my colleagues in the House these thoughts on national unity. There is an old expression that says "Don't look back unless that is where you want to go".

Are there many Canadians who wish to go back to where we have been on the whole question of national unity? I do not think so. I believe my fellow Canadians are prepared to look straight ahead. I believe they are prepared to be flexible and open-minded in finding a lasting solution to the national unity problem.

I exhort all of my colleagues in the House to fix not on the past but on the future, to be fully receptive to new ideas and proposals regardless of the source so that we may bring lasting closure to this issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's entire speech, but even more carefully to the latter part of it. Our colleague speaks to us about national unity. He tells us not to look back to the past, but ahead to the future.

I would point out to him, and it is to this comment that I would like his reaction, that the Canada of today is operating under rules from the last century, when we are now on the eve of the next century.

There is not an enterprise in this country, or in the rest of the world, that is operating according to rules from the last century. Such an undertaking would be doomed to failure.

When will Canada finally understand that the Constitution, which was drawn up in the last century, no longer meets, if it ever did, the needs we now have and will continue to have in the next century? Sovereignty, with a proposal for partnership, is a forward looking plan that assures Quebecers and Canadians of prosperity in the century to come.

I ask him whether he is looking to the future or to the past.

[English]

Mr. Carmen Provenzano: Yes, Mr. Speaker, indeed I look forward to a solution to national unity issues which have had a very checkered history. It is my hope that Canadians will be forward-looking. I pledge to do what I indicated in my speech. I am prepared to be very flexible and to take the lead from wherever it may come in order to find some kind of a solution to this problem.

I do not think that the federation is so broken that it cannot be fixed.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's comments with interest.

Although there is great hope for our country and for this global trade that is moving toward us, we have social problems in this country that parallel third world countries. We have aboriginal people living on reserves. The minister of Indian affairs has a fiduciary responsibility which encompasses the whole of the cabinet and the government to ensure that the funds that are directed to the chiefs and councils of those reserves reach the grassroots people.

• (1710)

We are hearing directly more and more from a growing number of grassroots people on a number of reserves across the country that they are living in poverty conditions which are leading to an enormous degree of violence, alcohol and drug abuse. On the Stoney Reserve we heard that an aboriginal woman is living in a van because she protested against the chief and council and mysteriously her house burned down. These kinds of stories are shocking and alarming. Yet the government is saying that all is well and has resisted for the longest time any examination of what was happening on the Stoney reserve. Finally Judge Reilly demanded that something be done to look into the societal conditions that were bringing so many people into his court room.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We are out of time. I would ask the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie for a brief reply.

Mr. Carmen Provenzano: Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns of the member opposite. I have a confident belief that we have the resources, human and material, to bring to bear on these problems and I am hoping that we can find a solution. Those conditions should not prevail in any civilized society. We must direct our attention to them and find solutions.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 2 of this year I received a mandate from the people of Erie—Lincoln to represent their concerns in the House. I am honoured to have been given this responsibility by my constituents and I am proud to be the first member of Parliament for the riding of Erie—Lincoln.

The Address

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people in the areas of the Niagara peninsula that supported me in 1993 and then became parts of new ridings due to redistribution. I enjoyed working with the warm people and progressive municipalities of the town of Pelham and Welland South. It was an honour to serve you. I have many fond memories of events I attended and friendships made.

The new riding of Erie—Lincoln brings in two fine new areas, the town of Dunnville and the town of Lincoln. The town of Dunnville is located on the Lake Erie shore and is dissected by the friendly Grand River. It is a picturesque community of greenhouses, mixed farming, light industry and most importantly, great people.

The town of Lincoln is located on the southerly shore of Lake Ontario in an area renowned for its tender fruit and vineyards and yes, great people as well. The excellent wines that are produced in the town of Lincoln are a testament to the unique micro climate found in the peninsula.

During my travels to the new areas of the riding I have been impressed by the number of small businesses that are actively exporting their products around the world. I welcome both communities to the Erie—Lincoln riding and look forward to representing them to the best of my ability.

The riding of Erie—Lincoln truly runs from lake to lake to river. It runs from the Niagara River and the American border at Fort Erie down the shore of Lake Erie to Port Colborne and Wainfleet and on to Dunnville, then up into West Lincoln to the heart of the peninsula and on to Lincoln on the shores of Lake Ontario. It is a wonderfully diverse and unique riding, a virtual microcosm of Canada. I look forward very much to working for my constituents in the upcoming mandate.

I would also like to take this opportunity, as I did in my maiden speech in January 1994 to thank my family, Sherrie, Megan, Patrick, Alanna, Andrew and Sarah, my parents and my siblings for their ongoing support and understanding. All those present in the House know of the sacrifices that an elected official must make and the toll that an election campaign and representation in Ottawa can take. My family cannot be thanked enough.

During the spring campaign and throughout the summer months the constituents of Erie—Lincoln delivered a very clear message that something must be done about unemployment. I was pleased to hear in the speech from the throne that “Stimulating job creation and economic growth has been, remains and will continue to be a major objective of the Government of Canada.” I applaud this initiative.

While the job creation figures are impressive, 947,000 jobs since October 1993, and while many of these jobs are well paying, full

time jobs, in my riding where unemployment remains too high, this is little consolation. The government must continue to seek out the opportunities that will put Canadians back to work and which will put many young Canadians to work for the first time in productive and fulfilling jobs.

• (1715)

We must continue to look abroad to market our excellent competitive Canadian products. We must investigate partnerships with the private sector. We must break down interprovincial trade barriers. We must continue to cut the red tape for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Most of all we must continue to see the unemployment situation for what it is, a battle, a war that must be fought until every Canadian who wishes to work and can work is afforded that opportunity.

The fiscal course is set. The budget is to be balanced in 1998-99, a truly remarkable achievement that has earned the admiration of the world community.

I fully support the direction the government has pursued. As difficult as it was we implemented many necessary cuts, all the while keeping in mind the values Canadians hold dear, those values that set us apart from other nations. The government's values are clear: responsibility, compassion, fairness and respect.

I caution the government with the words written by a constituent. My constituent wrote “Canada is a country, not a corporation”.

We cannot be driven by the bottom line at the expense of the livelihood, dignity and welfare of Canadians. Unemployment strikes at the very essence of an individual, leaving him or her unable to provide for self or family. Families can be traumatized by joblessness whose lives are seriously affected, sometimes irreparably.

No level of unemployment is acceptable. I will continue to examine ways in which Erie—Lincoln can seize the opportunities available to it and shall have the same access to services and programs as large urban centres.

Many Canadians and Erie—Lincoln residents are concerned about the unity of our fine country. The large French Canadian population in my riding has close ties to Quebec. We believe that la belle province is a fundamental part of our Canadian heritage.

In the address the right hon. prime minister spoke of a disturbing study showing that Canadians knew very little about one another. I am convinced that an increased knowledge of the other would bring greater understanding to those who are ambivalent about Canadian unity. Despite language, race or religion the day to day concerns of Canadians are the same from coast to coast to coast: family, employment and the economy. We are all more alike than we may realize.

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I embrace the desire to be innovative as we look at national unity. I commend the premiers and territorial leaders on the recent Calgary initiative. Oftentimes a fresh approach is required. At all times an open mind is required.

Children are our most precious resource. Some say they are our future, and I agree. I would also point out they are very much a part of our present. Throughout the past year as a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs I was part of a group committed to studying the youth justice system. The message in what we heard rang loud and clear. The most effective way to stem youth crime is not always tougher sentencing, corporal or capital punishment, but by preventing young people from falling into a life riddled with criminal activity.

Moneys carefully spent on programs dealing with children from their prenatal period through their elementary school years is crucial to preventing young people from committing that first petty crime, a first crime that can lead very often to a lifetime of criminal behaviour and incarceration at enormous cost to Canada and Canadians.

There is little doubt in my mind after visiting with young offenders, police, judges and youth workers from coast to coast that child poverty proves to be a major setback for many young children that may lead to learning difficulties, adaptation problems and potential criminal activity.

The government has acted by increasing the contribution for the Canada child tax benefit by \$850 million per year with higher payments to begin July 1 of next year. It is a step toward the very necessary eradication of child poverty.

I was pleased to hear in the Speech from the Throne that the government is committed to working with provincial and territorial governments to develop a broader agenda for children including clear outcomes in measuring their success. Our children ask little of us. They want only to have strong support of families and safe communities in which to develop. This is the very least we owe them.

In my riding of Erie—Lincoln it was announced that all four hospitals would be either closed or their services downgraded substantially. This is unacceptable. Many of my constituents have very real concerns about the present state and future of our medicare system. They are worried the high quality of health care they have come to expect and deserve will not be there for them when they most need it.

We have responded to these concerns and will continue to respond as we must. The government is committed to providing a minimum transfer of \$12.5 billion to the provinces and territories for health care. This increase will see the cash payment entitlements to the provinces and territories rise by \$700 million in 1998-99 and \$1.4 billion the year after.

With the nation's finances in good shape we will soon be in a position to make choices and investments that support this Canadian priority.

● (1720)

Also being examined are innovative ways to provide health care to an aging population that is on the whole healthier than the last generation and much more able to live at home for longer periods of time.

We are expanding home and community care, providing Canadians with better access to medically necessary drugs, and examining the quality and effectiveness of health care across the country through the health transition fund.

The government is also working hard to prevent the many diseases and illnesses that are very costly to treat once diagnosed. Funding for initiatives such as breast cancer, HIV and AIDS and tobacco reduction are key elements in the prevention strategy. We must work with the provinces to ensure universal and accessible health care is available for all Canadians, rural or urban.

It is no longer possible for an economically viable nation to live in isolation of world affairs and events. Canada has been renowned over the years for its contribution to peacekeeping efforts. As a country we believe in the values of collective responsibility as seen through our public pension system, publicly funded health care system and equalization payments.

As one of the have nations of the world we have a responsibility to the have nots to help them through conflict and struggle by providing some security for the innocent civilians and to help provide safe havens for refugees, hopefully contributing to a resolution that will see them return home.

These are all part of our responsibilities to our friends and neighbours around the world who through no fault of their own are not fortunate enough to have the stability and prosperity we find in Canada.

Canada is not only a peacekeeper. It is a peacemaker and a leader. From Lester B. Pearson in the 1950s to my hon. colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his humanitarian efforts to rid the globe of the hideous and maiming land mines, Canada has shown itself to be an independent leader in this arena. December's conference in Ottawa will demonstrate again to the world the honesty and tenacity with which we tackle these controversial issues.

In conclusion, too often it is easy to talk about the negative or the work to be done, but I cannot help but to think that we as Canadians get too wrapped up in it. Canada is the best nation in the world to call home and we have that privilege.

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Admittedly there will always be work to be done and the best can always get better. I am committed to working to make Canada a better place to live. My constituents and family provide much of the enthusiasm that fuels my efforts.

I welcome the new members of the House of Commons to this institution. To serve the public is perhaps a calling, definitely a right, and truly a responsibility we all have. I look forward to working with all my colleagues in a constructive fashion that will build on our successes as a country and will make Canada stronger than ever as it enters the new millennium.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for a very good speech. I might mention that we shared chairs on the justice committee and travelled all across the country looking at the Young Offenders Act. I was always appreciative of his practicality and his common sense when it came to addressing the issue.

It is nice to hear from him today and I have a question for him. Inasmuch as the throne speech stated that the government would “develop alternatives to incarceration for low risk non-violent offenders”, would the hon. member be prepared to support an amendment to the Criminal Code that would exempt violent offenders from conditional sentencing?

The former justice minister agreed that convicted rapists should not walk the streets, that they should be doing time. Because the benefits of conditional sentencing have not been exempted from violent offenders, would he consider supporting an amendment to the Criminal Code that would do that very thing and bring the law into line with the promise made in the throne speech that they would develop alternatives to incarceration only for low risk and non-violent offenders and allow violent offenders, particularly those who commit acts of rape, to do time in jail for no other purpose perhaps than the deterrent effect it might have?

Mr. John Maloney: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge your appointment to the Chair. It certainly will be enlightening to have you there. I am sorry we have lost you as a member of the opposition to comment on our debates. You always had a very practical approach. We are very glad to see you as perhaps the first non-member of the government sitting in that position. It is a welcome and refreshing step.

• (1725)

In response to the member for Crowfoot, I agree there is too much violence in society, domestic violence and violent criminal activities. While I support the removal of conditional sentencing for violent offenders, I think it certainly has merit. We would have to examine it very closely, but I am inclined to agree with the member that a message has to be sent to the citizens of country that violence cannot be tolerated in any way, shape or form.

A tap on the wrist is insufficient for that type of behaviour. I would like to see the private member's bill I am sure the member will propose.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the sober speech made by the hon. member for Erie—Lincoln.

The member showed some foresight in dealing with many of the issues at stake. However, as you know, I am more interested in certain points than in others. Sometimes, that foresight was lacking or not so sharp. I am referring in particular to his statement that Quebec is part of the so-called Canadian heritage.

Let me quickly go back in time and remind you that Quebec City was founded some 400 years ago. Canada, on the other hand, is 130 years old. Quebec City helped promote a nascent culture that blossomed through its contacts with many aboriginal nations. To be sure, the Conquest, 150 years later, enriched the culture of the people who were already there and who were already considering themselves a people.

I will conclude by saying that the anglophone ocean now surrounding us continues to try to assimilate us, not realizing that we are a real people. There are 7 million people in Quebec, 85 percent of whom are francophones. Ours is a pluralistic society. What does the hon. member think of this?

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. The hon. member for Erie—Lincoln can give a very brief reply if he wishes to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. John Maloney: Mr. Speaker, Quebec is a fine province that we are proud to have as part of Canada. It is unique. It is different. We enjoy going there. We all have relatives there. In my area of Erie—Lincoln there are many French Canadian people who have family in Quebec.

However Quebec does not have the monopoly on the French culture. My area is one. St. Boniface is another and the Acadians in New Brunswick are another. There are areas throughout Canada. We respect the French factor in Canada, but Quebec is not the sole governance of that.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment. I will be splitting my time with the member for North Vancouver.

As this is my maiden speech I would like to take the opportunity to let my constituents know I am truly honoured to be in the House of Commons representing them as the newly elected member of Parliament for Edmonton East. I would also like to inform the

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people who are listening to this debate today that we are debating the Speech from the Throne.

• (1730)

Many of the members of this assembly can trace their heritage to a common path. We share ancestors that sailed by the shadow of the Quebec citadel, some stopping, most going onward to Montreal or beyond.

My ancestors came to Canada in the 1850s. They, like many immigrants before and since, followed this route to Upper Canada. Like the French before who enjoined the land of the aboriginals, so too did the British. My wife's ancestors who came from Ukraine in 1910 travelled this conduit to settlement, as did many others who followed. The first impressions of this new country for most of Canada's immigrants was the impressive heights of the Quebec citadel and the wharfs of Montreal.

Canada by this time had embraced the railroads and more than anything else developed the interior territories by threads of rails emanating from its rapidly growing cities of Montreal and Toronto. Montreal was the hub of the dynamic business region and largest city in Canada up until the 1960s.

Business dynamics of cities have changed since then. Toronto now replaces Montreal in size and Vancouver may in turn in the future given its present growth rate. What Montreal retains is the true essence of Canada's multicultural make-up. Its cultural mosaic is a product of 350 years of enlightened immigration. This cultural diversity is shared by many cities and towns in Canada.

Edmonton East is just one of those cosmopolitan communities. Encompassing city hall and the Alberta legislature, Edmonton East also has a variety of cultural communities, Ukrainian, Italian, Chinese and others. Cultural diversity is a treasured part of our community. A large and popular cultural event is the Edmonton heritage day festival. Our community celebrates its individuals' heritage as well as enjoying the celebration of others.

Edmontonians truly do enjoy multiculturalism. Some groups display great pride in cultural accomplishment without federal funding. More groups should. Multiculturalism should not be about money. It should be about community involvement and community participation.

As a father of two teenage daughters, one in high school, the other in university, I am proud to say that they view, as I do, race and colour as transparencies. They simply do not exist in our lives.

In the global community of the next millennium discrimination will be a non-starter for those who will want to be equal partners in world affairs. Canada has become a major global trading country because of its diversity of cultures and the insightfulness it brings.

Canada Day is a product of evolution from the French-aboriginal encounter, to the early British stewardship, to the birth of a nation in 1867, already growing with immigrants from all corners of the earth, less than 500 years since Europeans set foot in Newfoundland.

What concerns me deeply is the very reason that brings me to this Chamber, Canadian unity. I truly believe in Canada's diversity. I have had a long and memorable relationship with a very significant part of our country. Since 1962 I have sometimes lived in, worked in and often visited Quebec. The most important visit was to Quebec City during the 1995 referendum. To be in Quebec City for the vote was important to me, to my past.

On October 31, like many thousands of Canadians, I was in shock and disbelief that our country could be lost for want of 100,000 votes. It was not a simple consultative referendum as we were told. It was a serious well orchestrated campaign for separation.

Thousands of Canadians reacted as I did. Dozens of unity groups sprang up. I organized a group in Edmonton. While several projects were completed I realized that to make a serious impression I could better serve Canadian unity from within a political party that truly supports Canadian unity. Ultimately it will be the government that makes constitutional changes, but we encourage suggestions from all Canadians that want to foster Canadian unity. I will bring forward concerns of people and groups in my role as deputy critic of intergovernmental affairs.

• (1735)

I stand here as a product of the 1995 referendum. I am not here pretending to have answers but I am here to try to help. Canadian unity is not just Quebec and the rest of Canada. Unity is successfully dialoguing concerns of all Canadians. It is renewing federalism. It is emphasizing the equality of the people of Canada as well as the equality of its partners, the provinces.

If Canadians have the will and determination we can resolve federal-provincial concerns, we can resolve aboriginal concerns and we can resolve linguistic concerns. The people of Edmonton East are just like the people of Gaspé and people from all across Canada.

What can and will work to bring this country together is to give Canadians everywhere the feeling that they have a government that cares, a government that will bring about real jobs by reducing taxes, not just floating statistics, a government that will support fair reduced taxes after it has begun a debt reduction program, a government that will make families a priority, a government that will work to make our streets safer by recognizing and correcting the misguided Young Offenders Act, a government that will repair the damage done by the past governments to the all important social safety net and pensions, a government that will view

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taxpayers for who they are, our employers, not simply as walking wallets.

Then all Canadians will feel better about themselves, about their families, about their well-being in senior years, about their justice system, about their government. Then we will have something to wave a flag about. Then we will have something to be proud enough about to even buy a flag ourselves. Then we might have unity.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate our new colleague on his election and I am surprised, as well as happy, to learn that he is here because of the 1995 referendum. As a result, unlike certain members of the preceding Parliament, he understands that the Bloc Québécois members who are here today are not an anachronism and are not completely out of touch with Quebec realities. In Quebec, 49.4 percent of the people voted yes, and the member was sufficiently impressed by that percentage that he decided to come to the House to debate the question, just like us.

I would like to ask a question to our new colleague, a question that comes from the conclusions of the previous speaker, who said that Quebec did not have the monopoly on French culture in Canada since there are francophones outside Quebec. There is an important semantic distinction to be made, here. The culture of Quebecers is not French, but “Québécoise”, just like the culture of Acadians is Acadian. There are also other French language cultures elsewhere, authentic French cultures.

Did our colleague, who did come to Quebec, realize how authentic la culture québécoise is, since it is found nowhere else in the world and since it is characteristic of the way our people has evolved over the past 400 years?

I would like to hear his comments. He is in a position to know. He has lived through the referendum. I will listen closely to what he has to say.

[English]

Mr. Peter Goldring: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I do recognize the uniqueness of the language and culture of Quebec, but I also recognize the uniqueness of other parts of Canada.

• (1740)

When I attended the referendum my distinct impression was that I was there because of a failure of our government in Ottawa to perform.

It is not only Quebec which is looking for changes in the federation. Many other parts of the country are also looking for change. We are looking forward to a renewal of the Canadian federation with a consideration for equality, not only equality of the citizens but equality of the provinces.

[Translation]

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if it is possible to be a people within a province like the province of Quebec, it is most certainly possible to be a people within the province of Alberta.

But is it true, I ask my colleague, if he wants one people for one country, that it must be a nation like Canada. A people perhaps for the province of Quebec, but a Canadian people for the nation.

[English]

Mr. Peter Goldring: Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns of the hon. member. I believe, as I stated in my speech, that Canada is comprised of peoples from all over the world, gathered together in the country of Canada. People who come from different cultural backgrounds and mosaics make Canada a great country. Canada is great because of the diversity of all of its cultures collected together.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will agree with me that the throne speech is an empty shell, that it contains nothing to reassure Quebecers, that it has brought little hope to our young people and no hope to our seniors. Seniors tell us “The more things change, the more they stay the same”.

I would like to ask the hon. member whether, when he came to Montreal during the 1995 referendum campaign, it was really in order to save Canada, or was it because of the attraction of a reduced \$95 flight from Vancouver to Montreal?

[English]

Mr. Peter Goldring: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comments. However, I will have to correct him.

I was very specific in my speech. I said that I was in Quebec City during the referendum. To the best of my knowledge, nobody paid for my airline flight. I booked it long before that time.

I was there as a concerned Canadian. Going through August and September I watched the polls changing. With Parizeau it looked like 60:40. With Bouchard it looked like 50:50. I was concerned about the dramatic change which occurred over the period of a couple of weeks because another person had taken control.

I was there as a Canadian wishing to experience this vote in Quebec City. I had visited Quebec City several times before. My wife and I have had very fond experiences there.

I wanted to see why people who were my age, 50 years old, with two teenage daughters, who were established in life, would risk going down the road with the uncertainties which separation would bring.

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I was there out of concern for my country. I was not there on a cheap flight.

• (1745)

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to your position as Deputy Speaker, an exciting, stimulating position during these speeches.

I would like to take this discussion in the direction of parliamentary reform and the lack of mention of it in the throne speech. I would first like to lead into that with a little story.

On the evening of June 2 this year when it was clear that I had won my riding with an 11 per cent increase in support, I stood in front of my supporters and I thanked them very much for their assistance. One other thing I said to them was that I could not wait to get back to the House so that I could stand here and look at the prime minister and say "I'm back". And here I am, his worst nightmare.

Before I get right into the nitty-gritty of my first speech—

An hon. member: Don't flatter yourself.

Mr. Ted White: It amuses the members opposite as much as it thrilled my supporters on the night of the election.

I would like to repeat my sincere thanks to my constituents for acknowledging and supporting the style and type of representation that I gave them in the 35th Parliament. I will certainly try to do even better in the 36th.

The victory was sweet because apart from the Liberal campaign that was run in the riding of York South—Weston in an attempt to unseat the sitting member there, I would say that the campaign run by the Liberals in my riding was probably one of the dirtiest and sleaziest in recent history. I do have to mention this to lead into my attack on the parliamentary system if we can call it that.

The Liberal candidate was personally endorsed by the prime minister and he launched into a litany of vicious personal attacks, innuendoes and mud slinging which detracted completely from the issues. The entire campaign turned into a personality thing distressing a lot of people.

My wife and many of the emotionally sensitive people in my campaign were in tears on a daily basis. If any other members were subject to that sort of abuse in a campaign they will appreciate that it is not a very nice way to go. My mother who is 84 years old had come from New Zealand thinking that it was going to be a joyous, happy campaign and she was reduced to sobbing her heart out on the first night that she was here.

As a public figure I am used to the criticism from political opponents. However it has often struck me that those who claim to have the monopoly on tolerance, compassion and understanding turn out to be the least tolerant, compassionate and understanding as they attempt to force through their agenda. The voters of North Vancouver could see through that and they gave the prime minister exactly what he deserves, a Reform representative from North Vancouver and a loyal official opposition from the rest of Canada.

One other thing. He can no longer call us the third party. Some of my constituents are waiting to see if he will use that label for the Bloc. I just have to mention that.

Election campaigns are about power. They are not really about democracy. They are about power for political parties at any cost. As new members in the House will soon learn, this House is not a place for the most part where we carry out the will of the people.

It is unfortunately the place where government members almost always obediently vote the will of the prime minister. And that is not because they always support what is being put in front of them, but because the consequences of voting against the government are so serious. Whether to stick to a principle or to represent constituents, the member for York South—Weston whose achievement in being re-elected to the House as an independent I admire, certainly knows the consequences of standing up for a principle. Sadly what happened to him I believe will act as a strong disincentive for government members to defy or even mildly depart from the instructions of their whip.

Nevertheless we do desperately need some reforms to the workings of this place, reforms that will make it a place of the people rather than a place of the parties. If each and everyone of us perhaps being guided by the general principles and polices of the party had been elected as independents with a mandate to vote the majority will of the constituents, this place could actually turn out to be useful to the average Canadian instead of being an overtaxing, overregulating, overinterfering hindrance to their lives. In fact some of my constituents have made the comment that they think the country runs better when we are not in session.

An hon. member: I have heard that.

Mr. Ted White: One of the PC members mentioned that she has heard the same thing.

• (1750)

The public perception of politicians as people who will say anything to get elected and then do whatever they like would disappear if we were truly representing them. Cynicism would be replaced by respect and we would be doing the job that the majority of voters thinks we should be doing. If we ask them they think we should be representing them, not ourselves or a hard party line.

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During the summer I collected a folder full of issues brought up in letters and later some phone calls from my constituents. I tend to do this throughout the year. I pick up the issues and bring them to this place so that I can express them on behalf of my constituents.

Unfortunately I will not have time to go through the whole folder today but I can promise members they will hear about it all over the coming weeks. They are issues that I really should not even need to talk about in this place and there would be no need to talk about them if as I mentioned earlier we were truly representing our constituents.

If we had citizens rights to initiative and referendum at the federal level it would make a major difference. For those who always claim that citizens rights to initiative and referendum are not compatible with our style of parliamentary democracy, I say bunkum.

New Zealand which has a similar parliamentary system introduced citizens rights to initiative and referendum in 1990. The Ontario government is in the process of introducing those same rights for Ontario voters. All it takes is the political will. Members will have the chance to see how it can be done at the federal level when I reintroduce my private member's bill on initiative and referendum hopefully next week.

The city of Rossland in B.C. which is just a small city actually stands as an excellent example of how initiative and referendum can work for citizens. It really cleans up the politics. Prior to the introduction of citizens initiative in Rossland in 1991, four mayors had been tossed out of office in consecutive elections and councilors were being replaced all the time. It was very chaotic.

Since citizens initiative and referendum power was introduced not a single council member or mayor has been voted out of office because the constituents have been able to concentrate on the issues and the council and mayor carried out the wishes of the constituents. They voted themselves some tax increases for repairs to the community as well as voted against some other things.

In the absence of the tools of direct democracy in this place we really remain captive to the will of the prime minister. Unfortunately that means Canadians will have virtually no input to this place over the next few years.

Canadian voters will probably be stuck with the same inadequate justice system which has degenerated under the old line parties into little more than a legal system incapable of protecting them from criminals. Canadian voters will probably be stuck with an immigration system incapable of preventing the entry of hundreds of bogus and criminal refugees every day, also incapable of deporting the offenders after years of taxpayer funded appeals. I wonder how many members know that there are more than 30,000 illegals under deportation order in this country right now.

Canadian voters will probably be stuck with the Liberals embarking on a special interest group spending spree wasting money on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council while they claw back seniors pensions and increase the CPP premiums for workers. Canadian voters will probably be stuck with higher and ever increasing taxes that eat away at their disposable income and kill jobs. Canadian voters will probably be stuck with record levels of political patronage using their tax dollars and borrowing against their children's futures.

They will probably be stuck with the ongoing Liberal social engineering programs which assign rights, privileges and money based on race or gender instead of on achievement or equal opportunity; state sanctioned racism and sexism completely out of touch with the realities of the marketplace.

In a way it is depressing. But in a way it is also invigorating because it will give me the opportunity over the next few years along with my colleagues to speak about these problems in this place. In my role as the direct democracy critic for Reform I will continue to apply pressure for change in this place, changes which would make it more effective and deliver real value for those who pay our salaries.

A strong sense of the need for change was reflected in the results of a vote held here last Monday. I hope there is sufficient resolve to carry that feeling through into meaningful changes as the business of this House progresses.

• (1755)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment because I know that many Canadians do watch the House. I want to defend members of Parliament who may be affronted by the member's comment about voting the way that somebody tells them.

As a member of the government party, I ran in the last election on a government platform which laid out the commitments that the Liberal Party was making to go into a new parliament.

I want constituents of my riding and of my colleagues' ridings to know that when we come to this place we will vote in favour of measures and bills which support a platform on which we ran. That is the mandate, that is the democracy and the accountability in this place.

My question for the member has to do with the issue of being an independent member and voting the will of the people, as the member would put it. I am afraid that the member is actually serious about this. The member continues to refer to New Zealand as a model. New Zealand may be able to do referendums but the population of New Zealand at some three million is the same as taking a referendum in the city of Toronto.

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I would like to ask the member a very direct question. When one considers that in the last session of parliament, just half of the 35th Parliament, we had over 400 votes in this House, how is it that he expects to consult and get fair questions to all of the constituents, to get them back and to process them to find out how his constituents feel and still do it with the resources that are available? This is going to cost a phenomenal amount of money.

I would point out to the member that if he truly believes in referendums, then he should not be here because he only got 49 per cent of the vote. More than half of the people said no to that member.

Mr. Ted White: Mr. Speaker, the member brought up really good questions and I thank him very much for that. He knows very well that most of us, except for one, ran on a platform associated with a party. So the people who voted for us supported the general principles of that party platform.

He also knows very well that his constituents do not support every single plank of that platform. He is far too arrogant to suggest that therefore he has permission to vote a certain way on every single issue that comes up in this House.

There is another problem because, as he also well knows having been here before, there are many issues that come before this House that were never in a party platform and were never part of any policy material. Those especially are the types of issues where he should be very sensitive to the will of those who are paying his salary I remind him.

He says he is actually afraid that I may be serious. I certainly am serious. He is also very concerned that I am using the example of New Zealand for referendums. Of course he completely ignored the fact that the Harris government in Ontario is introducing similar legislation.

In addition to that, we have as a very good example the country of Switzerland which conducts most of its business, at what we would call the equivalent of the federal level, through citizens initiated referendum. Nobody could say that the Swiss are not smart, that their country does not have a high standard of living and that they do not conduct themselves in a civilized manner, but the difference there is that those people who want input to the government truly have input.

Finally I would like to mention that of course many of the issues that come before this House are not issues that all of the constituents are interested in. Many of them are housekeeping items and minor changes and amendments that affect very few people. It is unrealistic to expect people to take part in a referendum process for such issues.

Nevertheless there are many major things, like the Young Offenders Act, capital punishment and various bills that came through here last year on sentencing reforms on which the public should have had more meaningful input. If the committees of this House genuinely reflected the will of the people instead of the

political agenda, most of those bills never would have gone through last year.

All I can say again to the member is to please open his eyes and begin reflecting the will of the constituents because the writing is on the wall: the times they are a changing.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being 6 o'clock, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1830)

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 2*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bailey
Benoit	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Cadman	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Davies	Desjarlais
Dockrill	Doyle
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duncan
Earle	Elley
Epp	Gilmour
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Hardy	Hart
Harvey	Hayes
Herron	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Jaffer	Johnston

Jones
 Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
 Laliberté
 Lunn
 Mancini
 Mark
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 Nystrom
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 Wayne
 White (North Vancouver)—77

Keddy (South Shore)
 Konrad
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 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Manning
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Mayfield
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Muise
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 Power
 Proctor
 Reynolds
 Robinson
 Solberg
 Stoffer
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Wasylcia-Leis
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)

Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Normand
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Pagtakhan
 Parrish
 Peric
 Peterson
 Phinney
 Pickard (Kent—Essex)
 Pratt
 Provenzano
 Reed
 Robillard
 Rock
 Sauvageau
 Serré
 Speller
 Stewart (Brant)
 St-Julien
 Telegdi
 Torsney
 Ur
 Vanclief
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 Wilfert

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Minna
 Murray
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 O'Brien (Labrador)
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 Paradis
 Patry
 Perron
 Pettigrew
 Picard (Drummond)
 Pillitteri
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 Redman
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Members

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 Anderson
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 Bellemare
 Bergeron
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 Boudria
 Brien
 Bryden
 Cannis
 Carroll
 Cauchon
 Chan
 Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
 Clouthier
 Cohen
 Comuzzi
 Cullen
 de Savoye
 DeVillers
 Dion
 Dromisky
 Duceppe
 Easter
 Finlay
 Fontana
 Gagnon
 Gauthier
 Goodale
 Gray (Windsor West)
 Guarnieri
 Harb
 Hubbard
 Ifody
 Jennings
 Karetak-Lindell
 Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
 Knutson
 Lalonde
 Lee
 Leung
 Loubier
 Mahoney
 Maloney
 Marceau
 Marleau
 Massé
 McGuire
 McLellan (Edmonton West)
 McWhinney
 Mifflin

Alcock
 Assad
 Asselin
 Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
 Baker
 Barnes
 Bélair
 Bellehumeur
 Bennett
 Bertrand
 Blondin-Andrew
 Bonwick
 Bradshaw
 Brown
 Bulte
 Caplan
 Catterall
 Chamberlain
 Charbonneau
 Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
 Coderre
 Collette
 Copps
 Dalfond-Guiral
 Debien
 Dhaliwal
 Discepola
 Drouin
 Dumas
 Eggleton
 Folco
 Fry
 Gallaway
 Godfrey
 Graham
 Grose
 Guimond
 Harvard
 Ianno
 Jackson
 Jordan
 Keyes
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lastewka
 Lefebvre
 Longfield
 MacAulay
 Malhi
 Manley
 Marchi
 Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
 McCormick
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Mercier
 Milliken

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Alarie
 Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok
 Caccia
 Desrochers
 Duhamel
 Fournier
 Girard-Bujold
 Karygiannis
 Lincoln
 Steckle

Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
 Bigras
 Crête
 Dubé (Lévis)
 Finestone
 Gagliano
 Godin (Châteauguay)
 Lavigne
 Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)

The Speaker: I declare the subamendment lost.

• (1835)

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

• (1845)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 3)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
 Anders
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)

Abлонczy
 Asselin
 Bailey

The Address

Bellehumeur	Benoit	Fontana	Fry
Bergeron	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Galloway	Godfrey
Blaikie	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Goodale	Graham
Brien	Cadman	Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Casson	Chatters	Guarnieri	Harb
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Dalphond-Guiral	Harvard	Hubbard
Davies	de Savoye	Ianno	Iftody
Debien	Desjarlais	Jackson	Jennings
Dockrill	Doyle	Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duceppe	Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Dumas	Duncan	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Elley	Epp	Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Gagnon	Gauthier	Lee	Leung
Gilmour	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Longfield	MacAulay
Goldring	Gouk	Mahoney	Malhi
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)	Maloney	Manley
Guimond	Hanger	Marchi	Marleau
Hardy	Hart	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
Harvey	Hayes	McCormick	McGuire
Herron	Hill (Macleod)	McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner	McTeague	McWhinney
Jaffer	Johnston	Mifflin	Milliken
Jones	Keddy (South Shore)	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)	Konrad	Mitchell	Murray
Laliberte	Lalonde	Myers	Nault
Lefebvre	Lill	Normand	O'Brien (Labrador)
Loubier	Lowther	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Lunn	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Pagtakhan	Paradis
Mancini	Manning	Parrish	Patry
Marceau	Mark	Peric	Peterson
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Mayfield	Pettigrew	Phinney
Mercier	Meredith	Pickard (Kent—Essex)	Pillitteri
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison	Pratt	Proud
Muise	Nystrom	Provenzano	Redman
Obhrai	Penson	Reed	Richardson
Perron	Picard (Drummond)	Robillard	Rock
Power	Price	Saada	Scott (Fredericton)
Proctor	Ramsay	Serré	Shepherd
Reynolds	Ritz	Speller	St. Denis
Robinson	Rocheleau	Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Sauvageau	Scott (Skeena)	St-Julien	Szabo
Solberg	St-Jacques	Telegdi	Thibeault
Stoffer	Strahl	Torsney	Ur
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Turp	Valeri	Vanclief
Vautour	Wasylcia-Leis	Volpe	Wappel
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Whelan	Wilfert
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NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélaïr
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Casey	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clouthier
Coderre	Cohen
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco

PAIRED MEMBERS

Alarie	Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—)
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bigras
Caccia	Crête
Desrochers	Dubé (Lévis)
Duhamel	Finestone
Fournier	Gagliano
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Châteauguay)
Karygiannis	Lavigne
Lincoln	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Steckle	

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

It being 6.45 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.45 p.m.)

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