



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, October 18, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 18, 1999

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1105)

[*English*]

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from October 15 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** When debate was last interrupted the hon. member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale had five minutes left for questions and comments.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's speech was so unmemorable that I cannot recall all of the points which I wished to ask him about. However, I have a couple of things which I would like to raise.

He talked about a balanced approach to financing. We all know that in the last couple of years the federal government increased its tax take in this country by \$18 billion. The hon. member makes much of the fact that the government is promising to lower taxes by \$16.5 billion over the next three years. Is that what he means by balance, that the government will take \$18 billion away from us and it might think about giving \$16.5 billion back? Is that Liberal balance?

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the hon. member's comment about my unmemorable speech, maybe I could give a memorable answer to him by saying, yes, that is absolutely my idea of balance.

Let me explain. The hon. member knows as well as I do that in the past years we were not in a position to reduce taxes. I trust that members of the party opposite would not have advocated reducing taxes given the budget problems we had and the deficit. They had huge complaints all the time about the size of the deficit and the debt. So that was the responsible attitude to take.

Now we are in a position to do something about taxes. In answer to a question, the Minister of Finance said in the House, I believe on Friday, that there were \$16.5 billion in tax reductions on the table for the next three years.

What differentiates the hon. member and myself and his riding from my riding is that my riding, as I pointed out in the introduction of my speech, requires an act of sensitive government to issues. It requires a government that says there are homeless people in Toronto. It requires a government that says there are children who need housing and homes and that it will actively pursue an agenda which will enable them to have better enriched lives, which will help all of us and reduce the ultimate tax burden by reducing the problems of social conditions which produce delinquency and other issues in our society. This is what we need in government. This is the balance of which I spoke.

There is investment in infrastructure at the university level. The students and faculties at the University of Toronto, Ryerson and George Brown College are all thrilled to see an active government of this country saying that it will reward excellence and ensure that our institutions of higher learning are well equipped to ensure that we have the best brains in this country contributing to the ability of the country to go into the 21st century well prepared. That is what I mean by a properly balanced approach. Yes, tax reductions; but, yes, a government which recognizes there are needs for our citizens at all levels that have to be fulfilled.

• (1110)

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale is a person with an extraordinarily good grasp of global and economic issues who always brings to the House very erudite and insightful comments.

Does he see the new spending that the federal government is committing to, the sparse commitment to tax reduction and the meagre commitment to debt reduction as being negative given the

*The Address*

state of the Canadian dollar and the importance of addressing the fundamental issues of lowering debt, lowering taxes and controlling spending in the long term, in terms of fiscal and monetary policy and currency levels? I would appreciate the hon. member's comments because our Canadian dollar has been weakened significantly under this government.

**Mr. Bill Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I should have recognized that the hon. member's kind words at the beginning of his question were about to cover some sting that was coming at the end of the scorpion's tail.

I am surprised that the he is coming so close to the previous hon. member who spoke. I thought there was an attempt to differentiate his party from other members further to the centre in the House. I am a little surprised by the tenor of the question, but I am really surprised that the hon. member, because I respect his economic judgment, would say the government is responsible for the weakening of the Canadian dollar in the last few years. As he knows, it is exactly our fiscal and our appropriate approach to the management of the economy of the country that has protected the Canadian dollar and allowed us to get to where we are today.

That is why I believe strongly that we need not just a focus on tax reduction or on debt relief, but a focus on those social requirements of Canadians that I referred to earlier in my speech. That is where the balance comes. That is where the differentiation is between his party, other parties and the government. I think that is where we will find that the Canadian people are comfortable with what is being done on this side of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Before we continue I thought it would be a good idea to go over how we will handle questions and comments.

I would like to proceed pretty much as we did in the first session; that is, we will always recognize a member from another political party for a question or a comment. We will try to do it in balance. If there are a lot of members interested in asking questions, they will stand when I first call questions and comments. At that time I will try to pick three and I will ask that the questions and responses to be kept to between 30 and 60 seconds. That way more people will be able to get their oars in the water. If it seems that there are just one or two people, or perhaps just one, then we will relax that rule a little.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the Speech from the Throne and to send a message to parliament from the people in my constituency of Winnipeg North Centre.

The people in my constituency are working very hard to build their future, our community and to contribute to Canada. They are people who get out of bed, work hard every day, who look after their kids and organize programs at the local community centre, who coach at the rink or help out at the seniors' centre. They share a sense of pride for their neighbourhoods and are determined to make a difference.

I will provide a little idea of just how people in my riding are making a difference in spite of some very difficult odds and conditions. In the last little while we have celebrated many important anniversaries. I want to mention, for example, the 15th anniversary of the North End Women's Centre, an organization working to provide counselling, training opportunities and employment for hard pressed women.

I want to mention the 50th anniversary of Inkster School, a wonderful example of good, solid public education that needs the support of all levels of government.

• (1115)

Let me also mention the 50th anniversary of the Shaughnessy United Church which is working very hard in my constituency to be a presence, to bring a spiritual contribution to our area.

Let me mention the 20th anniversary of Bleak House, a very important centre for seniors working to ensure social and recreational opportunities for all of our senior citizens.

Finally, let me mention the 100th anniversary of the Holy Ghost Parish, a church that is located in the heart of my constituency. It represents an incredible achievement for not only my community and the province of Manitoba but for all of Canada. It reveals a history of courage, tenacity and faith. From its earliest days, the Holy Ghost Parish helped early settlers adjust to life in this new land. It became a focal point for, in this case Polish culture, but it also worked to serve the needs of new immigrants right across western Canada.

Today I mentioned this centennial because it represents the pioneering spirit in the country. It talks about those who built this great country, who devoted so much time and energy and who sacrificed so much in order to foster the spiritual and cultural growth of our community and the country.

All of those organizations are trying very hard to make a difference but the odds are working against them because of a failure of federal leadership. In my own area, along with the constituency of Winnipeg Centre, we have the highest rate of poverty anywhere in the country. We have a housing crisis that is beyond description in the Chamber. Just in the last couple of weeks we have had another dozen or more arsons of vacant properties in the inner city and north end of Winnipeg.

In that context, let me reference the Speech from the Throne which suggests that the government, in response to the housing

*The Address*

crisis of the land, is going to study the roots of the problems of homelessness. The situation in areas like Winnipeg North Centre do not need to be studied any more. I can tell the House right now just what the problem is. This is an area that has few economic opportunities because of the policies of the government. This is an area that has been totally abandoned by the government offloading its responsibility for housing onto other levels of government. This is an area that has been abandoned by the big banks. In the next couple of months we will see another two branches close in my area. There are other examples right across the country. This is a situation where people are very much the victims of federal government neglect and of the failure of leadership that permeates every aspect of our society.

The people in Winnipeg North Centre are prepared to do their part to build communities but they want the support of government. They need the co-operation of government and they need the vision of government to do just that.

When I was at the celebration marking the very important occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Holy Ghost Parish, the pastor at that church, whose name is Father Karciarz, actually summed up the situation in the best way possible. He quoted from a prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero who said:

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

That prayer is exactly what people in my area and in areas right across the country are saying to the federal government. Together we must plant the seeds of hope. We must ensure that those seeds are watered daily. We must lay the foundation for building a better society and a better day. They turn to the government and especially the throne speech for that sign, the road map of how we will create a better day. They look to the government for a vision to help us overcome these great difficulties around poverty, homelessness, deplorable housing conditions, unemployment and lack of recreational opportunities for our young people. They expect a throne speech to be in tune with that vision, those ideas and those seeds of hope. What did they get from the Speech from the Throne? They got an absolute failure of leadership and an abdication of government responsibility. There was no sign of a vision and no hope for the future.

• (1120)

On every critical issue facing the country, the government is either silent or it claims to be studying the issue. There is no mention of the housing crisis, the fishing crisis or the farm crisis. There is no mention of the real problems facing families and communities right across the country. Nowhere is this more apparent than when it comes to health care.

We are under a serious assault in the country as a result of the failure of federal leadership and an agenda that very much

supports the privatization of our health care system. We are under the double assault of the dismantling of our universal health coverage system and the dismantling of our health protection system. This should be readily apparent today as we hear that there are 200 scientists in the government's own department who are crying out with a message that we are headed toward despair and doom on the health safety front unless the government decides to resume responsibility and provide leadership.

If nothing else, perhaps the government will listen to the words of its own former minister of health, Monique Bégin, who said: "Canada's cherished medicare system is steadily eroding and could one day collapse because of federal disregard". If the government will not listen to the words of the opposition, surely it will listen to the words of those who have helped to preserve and protect our health care system, one of its own former colleagues, the Hon. Monique Bégin.

I represent an area that was held by both Stanley Knowles and David Orlikow, two people who stood and fought for health care, pensions, unemployment insurance, protection for our families and ways to end poverty and despair in our communities. We have a great responsibility to carry on that legacy and it is one we take very seriously.

I hope we can impress upon members of the government the need for addressing the real concerns of Canadians: being there at times of crisis and offering leadership that builds upon the sense of co-operation and community that has been so much part of the history of the country.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the former minister of health, Monique Bégin. I had the opportunity to be her critic for four years in the House of Commons between 1980 and 1984, a period in which we were leading up to the introduction of the Canada Health Act.

The Canada Health Act is fresh in my mind because I just finished reading a copy of the *Hill Times* in which the headline stated that the Canada Health Act was 35 years old, although the article was a little more accurate. The Canada Health Act was only introduced in 1984. Prior to that, we had other legislation with other names. The purpose of the Canada Health Act was to discourage extra billing by physicians and user fees. The Canada Health Act incorporated all the previous legislation into this one piece of legislation.

I welcome the mention of Monique Bégin because it seems to me that she was the last minister of health we have ever had in the country who did something to actually protect medicare. Subsequent ministers of health have, for one reason or another, presided over the dismantling of our health care system, generally through the introduction of unilateral cutbacks.

*The Address*

As the hon. member mentioned, we now see two threats. I am sure that if she had more time she would have mentioned a third threat, which is that health services may be put on the table at the upcoming round of negotiations at the WTO.

I am sure I have said enough for the hon. member to comment more on the issue that she is so concerned about and on which she does such a good job of caring about in the House, the protection of our health care system.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the wisdom of my colleague, the member for Winnipeg—Transcona, who has been involved in these issues for some 20 years. He probably knows better than anyone else the struggle in Canada for a universal, comprehensive health care system.

• (1125)

It is absolutely clear that Monique Bégin will go down in history as the last person in the federal government to be seen fighting for medicare. She was very clear in her recent comments about what is required. She pointed to the fact that “erosion of medicare is the slow concealed process which suddenly leads to landslides and collapses. Is that what we want?”. Obviously we do not want that.

We have a universal health care system in the country that must be defended against all pressures including our own worst enemy, the Liberal government, which has overseen the dismantling of the system through steadfast cutbacks over the years, has willingly allowed the private sector to invade the health care sector and, as my colleague for Winnipeg—Transcona has said, is prepared to allow free-floating discussions at the WTO around health care services to be up for grabs at the table in the international sphere. Those are two obvious threats to health care in the country.

The third threat, which I hinted at earlier, is the dismantling of our health protection system. We have in the country a tradition of a tough regulatory approach to ensure that the food we eat, the drugs we need, the water we drink and the medical devices we need to use are safe beyond a reasonable doubt. We have operated in the country on the basis of a “do no harm” principle. If there is a concern or a doubt then we ensure that we do not allow that product to be consumed by Canadians until we know the long term health consequences.

We know from events of the past week that we have been inundated with all kinds of concerns from groups and individuals about the flood of genetically modified foods on the market around which there has been no scientific investigation or research from the federal government. Members also know that we have had a number of instances where our government inspectors are so under-resourced and short staffed that they are not able to address very serious situations around toxins and poisonings in our food supply. It is an area that cries out for government leadership.

We are desperately hoping that the government will address both areas of health care: the preservation of a universal, publicly administered health insured system and the strongest possible national food safety and health protection system imaginable.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt that the Speech from the Throne is a very carefully crafted document. One thing I have come to realize in the short time I have been here is that there is probably no other piece of work that is done on the Hill that is so scrutinized and carefully put together. One can almost see dozens of bureaucrats burning the midnight oil in the catacombs of this building agonizing over every word that goes into it to make sure it is exactly, perfectly put together.

The reason I point this out is that there are no accidents in the Speech from the Throne. If there is something missing from it, it is not by omission, it is missing for a good reason. It has been thought through very carefully for the message that it sends.

We all know there are two ways to send a message. One way is by putting the message in the document and one is by leaving it out. As a westerner from the prairie region, the most glaring omission in the Speech from the Throne has to be the complete absence of any reference to the agricultural crisis that we face in the prairie region.

I did not come to Ottawa to get on the hobby horse about western alienation. Frankly, I did not even think I would ever be standing up in the House speaking about western alienation, but the longer I am here the more I realize how important and grating this issue really is for a person from the west.

We are all very sympathetic to the issue of the lobster crisis on the east coast. We realize it is a real problem. However, we have an emergency in western Canada in the prairie region.

• (1130)

It is not just an isolated incident. It is not just a part of our industry that is suffering. The whole shebang is at risk of losing what developed western Canada, which is our agribusiness. Forty per cent of all prairie farmers run the risk of being out of business by the end of this selling cycle if something does not happen. If some intervention does not take place, 40% of all people who work on family farms today will be gone, kaput, and that does not even begin to talk about all the many industries that rely on a vibrant agricultural industry.

With all due respect to our colleagues from eastern Canada, we do not see the minister hopping on the plane to get to western Canada immediately to deal with the crisis, as we do with the

lobster fishery. The minister was on the plane the next morning, meeting with all the stakeholders down there and trying to carve out some way of dealing with that crisis. We do not see that in western Canada.

What are we supposed to think? Is it that our crisis is not as important as their crisis? Are we to weigh whose crisis is most severe? I put it to the House quite frankly that the other issue pales in comparison to what is going on in western Canada.

One might wonder why I would use my 10 minutes to talk about agriculture. I represent an inner city riding. I do not have a single farmer in my riding. There is hardly even a garden plot in my riding, frankly. It is the core area of Winnipeg.

However I do have the United Grain Growers. I have Cargill. I have the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. All the evidence of what built the prairies is located within the riding of Winnipeg Centre. That whole exchange area was built up because of a vibrant farm economy that we now stand to lose.

I raise this as the first point or as the most noticeable point about the Speech from the Throne for me as a westerner. There is not even a word, not a single line in there. I realize that the Speech from the Throne does not deal with specifics. That is for the budget. However, if there was a single line which said the Government of Canada recognized that it has to intervene in some way to protect the agricultural industry in western Canada, that would be some comfort. It would be some solace and people in that industry might say that at least the government appreciates that they have a problem.

It not just a matter of throwing money at it. I am not saying that everybody who lives on a farm, whether they are good farmers or bad farmers, should get a bailout from the Canadian government. Nobody is advocating that. It is a host of problems that have compounded and conspired to defeat the family farmer, whether it is world commodity prices or the corporate domination of the whole industry in terms of access to seeds.

One thing that scared the heck out of me recently was told to me by a group of farmers. It almost seems like this is part of some master plan: drive the small farmer off the farm so that the corporate sector can come in and make farming a corporate industry instead of a family enterprise.

One graphic illustration of why that is not just paranoia is the way that canola seed is dealt with. One has to buy canola seed from one corporate institution. I will not mention the name. One also has to sign a contract that one will sell the yield to that same institution. It controls the supply and purchasing of the product. At the same time it genetically alters the seed so that it cannot reproduce itself. It dead ends after one season. Unlike normal plants it cannot reproduce itself. It has been neutralized that way and the next year one has to go back to the same company to buy seed again.

### *The Address*

It is a serfdom. It is a return to serfdom. Agro-serfs is what they really are. They are not farmers any more. They are agro-serfs, multimillion dollar agro-serfs.

These are the kinds of things that Canadians are trying to awaken the Canadian public to and nobody is listening. There used to be champions in the House of Commons for the prairie farmer. At one time we had a western protest party that actually spoke out on behalf of prairie farmers instead of just the corporate agricultural industry. Unfortunately we do not hear a great deal of that today and, try as we might, we cannot get that issue in the forefront. The Liberal government has missed an opportunity to buy some support in western Canada by at least being sensitive to that issue.

That is really how one could summarize the Speech from the Throne. It was a missed opportunity, in fact a series of missed opportunities, and that is only the first and most glaring one that I can identify.

Another missed opportunity that is self-evident for me because it is in my critic area is immigration. All summer long, for the past six months, we have been seeing an hysteria about immigration whipped up by my colleagues in the Reform Party and their right wing counterparts in western Canada. They are trying to convince us that we have an emergency on our hands because 400 or 500 Chinese migrants have drifted to our shore. I have heard terms like this is the biggest breach to national security since the FLQ crisis. That is one of the points they have made. I do not know how to say balderdash or poppycock in terms that are parliamentary, but I have never heard such nonsense in my life. I guess I just did.

• (1135)

Somehow we have to put the hysteria back into perspective and ease the public's mind that we are not facing a breach to our national security because a couple of hundred desperate people have founded on our shore in British Columbia. It is a manageable issue and it is not the end of the world. However, again it is a missed opportunity where the Liberal government could have put one line into the Speech from the Throne to calm people down on that issue.

My colleague for Winnipeg North Centre raised the issue of child poverty. I was just reading the comments of the member for Winnipeg—Transcona in his speech. He reminded the House of Commons that we are up to the 10th anniversary of a unanimous motion in the House of Commons which said we would eradicate child poverty by the year 2000. That was moved by the leader of the NDP at that time in 1989 and it passed unanimously. Not a single person voted against such a laudable concept that by the year 2000 we would somehow eradicate child poverty within our borders.

I remind members of the House that we live in the richest and most powerful civilization in the history of the world. I ask

*The Address*

members to defend in any way they can why there should be anybody living in poverty within our borders.

As I said, I represent an inner city riding and so does the member for Winnipeg North Centre. We have three of the five poorest postal zones in the country. Poverty is an issue that we are seized with every day. There is not a day when we go to work that we are not dealing with somebody's urgent social emergency in terms of poverty issues. Yet in the Speech from the Throne we heard very little. We heard nothing about the important resolution that was passed in 1989, and only passing remarks about the issue of the fair redistribution of wealth building equity into our society.

The government mentioned that in the EI program it would lengthen maternity benefits. That is a laudable idea, a wonderful idea. I would like to see some costing of it. I cannot wait for the budget to come out to see what it will cost the Government of Canada. I would suggest that it will cost very little. First of all, fewer and fewer women qualify for any EI. They have to get on to EI before they can have their benefits lengthened.

The EI surplus is \$600 million a month and not per year. What the government will spend in lengthening the EI benefits for mothers on maternity leave might cost \$50 million a year. I have sort of done some costing on my own. Some \$50 million a year versus \$500 million or \$600 million a month. Where is the rest of that money going? The Canadian public is still being cheated and the EI reform is not nearly far enough. It is another missed opportunity. The government could have addressed that glaring oversight.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for my colleague who explained a few seconds ago that we have a surplus of \$24 billion in the EI program which was transferred in 1986 from the EI program to the general fund.

When the throne speech came down it talked about wanting to give it only to maternity leave. Would the hon. member agree with me that the government is not taking responsibility for the new jobs and for women returning to work? To go on maternity leave now they need 700 hours. Many women do not qualify for EI. We saw again this morning on the first page of the *Globe and Mail* that many women do not qualify.

The government forgot in its throne speech all the women who do not qualify for maternity leave because of the 700 hours and the 910 hours needed to qualify for first entry. Most women work part time and do not qualify for EI. Our youth who come out of university have a hard time finding jobs and end up in part time work. They do not qualify for EI. Eight hundred thousand people who have paid into the employment insurance fund do not qualify for EI.

• (1140)

I would like some comments from our labour critic about how he feels about that. This money belongs to the workers. As I have said many times, the Liberal government has stolen from working people and another \$30 billion from the public sector pension plan. Some \$54 billion have been stolen from the working people. The government is not taking responsibility for working people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I want to caution members. The member for Acadie—Bathurst indicated that the government has stolen or the Liberals have stolen. As long as there is not a direct attribution to a specific minister or a specific ministry it is a political metaphor but certainly it is not to be taken literally.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out those pressing issues regarding the EI program.

We all know that when unemployment insurance reform took place it made it more difficult to qualify. People could collect for a shorter period of time and receive less money per week. It was a recipe for a surplus. The government is using the EI system as a cash cow to harvest money from employers and employees to use for whatever it wants.

As the member pointed out, there is no such thing as the EI fund. All that money goes into general revenues and the government can spend it on whatever it wants.

I have always argued that to deduct something from a person's paycheque for a specific reason and then use it for something entirely different is fraud. At the very least it is a breach of trust. The government told us it would use it for one purpose and used it for another. It is completely misleading.

Never mind what it does to workers, which is bad enough. As labour critic I am sympathetic to that and what the changes in the EI fund are doing to my community.

The Canadian Labour Congress hired Statistics Canada to do some research on the impact on a riding per riding basis. In my riding alone the changes in the EI fund take out \$20.8 million a year. Can we imagine losing that amount of income, wages or salaries out of one intercity riding per year? In one area of Newfoundland it is \$70 million per year.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Winnipeg Centre who indicated that agriculture was not referred to in the throne speech at all. He indicated that there was no direction from the government with respect to agriculture.

Does the member believe that the government should have at the very least put together some sort of vision in the throne speech as to



*The Address*

the support the government should be putting into agriculture right now? The government does not seem to have any direction at all.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for Brandon—Souris is very knowledgeable about these issues. To answer his question simply, all it would have taken is one or two lines in the Speech from the Throne to recognize that we have a problem in western Canada, that we have an emergency that needs to be addressed. The government did not have to write pages and pages. There should have been a couple of lines to sympathize and say that there is an ongoing emergency in western Canada. It would have given some comfort and some solace to those people who find their livelihood at risk.

To answer the member's question, it is a missed opportunity on the part of Liberals to give some comfort to those of us in western Canada who feel more alienated than ever.

**Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Etobicoke—Lake-shore.

I congratulate Her Excellency the Governor General on both her appointment and inspirational address which she delivered on the occasion of her installation. Those of us who were privileged to witness that event were, I believe without exception, moved by her thoughtful and powerful address.

I compliment the hon. members for Windsor—St. Clair and Laval West on their eloquent remarks in moving and seconding the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

It is traditional that participants in this debate describe and praise the unique character of their constituencies. I have always felt particularly fortunate to represent Lanark—Carleton in the House of Commons. It encompasses one of Canada's major high technology clusters centred in but not restricted to the city of Kanata. It has a large rural area which includes much of Kanata and extends through West Carleton township in the county of Lanark, officially the maple syrup capital of Ontario.

• (1145)

In its towns and dotted throughout its landscape are numerous substantial and handsome stone homes and public buildings, a legacy of the Scottish stonemasons who were among the settlers who arrived in the last century. The people of Lanark—Carleton are very aware and proud of their heritage. At the same time, explosive growth of Kanata driven by successful high tech companies and entrepreneurs has added a dynamic sense of energy, pride and optimism to that historic and beautiful part of Canada.

Coupled with pride in its heritage is a sincere and energetic concern for the environment. One does not have to travel far to be close to nature. The increased pressure on water resources for

industrial and recreational use has led to real concern in particular within the farming community.

The spirit of co-operation that exists among those seeking solutions in an era of diminished financial resources is reason to be hopeful. However, I believe there is widespread public support for moving environmental issues back near the top of the agenda for all levels of government. I was pleased that the Speech from the Throne committed the federal government to addressing the management of toxic substances, increasing protection for endangered species and strengthening our capacity to perform environmental research.

I have mentioned the contribution of high technology to my riding. Its importance cannot be overstated. I was pleased therefore to see that the government recognizes the interrelated role of so many factors that allow high tech companies to flourish.

There has been an ongoing debate about the brain drain. Despite the clash of statistical and anecdotal evidence, I am on the side of those who see this as a serious issue. The success or failure of any business depends on the quality of its management and the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm of its employees. Very simple rules of human behaviour govern the response of individuals and therefore companies to both threats and opportunities.

We live in an era when changes to global trade rules and patterns have subjected business to unprecedented competition. Companies that once hid behind high tariff walls disappeared as those walls crumbled.

The ability and willingness of governments to prop up or bail out non-competitive firms has eroded. There is also little public appetite for government grants to business. Governments do though have the ability to create the conditions and environment that will encourage companies to take risks and encourage individuals to be entrepreneurs.

One aspect of that is the burden of taxation, both personal and corporate. Taxes in Canada are high both historically and in comparison with our neighbour and major trading partner, the United States. However, the relatively recent and sustained campaign in favour of major tax cuts demonstrates just how short term some people's memories can be.

This government inherited a \$42 billion deficit when it took office in 1993. Canadians enthusiastically supported the Minister of Finance as he brought in budget after budget that moved us steadily toward the surplus position we now enjoy. Prudence was the watchword. There was always the recognition that economic growth could stall. We were not prepared to achieve a budgetary surplus only to be thrown into a deficit situation by a future economic downturn.

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Tax cutting has begun. Measures from the last three budgets will mean 600,000 low income Canadians will no longer pay federal income tax. The current clamour for tax cuts comes from those in the top tax bracket. That is understandable and the fact is one does not have to earn an enormous salary to be in that bracket, which brings me back to the brain drain.

Canada depends on successful business people to create jobs for other Canadians. We cannot afford to lose highly educated, highly skilled and highly mobile people. The disparity in income tax levels between Canada and the United States has been a significant factor for high tech companies in my riding that need to attract and keep skilled employees.

My message to both employers and employees is simple: your patience is about to be rewarded. I will quote from the throne speech:

Tax reduction is a key component of a strategy to increase individual incomes and to ensure an economy that produces the growth and wealth which enable those public and private investments necessary for a high quality of life. In its next budget the government will set out a multi-year plan for further tax reduction.

I included that quotation because many media reports suggested the speech gave little importance to lower taxes. The message is clear and the details will be spelled out in the February budget.

This session of parliament appears to be built around the theme of "Canada, the place to be in the 21st century". I applaud the idea. It reminds me of a suggestion made by Dr. Howard Alper, vice-rector of research at the University of Ottawa. While considering the Canadian scientific diaspora, those top scientists and academics who are now abroad, Dr. Alper suggested a rediscover Canada program. Canada can only benefit by having many of its finest researchers available to, in particular, graduate students.

• (1150)

I was excited therefore to hear of the government's decision to fund a program known as the 21st century chairs for research excellence. The federal granting councils already play a very significant role in funding university research. They will now be responsible for enabling the establishment of 1,200 new chairs for research excellence in universities across the country. The objective is to have a total of 2,000 chairs as soon as possible.

That is the kind of bold leadership required if Canada is to be known as the country that celebrates excellence. I would extend that idea, though not the model, to other areas of human endeavour.

There has been a recent and overdue recognition of the need to celebrate our national heroes. Fellow Canadians who are successful

on the world stage make us feel good about ourselves and serve as role models for others.

An obvious area is amateur athletics. In this era of multimillionaire professional athletes, to whom few of us can relate, we should remember the pride we always feel when our Olympic athletes perform well. At a time when study after study raises the alarm about how physically inactive our children are, we should look for ways to encourage amateur athletics. That will also require an investment in developing top quality coaches.

Along with celebrating excellence we should be known as a country that welcomes and supports creative minds. That means Canada is the place to be for artists, among others. One has only to look at the excitement created by Pinchas Zucherman becoming music director of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Often relatively small incremental costs mean the difference between experiencing the merely competent and the truly outstanding.

Many small steps can lead to a better country. One example is the annual Prime Minister's awards for teaching excellence. Another is the Governor General's award for caring Canadians. It is important to recognize and highlight the achievements of unsung heroes.

One group of heroes we can never properly thank is our war veterans. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to never experience war can have no real idea of what it was like. The reality that over 100,000 very young Canadians died on foreign soil in defence of their country can be acknowledged every November 11. But the enormity of the sacrifice and the loss and grief experienced by so many families rarely invades our own consciousness.

We became a country in the eyes of the world thanks to battles like Vimy Ridge. To recognize and celebrate the lives of those who died for Canada is not to celebrate war. It is a fundamental overarching responsibility we have to make succeeding generations know the price that was paid for our freedom.

I mention this in the course of this debate because another debate has been going on for far too long about building a new Canadian war museum. I believe the government should release from their commitment those who offered to raise money for the museum. Just build it.

I have seen much of the museum's collection that is unavailable to the public because of space restrictions and I can assure everyone that it deserves to be on display. I am aware of no other national institution that depended on private fundraising to be built. I hope there will be an early announcement that construction will soon begin on the new museum.

The Speech from the Throne addressed the need for an infrastructure for the 21st century. The most visible is the physical infrastructure we require as a trading nation to enable the free flow

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of goods and services. In addition to transport, the five year plan will focus on tourism, telecommunications, culture, health and safety and the environment. That is an ambitious objective but one which I believe Canadians will support.

The government has set a goal to be known around the world as a government most connected to its citizens. It will also take steps to accelerate our adoption of electronic commerce and encourage its use throughout the economy. There are challenges associated with electronic commerce.

In the last session of parliament we worked on legislation to protect personal and business information and to recognize electronic signatures. It is important that Canadians recognize and seize the opportunity we enjoy, because of our leadership in communications technology, to be a world leader in the control and use of electronic commerce.

I want to acknowledge and support the government's commitment to building stronger communities. In much of the industrialized world we have seen a growing gulf between rich and poor. There are almost daily media reports of newly minted high tech millionaires and corporate executives enjoying incomes that are many multiples of those earned by their rank and file employees.

Globalization has led many to question the importance of national boundaries. Every new round of trade negotiations appears to lessen the ability of governments to act on behalf of their citizens.

When Canadians are asked what separates them from Americans, we often point to our system of health care. A search for the defining idea of what makes Canada unique remains elusive. I suggest however that the answer may lie in embracing the idea of community. It is not a weakness to be seen around the world as a country that supports the less fortunate. It is not a weakness to be known as a country that embraces cultural diversity and welcomes new immigrants with their skills, energy and ambition to build a better life for themselves and their children. The danger would be in a retreat toward isolation as provinces, as communities and as individuals.

We as members of parliament have an ambitious agenda before us. The challenges set out in the Speech from the Throne are many and real. The goals are clear and within our grasp. Canada deserves nothing less than our best effort.

• (1155)

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Lanark—Carleton.

He addressed the issue of the brain drain as being very serious. I know the member. I know he is serious about it and is concerned. I wonder how that squares with his government's record on a lot of these issues and the reasons for the fact that our society has this

brain drain. The conference board two weeks ago came out with a report which said that Canadians are falling back in terms of innovation and that we are losing some of our brightest people to the United States. That is a fact of life we all know about.

When our committee on international trade asked small and medium size companies why they did not export outside of Canada, they said that too much government regulation was a serious inhibitor to doing business in Canada. Taxes, including payroll taxes, were a deterrent. There were interprovincial trade barriers. I noticed the premier of Ontario on the weekend said that it was easier to do business with several American states than it is with Canadian provinces.

The government has been in power for the last six years and we still have these serious problems. There is a 50:50 split on how it is going to decide what is going to be spent on spending and on debt and tax relief. Yet we have seen social spending increased so there is nothing left to split 50:50.

What is the government doing? It has had six years to address these issues and nothing much has changed.

**Mr. Ian Murray:** Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that these problems did not spring up overnight.

If we look at the history of research and development expenditures in Canada, they have languished at the low end of the G-7 for many years. That is largely because of the branch plant economy we had in Canada. The brain drain problem is partly related to taxes. It is a very important component and I am pleased it is going to be addressed.

The hon. member referred to trade. It is important to look at the team Canada initiative of the Prime Minister. It has been quite effective in stimulating increased trade abroad. A lot of people ridicule these trips abroad as junkets that do not accomplish anything. The fact is for years businesses have been asking ministers—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry to interrupt the member.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member opposite rather well. He is one of the august members on the Liberal benches. In fact, he should be a Reformer with some of his philosophies and the hon. member is welcome any time.

I would like to address a point that was not in the Speech from the Throne. It has to do with traditional activism, in particular, the reference with regard to the possession of child pornography. I do not know a single issue that has been raised more by constituents across Canada as to why this is the case. Not one single solitary statement was made in the Speech from the Throne dealing with this particular issue.

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It is not a matter of what is right or wrong with child pornography, it is that the judge completely ignored what the people wanted. He completely ignored what the intent of parliament was when that law was first passed. He used his own technical legal interpretation of a particular issue. When we asked the government to invoke the notwithstanding clause, there was deathly silence.

Could the hon. member say if it has come to the point where the government does not have the courage to deal with issues that are controversial and reflect the interests and the wants of the people of Canada?

**Mr. Ian Murray:** Mr. Speaker, not at all. It is important to remember that until 1993 the country existed without the law my hon. colleague is referring to. The law was rushed through during the Kim Campbell government just before the 1993 election. We have to keep that in mind as we look at this issue.

As well, it is important to remember that any exploitation of children and the production and distribution of child pornography is still illegal.

I am concerned that the law may have been carelessly drafted. Apparently it is possible that if somebody has written something themselves and maintains it in their possession and it can be defined as pornographic, then they can be charged. That is not the sort of thing we are worried about in the House.

• (1200)

I was one of those who very early on called for the Prime Minister to address the problem created by that judicial decision in British Columbia.

I have been quite willing, though, to wait for the courts to look at it. If the problem is not resolved by the courts, I think the House should look at redrafting the legislation to make sure it is ironclad that the possession of child pornography remains a crime throughout Canada.

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I want to begin by complimenting the governor general on her appointment and note the signal of hope that appointment has given to many in my riding.

I also want to begin by wishing the legendary former prime minister, the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a happy 80th birthday, with wishes from my constituents for many, many happy years to come.

The Speech from the Throne gives reasons to my constituents and to all Canadians to be optimistic about the future of Canada. I said that on Friday when I spoke to four classes of grade 10 students. I encouraged them to watch the debate in the House today,

and I am convinced that many of them will be watching. Therefore I am pleased to make my remarks with the hope that it will enlighten them and with the hope that the remarks from other members will show them the extent to which the Speech from the Throne has set out a vision.

The government has set a course for Canada in the next millennium. It has paved the way in building a nation in which the quality of life of Canadians will continue to be unmatched in the world.

For several years in a row the United Nations has declared Canada to be the best country in which to live. The commitments we made in the Speech from the Throne will ensure that our country will remain so for many years. To the students who are watching, we hope that it will also be the case for many years in their lifetime.

Last Wednesday the Prime Minister stated that Canada is the place to be in the 21st century. I agree. Six years ago when the government took office our country was described as a third world country. Our economic growth was slow. The deficit and unemployment were high.

This economic malaise impacted our communities across Canada, including those in Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I recall a time when there were many closures in my riding: stores, businesses and manufacturing areas. Today I know that our country will be well situated economically and socially to be a world leader in the next century and beyond.

We are enjoying the longest economic expansion since the 1960s with over 1.7 million new jobs created. Our nation's fiscal house is in order. Taxes have been cut in the last two budgets by \$16.5 billion over three years and, important to me, 600,000 low income Canadians will no longer pay federal tax.

The government has done this by adopting a comprehensive, balanced economic strategy that has transformed Canada to becoming one of the strongest economies of the G-7.

With this strategy our government will continue to strengthen Canada by recommitting itself to economic policies that will allow us to keep the national debt on a permanent downward track, reduce taxes for Canadians and invest in knowledge, innovation, children, youth and health. These are the themes of the throne speech.

The Speech from the Throne enables the government to further its efforts. Canadians may recall that this is what the government said it would do: 50% for tax and debt reduction, 50% for economic and social needs.

• (1205)

I held several budget consultation meetings and over and over I heard from my constituents that those are things they would like to

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see the government pursue in dealing with the surplus, and they urged us to manage whatever surplus there is in a progressive way.

The constituents of Etobicoke—Lakeshore believe that in the global economy knowledge and technological innovations are the cornerstones of the highest standard of living and a better quality of life. Our quality of life and standard of living can be secured in the future if we are willing to explore new frontiers in innovation. Investment in research and development is central to this.

We need to build an infrastructure of skills development and innovation to foster opportunities for Canadians to pursue lifelong learning. I see this in my constituency. The federal government has created initiatives such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and Technology Partnerships Canada to put Canadians on this path. Many of my constituents have received benefits from the \$1 billion endowment to the Canada Foundation for Innovation which is helping to build a leading edge national system of innovation.

The technology partnerships program is being taken advantage of by businesses in my riding to help them keep up in the development of marketing, production and new technology in Canada, thereby creating jobs for Canadians.

With the commitments in the throne speech the government is expanding its efforts. Let me cite some of them, especially for those grade 10s who are watching. There is good news. Through the research granting councils the government will fund the creation of 1,200 new 21st century chairs for research excellence in Canadian universities over the next three years. The cost of the program will be \$60 million in the first year, \$120 million in the second, \$180 million in the third year and it will be ongoing.

I shared this information with those grade 10 students. Many of them come from diverse communities. Perhaps they can see that there is an advantage for their parents and older siblings who are presently at university in research areas.

Canada's place in the 21st century cannot be secure unless we commit to investing in children. They are the future of our country and the strength of our society. We know that when the development of children is neglected in the formative years of life society as a whole is disadvantaged. I spent six years as chair of the Metro Toronto Housing Authority. We dealt with individuals in rent geared to income facilities and I saw the socioeconomic situation of many of our children.

Over the past six years the federal government has endeavoured to provide families with support in caring for their children. We put several programs onstream. I want the young people of Etobicoke—Lakeshore and across Canada to know that as we look forward to the progress in broadening experiences and the understanding of our fellow Canadians it is important for us to do what needs to be done to ensure that the mantra of no experience, no

skills, no job becomes something of the past, especially among young people.

My constituents expect nothing less from the government but to ensure that our health care system is modern and sustainable. I know of several who are watching the direction in which the government is going. It is trying to ensure that we meet all of those commitments.

Canadians are committed to preserving and protecting the environment. Several individuals in my area work on a daily basis in the protection of the environment. The Humber River was recently declared a Canadian heritage river. There are many other very important environmental niches in Etobicoke—Lakeshore where we must ensure that we clean up areas that are contaminated and that we protect the health of all Canadians.

• (1210)

The Social Development Community Council in Etobicoke—Lakeshore has a regeneration project and is looking to the direction in which we are going for support for their project. The volunteers and people who give of their time and effort in my riding are enthused by the direction in which we are going.

I call on all members on all sides of the House to view the Speech from the Throne, as it outlines the Liberal vision for Canada's future in the new millennium, as building and creating strong communities that will enable us to have a more equitable society for all Canadians.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I found the speech to be rather interesting, but I was actually somewhat disappointed by what it omitted. I would like to give the member an opportunity to address some of the issues that she might have included in her remarks rather effectively.

I would like her to respond to the whole situation of youth in Canada today. We have a number of young people who are looking somewhere for a job, hopefully at home in Canada. Many of them are finding, though, that the tax situation is such that it is preferable for them to find a job elsewhere where they will get more money because the taxes are lower than they are in Canada. There is a disadvantage for them to stay at home, assuming they have a job in the first place. I would like the hon. member to address that question.

The other question concerns the youth exchange program across Canada. If there is a shortage of funds, which there is, which would the young people rather have, an exchange trip across Canada or a job?

**Ms. Jean Augustine:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member because in my discussion with our young people we talked about how debate occurs in the House. Someone speaks and someone questions or responds. I am sure this is a really good example for the young people who are watching.

*The Address*

To address the issue of jobs I will speak about my riding in particular. We have a number of agencies that are working with our young people and a number of initiatives that are on the ground to assist them in finding employment through small business, entrepreneurial adventures and through support.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** What about taxes?

**Ms. Jean Augustine:** The issue of taxes is one that all Canadians are concerned about. At the same time we also recognize that the taxes we pay go into programs that benefit all of us and that is important to our young people.

In terms of moving out of the country, I think the Prime Minister put it very well when he talked about the environment and culture and everything else that makes us Canadian and the importance of holding on to this and not going after small gains in terms of dollars.

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was quite pleased to hear the hon. member's remarks concerning education for our young people because we know this is a very important issue that has to be dealt with in our country.

I would like the hon. member to elaborate a bit upon what the government is doing to make it easier for young people through cuts in tuition or something similar which would make their debt load easier as they struggle through university.

**Ms. Jean Augustine:** Mr. Speaker, there are several things that the Speech from the Throne addressed and several programs that we have been working with. I will cite some examples that I had written out, guessing that this might be a question that would be thrown my way.

Our expanded commitment to young people now includes the hiring of youth to put in place additional community Internet access sites in communities across Canada, which we know is the most connected country in the world.

• (1215)

We have launched Exchanges Canada which will provide 100,000 young Canadians every year a chance to learn about a different part of Canada and support them in that effort. We are giving young Canadians from the age of 13 an opportunity to produce their first works using traditional and new technologies in the arts and in cultural, digital and similar industries. We are giving young Canadian volunteers the opportunity to help with literacy skills and participate in community and national environmental projects.

At the same time we have signalled what we will do in terms of student debt and loans and ways in which we can deal with the postponement of the huge debt that young people carry.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time this morning with the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

I feel very privileged to represent the riding of Kings—Hants in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia. Living in Kings—Hants, we understand the power of tides. We have the highest tides in the world in the Bay of Fundy and the Minas Basin. The Liberals felt the force of those tides in the last general election. There was nothing in the throne speech that will reverse those tides in the next federal election.

The government says that the fundamentals are strong when speaking about the economy. It is very important to remember the words of John Kenneth Galbraith, the Canadian economist, who said that we should beware of governments who say that the fundamentals are strong. The fundamentals that are important to Canadians are simply not strong under the leadership of the government.

One of the most important fundamentals is the issue of brain drain. The choice that each of us has, particularly young Canadians, in pursuing our lives and careers in Canada or in other countries, particularly with the mobility of populations that exists today, is very important. Whether or not we are attracting the best and brightest to the country, and particularly whether we are maintaining and keeping the best and brightest here, is a very important fundamental.

The fact is that in 1986 we lost 17,000 young Canadians to the U.S. through the brain drain process. In 1997 that number had grown to 98,000. Those are 98,000 of our best and brightest people with the education levels to contribute, to pay taxes, to prosper and to help provide the social infrastructure that in the future would allow for more economic growth and the type of caring society that Canadians want, but more importantly the type of caring society that we can afford in the future.

Another fundamental is the Canadian dollar. Under this government the Canadian dollar has dropped from 77 cents in 1993 to the 67 cents range currently, with the dollar being as low as the 64 cents range a year ago last summer. The currency of a country represents in many ways the share value of that particular country. Under this government, the share value of Canada has effectively dropped from 77 cents to the mid-60 cents range. Those are very important fundamentals.

Tonight we are going to have an opportunity to see the screening of the documentary film about the former Liberal prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, and it is called *Just Watch Me: Trudeau and the '70s Generation*. Part of that was Mr. Trudeau's response to the FLQ crisis at that time and the question of how far would he have gone.

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I suggest that if we were to ask the Prime Minister how far he would go in pursuing the types of economic policies that are aimed at the next election, at the expense of Canadians in the long term, he would probably respond "Just watch me".

The dollar issue is a direct reflection of the high debt levels we have in Canada, the 50% tax levels, the intrusive regulatory system and things like interprovincial trade barriers which reduce the competitiveness of Canadians and Canadian enterprise globally.

Ironically, a Canadian economist, Robert Mundell, just last week received the Nobel prize in economics for his studies linking currencies to fiscal and monetary policies. He identified the structural impediments of debt, tax levels and the regulatory burden. Again the government has refused to listen to even a great Canadian economist in Robert Mundell, who has been recognized internationally. The government continues to pursue the types of policies and, in this speech, has promised to expand on the same types of negative policies that have us in the mess we are in right now.

• (1220)

There are 32 pages of spending in the speech, spending tax distortions and regulatory spider webs but really very little action on the tax side. It could be said that there may have been a thimble of tax reduction in a sea of new spending in the government's return to the unfettered, wanton spending of the 1970s that got us in the mess we are in right now. That, frankly, is where the government is heading.

The government is now focusing on expanding program spending. Unfortunately, the expansion of spending is not focused on the real needs of Canadians. I did a survey in the spring of my constituents and asked them directly what their priorities were and tax reduction was a major priority for my constituents, as was health care investment.

In the last budget the federal government made a symbolic commitment to health care by reinvesting some, and just some, of what it had taken from the health care system since 1993. I think it was a reinvestment over the period of six years of \$11.5 billion when the government had in fact taken \$18 billion from the health care system since 1993. By the year 2005, the government will only have reached, under its plan, 1995 levels of health care investment which does not take into account inflation or population growth. The government is big on symbols but has really not addressed the health care crisis.

My constituents are also concerned about defence spending and the government's lack of effectively investing in the defence of our country and in our national defence system. We are increasingly being called on to participate in an increasingly complicated global

scenario, whether it is Kosovo or East Timor, with a very fixed or reduced commitment if one looks at it in real terms to spending.

In my riding that means CFB Greenwood is facing significant challenges now with the reduced level of government commitment. The government is now turning its back on the full functionality of CFB Greenwood.

The government is ignoring one of the other concerns that Canadians have and that is our national infrastructure system, in particular our highway system. Highway 101 in my riding is one of the most dangerous highways not just in Nova Scotia but in Canada. There have been 38 deaths on the untwined parts of highway 101 over the past several years. The government has not made the necessary commitment to highway funding. The government only spends 5% of the money it takes in federal gas tax revenues on highway taxes. It is the lowest of any industrialized nation. Again the government has not addressed a real concern of Canadians.

Sadly, the government is now talking about pursuing a new children's agenda which is ignoring one of the most fundamental difficulties that Canadian families and children face. With the ever increasing tax burden under the government, Canadian families and individuals have faced a personal disposable income decline of 8% since 1993. During the same period, Americans have enjoyed approximately a 10% increase.

The government is expanding its taxation. It states that it will bring forward \$16 billion of tax reductions. Those are the tax reductions that the government has given through the front door. What the government fails to remind Canadians is that through the back door, through, for instance, bracket creep, the government has actually taken in more than that, about \$18 billion. The government has actually continued to plunder Canadians through the back door while pretending to provide some level of tax relief through the front door.

The concern we have is that the government is engaging in almost a corporate re-imaging effort aimed at trying to convince the international community that somehow it is addressing some of the structural deficiencies in the Canadian economy. However, it is doing very little to actually change those structural inefficiencies and impediments to actually put Canada on a growth track where we could have a strong dollar and a strong economy.

The government is trying to devalue its way to prosperity. I remember a couple of years ago when the dollar hit about 65 cents the Prime Minister said that a low dollar was good for the Canadian economy and good for tourism. Now the logical corollary of his argument would be that a dollar trading at zero, if we reduced it to zero, would be excellent for Canadian exports. We could give away our goods. We would be the greatest exporting nation in the world. However, the Prime Minister's economic logic is not really that sound in this area.

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• (1225)

We could have a strong dollar and a sustained economic growth if we allowed Canadians to actually enjoy some of the prosperity that other countries are enjoying and actually took the initiative to provide significant tax reform and tax reduction and also address some of these other structural issues, the types of issues which were addressed under the previous government.

The previous government had the guts to pursue policies like free trade, the GST, deregulation of financial services, transportation and energy. They were not always popular, but they were the right decisions then and have proven to be the right decisions since then. We just wish that this government would now have the vision, the courage and the guts to pursue those types of policies that would allow Canadians to enjoy sustained economic growth into the next century.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Before we go to the hon. member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale, I just want a brief explanation. The use of the word guts in that context was again a political metaphor. It was not addressed for or against any person specifically.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps you put your finger on the problem of the speech from the member for Kings—Hants, whom we all respect for his economic perspicacity and his wit and wisdom, but sometimes perhaps he allows his wit to run away with his common sense and I suggest perhaps in today's intervention as well.

I am surprised that the member is so oversimplifying this issue of tax. I am surprised that he has laid every woe of Canadians at the door of high taxes. I remember when there was a brain drain from his province to Toronto. There were no tax differences between his province and Toronto, it was a question of opportunities. I suggest to him that it is opportunities. Some of the measures in the Speech from the Throne, which address opportunities in academic and other areas which will create an enriched atmosphere in the country for opportunities, will reverse that brain drain because those opportunities will be here for Canadians. That is something he has to look at as well.

The member should not say that high taxes is the reason why the Canadian dollar is low. I suggest he look at the Swedish currency, which is very strong today. The Swedish economy is booming at the moment. Sweden has some of the highest tax rates in the world.

How does the member, with his extraordinary sophisticated knowledge of the working of things, drive down the single lane 101 highway of tax reduction, which he will end up crashing himself and his party with the same problems he has on his highway down in Nova Scotia, instead of looking at all the other factors which we have to address when we are trying to deal with what is a very complex and not a single issue?

**Mr. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his, as usual, erudite, intelligent and well placed question.

The hon. member is a true Liberal in the traditional 1970s sense. He does point to the fact that Canadians are leaving to find greater opportunities elsewhere. He and I both agree that Canadians are leaving Canada to find greater opportunities elsewhere. Where the true Liberal thing comes in is, at this point, where we divide. I go one way and he goes another in terms of our pursuit of a solution. He believes that government, through government spending, can create better opportunities in Canada to keep Canadians here. I believe that if the government reduces taxes we can create better opportunities here.

In terms of the opportunities for people leaving Canada to seek jobs elsewhere is in part pay. It is not all taxes; part of it is pay. However pay is an instrument closely related to corporate tax rates. Canada has one of the highest corporate tax rates in the OECD. Last year, for instance, our corporate tax rates were lower than those of Italy and Japan. This year we now have higher corporate tax rates than Italy and Japan because Italy and Japan have engaged in tax reform and tax reduction on the corporate side.

• (1230)

If the hon. member is sincere about pursuing greater opportunities for Canadians then he should unshackle Canadian enterprise and businesses from the burden of his party's failure to address corporate tax reform.

Jack Mintz, one of his constituents, submitted an excellent report to the federal government, the Mintz report. It was commissioned by the federal Minister of Finance and then ignored by the Minister of Finance.

I would suggest that this hon. member listen to one of his constituents in Toronto Centre—Rosedale who has provided a great blueprint for tax reform and tax reduction in Canada. If followed, it would ensure that ultimately Canadians would enjoy greater opportunities here and not have to seek them elsewhere while the government pursues 1970s policies which have been discredited around the world and in fact mire Canadians into less opportunities in the future and not more.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

I will begin by mentioning some things that were not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I believe it is worth mentioning some of them. The government is attempting to hide from some of the very real concerns, some of which we are living through now.

One is the Donald Marshall ruling in terms of native rights, fishing rights, mineral rights and so on. I should say treaty rights in



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general. That is a huge problem in Atlantic Canada but obviously it has implications from one end of the country to the other.

At this point it is focused on the lobster fishery simply because the lobster fishery is one of the most lucrative fisheries. It goes far beyond that but I certainly do not have time in 10 minutes to go into the minute detail. The government must address the issue and show some leadership on it. Up to this point it has not shown any leadership on the issue.

Yesterday in my home riding in New Brunswick I met with very concerned lobster fishers on Grand Manan Island. We have eighth generation fishermen who do not know whether or not they will be able to make a living at their fishery. The fisheries minister simply hides under his desk when we talk about it. He has yet to bring the native community and the non-native community together to make reasonable progress on this very important issue.

The next shoe to drop in this whole debate will be the word compensation. The fishers accept the fact that the supreme court has ruled. We talked about the government exercising the notwithstanding clause to give the fishing community time to resolve the issue because it does not appear as if the minister or the Prime Minister will resolve it. We also talked about a stay of the decision. The government obviously dropped the ball on that as well.

A day after the decision can we imagine the Prime Minister of Canada standing up not knowing whether the government could have asked for a stay in the decision or at least get the government time to respond? He could have done that but did not. This created a crisis when a crisis could have been avoided. That is a big issue that was left out of the Speech from the Throne.

Another one is the merger of Air Canada and Canadian by Onex. It appears like we will be looking at an American controlled airline with services diminished in many parts of the country. However this has never been debated on the floor and was never mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. Neither was the agricultural crisis which extends far beyond western Canada.

We are focused on western Canada and low commodity prices but we are obviously not supporting our farmers the way we should to get them through this international crisis. We are showing no sign that we are interested in helping them. I think the government has to do something.

The same thing applies to the immigration policy. We went through a crisis on the west coast this year in terms of illegal immigrants coming into Canada.

• (1235)

What has been the response from the various ministries? On the immigration crisis the minister says that winter is coming, so there is not a problem out there that mother nature cannot take care of. In

the native fishing dispute it is the same. Winter is coming and the winds will blow. Thank God for mother nature because the ministers will not take action when it is necessary.

To go back a little on some of what I have heard from the government side of the House in terms of the throne speech, there has not been a member on the government side speaking on the debate who does not fall back on their financial success. That just amazes me.

What amazes me even more is that we on this side let them stand up and get away with it. They talk about the huge deficit they had and the financial mismanagement that was there when they came to power. It is interesting to note every success they have had. I do not deny they have had success in terms of balancing the books, but the question has to be how they balanced the books. That is the question.

One of my members said that it was like an old country western song, give me 40 acres and I will turn this rig around. They turned the rig around for sure but on policies we brought in when we were in government. One I want to mention is the GST. Every member sitting on that side of the House fought against the GST from day one. In fact most of them over there were elected on that. Anyone over there elected in 1993 was elected on the false promise to eliminate the GST.

It is quite interesting that I would mention this point. It is past history but it is very relevant because on the CBC radio program *Cross Country Checkup*, hosted by Rex Murphy, the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions as a guest panellist responded to some of the phone calls coming in from across the country.

One of the questions put to him was on the elimination of the GST, that old promise from 1993. The minister in his own words said that they could not abolish the GST. When he was asked why he said that it was because it was bringing in \$22 billion in revenue. That would simply blow away every inch of financial success they have had on that side of the House. They won the election on the big untruth. I know I am not allowed to use the word lie, but they won that election on the big untruth.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member is not unfamiliar with skating on thin ice. This time he went a little too far so I would ask the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest to withdraw the term lie.

**Mr. Greg Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly will withdraw that term. In terms of the thin ice I will be like the minister. It is something that mother nature will take care of in the next few weeks.

When the junior minister of finance admits on national radio that they cannot get rid of the GST and that the success they had is

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because of it, it reveals exactly how thin the ice is they are skating on over there when they are talking about their so-called financial success.

There is probably only one member over there, the member for Burin—St. George's, who would agree with every word I am saying. He campaigned on this basis in 1997. Anyway I think the truth lies in the numbers and lies in the record.

I want to examine three or four big issues. One is free trade which that side railed against. Another is the GST which that side railed against. Another is tax reform which we initiated as the government as well as deregulation. I am talking about financial sector deregulation, transportation deregulation and energy deregulation as in the elimination of the national energy program to benefit western Canada.

● (1240)

They have to stand on their hind legs and talk intelligently about what they inherited. It was not the horror show they love to talk about. Every time they get up it is quite interesting that the debt goes from \$20 billion to \$25 billion to \$30 billion to \$40 billion. This time next year the debt they inherited will be up to at least \$65 billion or \$70 billion. It just keeps growing and growing. As the story prolongs it gets more exaggerated.

I am proud of what we attempted to do and what we will be able to do when we take over that side of the House. I will entertain questions from my learned friends on the other side of the House. I look forward to it.

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of thin ice, the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest was a member in the House. Actually he sat on this side of the House with the Mulroney Tories when I was a member of parliament in opposition.

It is pretty thin ice when he starts criticizing Liberal members on what we have been able to do with the mess the Conservatives left us when they were over here for nine years. It gets more and more difficult to believe he actually is telling us that we did not do a good job in balancing the books. All the Conservatives spoke of for nine years was about what terrible financial shape the country was in.

I am an accountant by trade and there was something I really believed. I really believed the Tories were good accountants. Can one imagine my shock when I became a member of the government and realized not only did they just talk but they were terrible accountants? There was a huge debt with which we were saddled after hearing about how fiscally responsible the Conservatives were. They really were not very fiscally responsible.

Since then I think we have done a fairly good job considering the difficulties we were facing.

**Mr. Greg Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, this is really fun because we sat on the finance committee together many years ago. Obviously the hon. member was much younger then and time has erased many of those memories.

It is interesting that never once did she or any other member on the government's side of the House, including the finance minister, vote for or support any initiative that reduced the size of government or the cost of government. In 1988 when the member was first elected she railed against free trade. Free trade has been the biggest success story in Canada and one of the reasons that Ontario is leading the pack in terms of economic development and prosperity.

Let us go back to the GST. The member was a winner on both issues. She campaigned against free trade and swallowed herself whole in 1997. She campaigned on NAFTA and swallowed herself whole. She did the same on the GST. She just lucked into office as did the government.

It is like turning that truck around in 40 acres or slowing down that tanker. It takes more—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Egmont.

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, hon. member was saying how great the previous government was. Why then were the Conservatives reduced from a majority government to two seats in 1993? Why is the member still a member of the fifth party in the House and not sitting on this side?

**Mr. Greg Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, that is pretty obvious. It is because they campaign on the big *l*. We know what that spells.

**Some hon. members:** Liberal, Liberal.

**Mr. Greg Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I did not say whether it was a small *l* or a big *l*, so be careful before you stand on your feet and cut me off. In 1993 we were just about wiped off the map. The truth is that they campaigned on a promise to rid us of a very—

● (1245)

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the comments by the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest. I cannot disagree with much of what he has said about the Liberal Party's campaign promises in 1993. In fact, I suggest that there were several big rivals told during that campaign which were never lived up to, the GST and free trade.

I want the member for New Brunswick Southwest to clarify the Conservative Party's latest stand on free trade as a result of having David Orchard in its party, the anti-free trader. I want to know where the party stands on free trade these days. Has it taken a left turn?

*The Address*

**Mr. Greg Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I guess I would have to ask the member from that party where he stands on the UA.

Every party is always plagued with a problem or two. That might be an intellectual hurdle over which some people will have trouble jumping. I guess that is the fun of politics. The definition of politics is the art of the impossible. Sometimes we all have to practise the art of the impossible.

What does amaze me is the hypocrisy coming from the Liberals on the other side of the House in claiming any kind of financial success in terms of managing the economy when they have yet to bring in a major initiative to address the future of Canada in the life of their governments going back to 1993.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was greatly pleased with the major policy thrusts of the Canadian government as set out in the Speech from the Throne by her Excellency the Governor General and later in more detail by the Prime Minister.

The focal point of this vision we wish to share with our fellow citizens is quality of life; it will be the main thrust of our activities as a government and must be constantly at the centre of our daily concerns.

The concept of quality of life is a hard one to define clearly. The International Society for the Quality of Life Studies defines quality of life as the result of interaction between social, economic, environmental and health factors affecting human and social development.

For many Canadians, however, it is clear that the concept of quality of life cannot be confused with the concept of standard of living. Our fellow citizens see a marked difference between the two concepts and do not attach the same value to both.

Quality of life is not measured solely against our objectives and successes on the economic level. It is, of course, important to have a healthy economy. Without one, we would find it impossible to make strategic choices for improving our quality of life. Equally important, if not more important, however, to Canadians is the fact that quality of life involves human investment, that is in health, education and skills development and in our children.

In fact, economic growth and an improved standard of living must involve good social programs and good social policies.

What do our fellow citizens want, then? They want to live in a country where quality health care is accessible. They want to live in a country where all children can receive not just a basic education but one that will prepare them for the realities of the 21st century.

They want to live in a country where all of us can improve our quality of life by improving our skills. They want to live in a country which understands that children are our greatest asset and which has chosen to invest in their development.

They want to live in safe communities with green spaces, where their health will not be threatened by a deteriorating environment. Canadians want their government to achieve a consistent balance between social and economic objectives.

• (1250)

They want their government to understand these needs and to be able to meet them in a concrete fashion. Our government understands that message. This is why it has chosen to make the improvement of Canadians' quality of life the central theme of its vision for the years to come.

However, investing in social programs alone is not enough. Our investments must be in strategic areas, they must be targeted. They must achieve the objectives that we set for ourselves as a society. While it is relatively easy to measure economic results, it is more difficult to establish social performance indicators.

How do we measure quality of life? A number of factors may give some indication, including life expectancy, the quality of one's physical environment and the crime and poverty rates, but other factors are subjective. For example, how do we measure social exclusion? In the coming months, therefore, we must work to improve our performance indicators.

I should point out that, for the first time, the report on departmental performance that is to be tabled in a few days will include a number of social indicators.

The government is driven by a will to improve the quality of life of Canadians and has made a number of commitments regarding strategic investments, which include, of course, economic investments, but also social ones.

We are investing in our young people and in our children, because they are tomorrow's adults. We hope to provide them with the best possible start, both from a family and an educational perspective.

We are also investing in families through various tax measures that will allow them to better meet the needs of their children. It is our hope that parents can have a real opportunity to improve their situation. To that end, we want to ensure that the development of skills is not only a priority, but also a reality.

The government also supports various sectors through research. Investing in research and development will allow us to remain competitive and to continue to develop state of the art technologies. We will also strive to ensure Canadians get the best possible care and a healthier environment. We also want to provide Canada with

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modern infrastructures, so that our country is ready to meet the challenges of the new century.

Clearly, we will work on modernizing physical infrastructures, and it is my firm intention to initiate quickly the dialogue that will enable us, by December 2000, to provide clearer details of this new program.

If Canada is to affirm its prosperity in the context of global trade, it will have to have the means to do so, that is, ensure transportation safety, protect the environment and encourage tourism and telecommunications. The list could be long and will, no doubt, have to be shared with other public or private partners.

Thought must be given to culture as well. Canada draws much of its national identity from the diversity of its people. Writers and artists are recording our heritage in the archives of history daily. We must give them the means to do so.

As well, new technologies lend themselves to all sorts of innovations. It is up to us to discover how to use them to reduce the huge distances between people across the country. The Internet must be used to serve Canadians and in both official languages. It must also serve the economic and cultural interests of Canada as a whole.

The immense possibilities offered by the information highway must be mastered and put to use. It is not only a useful tool, but a vital one. It may be of particular benefit to the population of Canada spread between the two oceans and across the vast northern territories. It eliminates distances and thus opens to all who dare previously impassable trade borders.

This is why the government wants to develop in all sectors a new infrastructure program in co-operation with our provincial and private sector partners. This, clearly, involves strategic investments for the future.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Our government intends to build on our successes. The previous infrastructure program enabled us to revitalize our economy in several key areas. The next one will enable us to equip Canada with all the tools it will need to remain competitive and on the leading edge of economic and social development. With the budget surplus we can consider making strategic investments that will help us in meeting our objective of improving the quality of life for Canadians.

Let there be no misunderstanding. We are not talking about wasting the gains that have been so dearly paid for. Each investment will be carefully assessed in terms of its effectiveness, its relation to our needs and our ability to pay for it.

We must never lose sight of the fact that we are talking about taxpayers' money. In recent years our government has asked the

people of Canada to make the necessary and sometimes difficult sacrifices so that we could restore the health of our public finances. While the time has come to reap the benefits of our collective efforts, it is also clear that the government is committed to never returning to the days when we put ourselves deep into debt. Never again will we live beyond our means.

Before going any further, allow me to quote the Prime Minister: "Today I have set out a comprehensive strategy, for people, for opportunity, for excellence, for success, for a high quality of life, for sharing, dignity and mutual respect, for creativity and innovation".

Simple logic holds that this strategy which centres on the quality of life applies to everyone without exception, including government employees. As a public sector employer, it is incumbent upon us to attend to the development of what is undeniably the greatest asset of any government, the public service. It is time to reaffirm our commitment to our employees. Everyone, public service employees, carpenters and musicians alike, need to feel appreciated for their efforts and in the work they do.

Our employees are the representatives of the government, the very government that imposed budget cuts, that took away what had been gained, that demanded sacrifices, that caused belts to tighten. It was often our employees who dealt with the public who had to face the backlash from angry Canadians.

A better quality of life for the people of Canada will have a twofold impact on our government employees. They too will benefit from the overall improvement in addition to being granted greater recognition for their work by a public that has been reassured.

I will of course see to the well-being of our public service employees' needs through the Government of Canada's overall strategy. I will also see to it much more directly through the implementation of a series of new measures throughout the public service.

Improving the way in which we deliver our services to the public is obviously a commendable objective, but we must have the means to do so. That presupposes that our public service is properly equipped and it will be. We will modernize our public service. We will renew it. We will tailor our management to the needs of the next century.

In Canada we want to create an exclusive public service, but time is of the essence. In a little over four years, 40% of our senior managers will be eligible for retirement and it is not clear who will ultimately replace them. Almost half of our public service employees are over the age of 45.

I reiterate my personal commitment. We will start by providing stimulating work in a positive environment. We must recognize and acknowledge the importance of front line staff in the delivery

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of services to the public. We will recruit the best and most outstanding employees.

• (1300)

We will do everything we can to make sure that our public service regains the prestige once associated with it. The Public Service of Canada, similar to those countries emerging from major transformations taking place throughout the world, will be less cumbersome, more technology based and, as a result, more alert.

This will benefit everyone: the employers through better performance, the public through more efficient services, and the employees through acknowledgement of their work and the resulting sense of personal satisfaction from a job well done.

Naturally, the primary responsibility for this transformation lies with the federal government, which is well aware of the needs of its public service.

I realize that our union partners may be skeptical of these commitments by the government. I can only reiterate my firm desire to undertake the necessary discussions we will need to have on the methods to be used to meet our mutual objectives in an atmosphere of partnership and dialogue, not confrontation.

By the end of our mandate, when the application of the measures announced has taken shape and when the new quality of life has made itself felt in Canadian homes, the federal government will regain its place at the top of the list among employers of choice. We will have a modern, efficient and motivated public service that will be able and happy to assume responsibility for the destiny of the Canada of tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it will soon be four months since the House of Commons recessed so that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet could put together the throne speech. The President of the Treasury Board must certainly be pleased with what her leader had to say.

First of all, she mentioned the quality of life of all Canadians. I have read and reread the throne speech, and was even present when the Governor General read it, but I found no short-term solutions to serious problems such as the fisheries dispute, which is worsening daily in the Atlantic provinces.

There is nothing to put an end to the arrival of boatloads of immigrants on the west coast. Nor is there any clarification of the government's position with respect to Onex, which would like to buy and merge Air Canada and Canadian Airlines, or anything to repair the grievous damage this government has done to health care, social services and postsecondary education. There is nothing to put right the terrible unfairness in EI, for which barely 42% of

unemployed workers who pay premiums qualify when they lose their job.

There is nothing to narrow the gap between rich and poor, which grows wider with each passing year. I wonder whether the minister, the President of the Treasury Board, was one of the 500 people who marched in Montreal yesterday to try to make people, especially rich people, aware of the terrible straits in which several hundreds of thousands of Canadians find themselves. With many, many children coming to school hungry every day, donations must now be sought so that they can be provided with breakfast and lunch.

When the minister talks about the quality of life and the environment of Canadians and Quebecers, can the minister tell us whether or not she intends to do something about these oversights in last week's throne speech? I await her comments.

• (1305)

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** Mr. Speaker, what we are doing today is very clear: we are analyzing a throne speech. What is a throne speech? It is the outline of the government's vision for the future. This does not preclude us from focusing on short term problems, on everyday problems.

In a throne speech, we look at where we have been, where we are now and where we are going. I hope the member for Frontenac—Mégantic will agree with me that, if one looks at the progress made over that last five or six years, from 1993 to 1999, the situation has improved in several areas in Canada. That does not mean that there are no problems here, even though we are fortunate enough to live in such a great country.

Canada is far from being a perfect place. There are still some major problems. We talk about improving the quality of life and not only the standard of living—and we must make a distinction here in that the quality of life also implies looking at the social aspect of life in our society. This is what matters.

When we talk about improving the quality of life, it means improving the welfare of families, children and any person living in Canada. Poverty levels in this country are clearly unacceptable. That is why, for example, the Speech from Throne shows that we have a vision for the future with regard to families and children.

First and foremost, we want to focus our attention on early childhood, to give our young children a good start in life, to help families with children, to reduce their tax burden. Then, we will increase the child tax benefit, which is paid to low income families to help them meet their children's needs so they do not have to rely on welfare.

This is a clear commitment to help children, to give some people a chance to break free from poverty. Moreover, the throne speech leaves the door open for further improvements.

*The Address*

Our government's commitment to improve the quality of life of Canadians says it all. We recognize the fact that our country is great compared to others, but we still have to work together to improve the quality of life of Canadians.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, but I would like to ask my colleague a few questions.

She says that the Liberal government has done a good job in the past six years. I do not know where she was, because in the Atlantic provinces, the Liberals have lost nearly all their seats.

As for students, by the time they get their degree, they have a debt load of \$30,000. If two graduates form a couple, they are saddled with \$60,000 in debt before they even get a home.

There are 800,000 workers who do not qualify for employment insurance. Women need to have worked 700 hours to qualify. So what about all these young workers and women workers? If there are 800,000 workers who do not qualify for employment insurance, how many hungry children does that create?

The number of food banks has gone up 10% more in recent years. Where do the children fit in here? Where has the Liberal government been these past six years? It has merely been following in the footsteps of the Conservatives, who started the employment insurance cuts in 1986, and the Liberals are just continuing them.

If the minister does not believe this, let her leave Ontario and Quebec and come to New Brunswick and the rest of the Atlantic provinces to see what is going on, to see how people are having trouble making ends meet.

When I went across Canada on my employment insurance fact-finding tour, that is what I found. People are hungry. It is not the tiny change mentioned in the throne speech that is going to make any significant change for women. Women do not qualify for employment insurance if they have worked less than 700 hours in a year. The change the minister is proposing is a minimal one. I would like her comments on this.

• (1310)

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** Mr. Speaker, I also said in my presentation today that, if we have come this far in Canada, it is because we asked huge sacrifices of Canadians, not just workers but all Canadians.

In 1993, when we were faced with an incredible debt, a \$42 billion deficit and a stagnant economy, what did we have to do? We had to put in place a very restrictive plan for the use of all our resources and we had to make major cuts. The public was behind us, it was supportive.

Now, I do not think Canadians would ever again allow a government to accumulate such a huge deficit. So, Canadians

agreed with our initiatives and they are the ones who made these sacrifices. There is no question about that.

In spite of these circumstances, we were able to get the economy going again and keep our inflation rate very low while maintaining interest rates at an acceptable level. The national unemployment rate has gone down and we have managed to preserve social programs, although they had to be redefined. Clearly, that redefinition of our social programs affected some groups more than others. This is why the government, in its throne speech, demonstrated its commitment to making investments wherever necessary.

The impacts of our employment insurance reform were significant, because that was a comprehensive reform. We are currently looking at these impacts with a view to making improvements.

What do we find in the throne speech? It deals with the parental leave for women, for example. Did I not hear the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst say "Congratulations on extending the parental leave from six months to one year and making it more accessible"?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Yes, three times.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** Now that we have a budget surplus, we want all Canadians to benefit from it, first through a tax reduction and, second, by making strategic investments to help those groups that need it most, whether in eastern Canada, in Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula or in western Canada.

[English]

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to address our response to the throne speech. Personally, my response to this has been a bit of a defining moment, trying to make up my mind whether to run again and maybe take over from this motley crew on the other side or whether to forget it and go home.

I thought perhaps I should try to understand what would be in the throne speech. I made a little list for myself to see if certain things would be addressed. I even made a list about aboriginal issues for the previous minister on the other side. I am glad she is here because I have a few things to say about that.

Some of the issues in the throne speech that I wanted to see addressed more specifically, along with a lot of people throughout the country, were issues like child pornography. What will the government do about that? It has messed it up and left it to the courts. Let us see it in the throne speech. That was one of my top issues on the list because I think that is very important.

Will prison reform be in the throne speech? Will that long overdue issue be addressed?

Will the age of sexual consent be addressed? Both the Liberals and the other crew down there had a lot to do with that a few years ago and in fact reduced the age of sexual consent from 16 to 14. Will it be changed back to 16?

*The Address*

Will the growing issue of aboriginal affairs be addressed, in particular on the east and west coasts, but in many other parts of the country as well? One member said it was, but I will get into that debate in a moment.

Will the real issue of taxes, a real commitment on taxes, with timelines, be addressed? Taxes were mentioned but the timelines were not, the legislation was not and the details of the legislation were not.

• (1315)

In most cases anything that was even generally addressed in the throne speech would have to be turned into legislation. Most of us know that it is probably less than two years before the next election. As House leader I can say that turning these general commitments into legislation before the next election is not going to happen. So much for commitment.

What about the old Young Offenders Act, now called the Youth Criminal Justice Act? The Liberals changed the name but will they make commitments on when it will be changed and what will be changed in it? I believe this is now the fourth, count them, throne speech in which the government has mentioned those changes, yet we see no changes.

What about the airline industry issues? I asked myself whether that would be included. It is certainly a concern for many people.

There are the problems in the immigration and refugee department. They are long outstanding difficulties. I have spoken many times in the House about what some of the problems are with the numerous appeals and on and on it goes. Will they be addressed?

How about the issue of the Senate? Will we ever see a reformed Senate? The Liberals may have wanted to mention something like that in the throne speech. How about things like free votes? How about some substantive details about how we are going to fix the unity issues?

The defining moment came for me when I read the document which was really a rhetorical PR piece. We know that essentially it will take legislation and the courage of all of us in the House to change things. I can say that legislation will not be forthcoming, at least not to the point where it receives royal assent. They may play with it but it is not going to happen.

The other issue I want to talk about is drugs. About seven months ago the Liberal government came out with a national drug strategy document. I looked through the document and thought here we go again, lots of rhetoric lacking substance. I did some checking. The other guys down there, Joe what's his name and the other fellas, the Conservatives, brought out a national drug strategy in the eighties. I compared their national drug strategy with the national drug strategy of the Liberals. Lo and behold, I sincerely believe both

were written by the same person. Hardly anything changed; it was virtually the same document.

I took the Liberals' document to many places across the country, from downtown east side Vancouver to small cities across the country, Nova Scotia included. I asked them to look at this national drug strategy and to tell me how it affected them. They told me that it was a waste of their time and mine, that the strategy was no good and not effective at the street level.

Unfortunately a few comments were made in the throne speech. I think it was primarily because the Reform Party has been nagging the government on this for some time. I do not believe the government has a strategic plan in mind to combat drugs, organized crime and all the other things that go with it, nor do I think it has the will or the desire to do it.

I come from an area which has 15,000 addicted people, many who are young teens. I come from an area outside Vancouver where the downtown east side has around 6,000 addicts. This is just one area in our country. Go to Toronto, Ottawa or small towns. Go to Sydney or Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. All of those places have serious problems with drug addiction, yet when I read the throne speech, there are platitudes. There is no commitment.

• (1320)

I talked to some ministers who said that they gave \$5 million to British Columbia after the opposition parties nagged them. They threw out \$5 million over a period of two years. This is petty cash. The Liberals do not say that the drug issue is a health issue. They say it is an issue and they will fix it by throwing some money at it.

I happen to work with quite a few people who have family members who are addicted to drugs and I can say what their opinion is of a government with no plan. They have long past given up the idea of being upset about it. They have long past given up the idea of thinking this is the place to resolve problems. They are now hunkered down waiting for someone to help them, not a government, some one or two people in this place.

I look at a blueprint, a model, a plan called a throne speech and I can see that we have a government with status quo in mind. Don't worry, be happy, things are working right. We will get into the spotlight. We will tell all that it is working great. Patch it a bit, fix it up.

These things I mentioned are not working. There is no commitment from the government. Where there is no commitment from a government, the government should remove itself or the people looking for the commitment will do the removing for it. I expect a lot of people will be running in the next election, not because they want to get into politics but because there is no plan in the nation, no commitment, no strategy.

We want something done about drugs. We want something done about child pornography, prisons, the age of sexual consent, aboriginal problems, taxes, crime, young offenders, the airline

*The Address*

industry, the immigration and refugee system, the Senate, free votes. If we get around to trying to fix that, we will find that perhaps unity will be somewhat resolved. But that takes courage and I am not sure the government has it.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's comments particularly with regard to the lack of substance in the throne speech. I could not help but agree with what he said.

He mentioned child pornography, immigration, a whole bunch of justice issues. I have been in this House since 1993 and I have come to the conclusion that the government does not have the will to do what it was duly elected to do. By that I mean the government wants to be politically correct. Any of these issues that are of any moral or justice substance the government wants to pass on to the courts and I strongly disagree with that.

Does the hon. member think we were sent down here to help draft the laws and address the wrongs of our laws instead of the lawyers and the judges who are not an elected body?

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, this concept is very near and dear to the hearts of most Canadians. Who actually makes laws in this country, the elected people, the representatives from all over the country in this place, or the judges appointed by the government of the day? That is a valid question. There was never any question in my mind about who it should be. It should be the elected officials.

• (1325)

The difficulty I have is this delegation of authority. If it were only the judiciary, I think we could find a way around that perhaps by appointing judges for seven years instead of for life, or electing judges, we could find answers to make them accountable for their decisions, but it is not. The government appoints bodies, refugee boards, immigration boards, parole boards, that tend to have autonomy within our system. When questions are asked in the House of Commons, ministers say "I do not know. It is not my fault, it is their fault".

The problem is the government of the day has delegated too much responsibility. At the same time it has not issued accountability within those areas it has delegated to.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with some intent to the hon. member opposite. I want to ask him two questions.

The first question is I wonder what he thought there was to gain by bashing the judiciary? These judges are people of integrity and great stature, people whose job it is to interpret the laws as made by parliament. I wonder exactly what his game plan is in terms of

trying to bash these honourable people, people who do the right thing most of the time in terms of what they do and say.

The second question I have is that the hon. member spoke about running for parliament and being around to do the right thing in terms of caring for the country. Is he planning on doing that the next time, or is he going to jump ship and seek provincial politics?

I would be really interested in answers to both of those questions, the honour of the judiciary and where his commitment lies in terms of parliament vis-à-vis the provincial political arena.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this jumping ship is. Rumour has it that I am running for the Liberals in B.C. Give your head a shake. It is interesting to see how the Liberals here are much enamoured with the Liberals in British Columbia. We will remember to bring that message back home to those who say they do not have any association with these people.

To answer the more serious question of the two, it is interesting with those fellows over there. If a person speaks out about and issue and thinks he is right about it, for instance, a judge says that the possession of child pornography is legal and a person speaks out about that, or a judge like Howard Weston in Manitoba who says that all federal penitentiary prisoners—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry, but some months ago we had already agreed that we were not going to mention specific judges. We can refer to the judiciary, but not to judges specifically.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, if an individual, in particular people in this House, disagree with that, the Liberals call it bashing instead of articulating what one believes in. If an individual dislikes what is going on in any portion of the immigration proceedings, and I have had lots of experience trying to get criminals deported from this country, they call it racism. The problem is that those individuals over there have no argument to articulate other than "You are bashing, you are bashing, you are bashing". That is sad. Perhaps they should learn a little more about what they are supposed to be talking about before they put legislation in place.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my intervention in this debate by welcoming the new human resources development minister. This is a huge area. I have been the critic in this area for quite some time. I know this minister is committed to doing a good job. I will certainly commit to helping her with the best advice I can give on how to carry out her responsibilities.

The second session of the 36th Parliament and the throne speech which opened it were the subject of more hype and convenient leaks than in any previous session in my time in this place.



*The Address*

• (1330)

In recent weeks we had media carrying many interviews with cabinet ministers and all sorts of insider leaks promoting the expectation that the government had an imaginative plan of vision for the future of Canada as we enter the next century and the next millennium. With the opening of parliament delayed by three whole weeks for the government to get this just right, we all waited with bated breath for this wonderful vision to come forward. What happened? The throne speech contained the usual Liberal feel good rhetoric and much less actual content than was expected even on the big centrepiece, the children's agenda. There is no clear vision as we enter the next millennium.

The theme of the Prime Minister's speech when he followed up in the House was emotive jargon: hope, confidence, optimism, working together, boldness of vision, courage to act, best country in the world, et cetera. He reiterated all of the usual bromides: society of excellence, strong, united, dynamic, innovative, diverse, cohesive, sharing, every child gets the right start in life, young people with a chance to grow, access to skills, quality health care; all of the things that nobody in the House, let alone the whole country, would disagree with.

What was missing was one single, solitary, cohesive plan with specifics on how to achieve these wonderful things that we all want for our country. This is the lack of leadership that we suffer from in this country: a Prime Minister without specifics, simply falling back on platitudes.

In case people listening think that of course we are going to say this in the opposition, let me quote from some commentators. Andrew Coyne called it "a compendium of bland truisms and vague declarations of intent". Another commentator said the speech shows the government as being "bereft of vision". Even the normally Liberal-friendly Toronto *Star* noted that the speech was full of platitudes and short on specifics.

We need a sound vision in this country. We need some specifics. Where are we going? What is it going to cost? Where is the money coming from? What will be the benefits to people? There was none of that, just some nice emotional words.

To top it all off, the Prime Minister had the nerve to call all of this the Canadian way. It is the Liberal way. It is the Liberal way of muddiness and fuzziness and murkiness and feel good rhetoric, without delivering the sensible, sound, specific plan this country needs.

What is the Liberal way? It is bureaucratic meddling; intrusive government; Ottawa knows best, especially how to spend our money; no hope for workers to keep more of what they earn, but instead they can expect to keep half of what they earn; no liberation from excessive taxes; more and more of the nanny state, a model that has failed over and over across the world; and no vision for the future that would appeal to our best and brightest young minds.

What is the Liberal agenda? After all of the words, after all of the speeches, we do not really know for sure. All we can do is examine their past behaviour, their past record of missing the obvious. Remember, it was these Liberals who were opposed to free trade, the only thing practically that is carrying our economy today.

What about the other important issues that are burning in Canadians' minds? What about agriculture? Our farmers have lost virtually all of their income. Their income has fallen to 2% of what they earned last year. Would anybody in this House like to have his or her income cut by 98%? Would there not be a hue and cry for something to be done? There was not a mention by the government on how to deal with these people in crisis across our country.

What about immigration? We have solid people from across the world lining up to be in this country. What happens? We have people smuggling and illegal entrants taking up those spaces that could be taken by people who have a commitment to doing things the way the law says they should be done.

What about defence? We have a military that is literally falling apart and falling out of the sky. There was not a word about how to restore the pride that we used to have in our forces.

What about the fishery? There is violence in a country like Canada: people against people, citizens against citizens, community against community. Yet, this visionary government did not even mention that, never mind come out with a plan to address it. It is a shame.

• (1335)

The Liberals are totally out of touch with Canadians. Canadians want less government, not more. They want to keep the money they earn. They do not want to have to turn it over to government, which then says "Have we got a program for you". These programs simply do not cut it for the majority of Canadians.

One commentator spoke about the only specific in the Prime Minister's speech, which was to extend maternity leave. The commentator said:

If Canadians were taxed less, they could have a whole range of choices. Taxes are the business of government. Parenting is not. If this government truly wants to help Canadian kids, it should ease the tax burden on parents.

We need flexibility and choices as parents and as citizens of this country, but no, the government wants to take our money, put us into its little box, its little program and it will decide what we can choose. It decides where we can go. It decides what kinds of choices are available to us. That is not the way to run a good country.

We have the Liberal record that my colleagues have talked about so many times over the last few days; a government that says it will give tax relief when in fact it is taking \$2 billion more in taxes

*The Address*

next year than it did last year. That is not tax relief, except to a Liberal who wants to say one thing but do the total opposite.

What about health care? Health care transfers have been cut. Cash transfers are still over \$4 billion a year below what they were when the government took office. That is \$4 billion that should be going into health care services in the country which the Liberals have taken out and not returned.

The government talks about wanting to help our children. Look at its track record on that. Ask aboriginal children how well the government has looked after them. Many of them are living in poverty and squalor, and they lack services.

What about military families who are getting by on subsistence wages with substandard housing? The government is totally responsible for the wages and housing of our military and their families.

What about farm families, children who are losing their entire heritage while the government stands by without a word?

What about the children whose parents have hepatitis C from the ineptness of government? The government says "Sorry, your parents cannot get insurance. They cannot get mortgage insurance. They cannot do a lot of the things they need to provide for you and your future. Too bad, you lose". That is how the government looks after children.

I have already mentioned health cuts. How do they impact parents and children? Yet, the government has the nerve to say it cares about children and families when everything it has done in the past shows completely the opposite.

We need a plan that will really carry us into the future, with something solid that we can count on and something that really gives us choice, flexibility and a bright future. That plan was enunciated in the House by the Leader of the Opposition in a speech that had the substance that this tired, sad, incompetent government failed to deliver.

I commend to all Canadians the plan we have put forward, which would give real choice, flexibility, freedom and the protection of family resources and the resources for which we all work so that we could build the future we want together.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague for Calgary—Nose Hill. I thought she gave a very thoughtful analysis of the throne speech.

I see some commentators have taken to calling this the drone speech rather than the throne speech in that it lacks a vision for our country entering a new millennium.

I thought my colleague said it pretty well, but I am really interested in her analysis of the government's 50:50 proposal for spending our so-called surplus. I would like to find out where my colleague stands on the whole issue of 50:50.

• (1340)

In my mind it sounds good. However, I think the Canadian public are being fooled into thinking that 50% will go toward new spending and 50% will go toward the reduction of the debt and the massive tax burden in this country. In fact, we are finding out that basically there is no surplus to split 50:50. I would like to have her analysis of that situation.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, the real issue is, is government spending enough of our money or not? That is the real question that Canadians will be asking themselves. Most Canadians are saying that the government spends enough of their money and that it spends a whole lot more of their money than it should.

Our money is burning a hole in the pocket of the government. It thinks of wonderful new ways to spend it, like sending young people across the country who are trying to get an education, some skills training and looking forward to a stable job with a decent income. It thinks of feel good programs instead of the substance that our country needs. Then the government says "We are going to spend half of your money for you because we know better".

The real question for Canadians is, do they want government spending more and more of their money? Or, do they want to say to the government that it is spending enough, that it needs to put some of the money it has been spending on wasteful, frivolous things back into key programs like health care, solid education for our children, proper salaries for our military and addressing the real problems of this country?

Let Canadians spend their own money. They will do it better than the government.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member who mentioned the children on reserves, the lives they are leading and the squalor and poverty that exist.

As she knows, I spent two years visiting the homes of these people across the nation and it is a very broad and serious problem. We always look for explanations, and I am sure that she does not have any. I know I do not.

I would like her to comment on why in the world a government that has been in power for the length of time that this government has would continually ignore the auditor general's statements which blasted the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for its lack of accountability in looking after these matters. Why does the government continually ignore that?

*The Address*

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, first, I commend my colleague from Wild Rose who has spent more time talking to real aboriginals about their real life problems than, I would dare say, either the minister or anyone in the minister's department.

I believe that the government cares more about its image, its legacy, about politicking and feel good words than it really does about doing something serious, practical and specific for the people of this country.

The hon. member for Wild Rose is one who knows very well that when it comes to delivering, the government gets a big fat zero.

**Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Chatham—Kent Essex.

[*Translation*]

As we all know, my role as Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole limits my interventions in this House to procedural matters. I am therefore grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for finally giving me an opportunity to speak to my colleagues about a topic which is dear to my heart and which was mentioned briefly in the throne speech. I am referring to the plight of the homeless.

Naturally, however, I want to begin by thanking my constituents in Saint-Lambert, to whom I owe the great privilege of sitting in this place.

• (1345)

My riding consists of four large municipalities: Greenfield Park, Lemoyne, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the western portion of the city of Longueuil and, finally, Saint-Lambert, which gives my riding its name.

As is the case with many urban ridings in Canada, contrasts abound between and within these four municipalities. They are essentially suburbs of Montreal—what are often referred to as bedroom communities—where the quality of life takes precedence over industrial activity. The proportion of anglophones, francophones and new Canadians also varies widely in the municipalities contained within the riding's boundaries.

[*English*]

My constituents back home have been generous enough to put their confidence in me. I renew my pledge to represent them loyally and efficiently, notwithstanding their social background, their cultural origin or their political affiliation.

[*Translation*]

But I also wish to pay special attention to a very serious problem. That problem is homelessness, the terrible and hopeless situation in which thousands of homeless people, particularly youth, find themselves.

The gap between those whose circumstances are improving and those for whom, on the contrary, they are worsening, also exists in my riding. At the close of the century, with the effects of globalization and technological innovation increasingly transforming not just relations between countries but also the daily lives of all citizens, I feel we must pay special attention to the life of the community.

In fact, I believe that one of the vital roles of the governments of today, as well as of each and every member of this House, must be to work toward the economic and social integration of all those who are at risk of being pushed aside in a competition-, innovation- and knowledge-based economy.

In this context, the situation of the homeless is a particular concern. It is true that this is a problem that is hard to get a proper handle on. There is no typical homeless person, although we are too often tempted to lump them all in together without thinking.

In reality, all homeless people have their own stories, their own experiences, their own lives. They may be children abandoned by their parents, ruined businessmen, battered women, aboriginal people who have not managed to integrate into big city life, refugee claimants, or people who have been released from correctional or psychiatric institutions and are having difficulties fitting back into society.

People end up on the street for all kinds of reasons. Among the main causes of homelessness are: mental illness, family violence, addiction, poverty, loss of income, less affordable housing, and migration to major urban centres.

[*English*]

In Ottawa, our nation's capital, an estimated 4,500 people including 375 families with children are homeless. As a matter of fact, the fastest growing group of homeless is families with children, and 18% of the homeless population of Ottawa are children under the care of single parents.

[*Translation*]

In the street, all suffer in the same way, young and old, university graduates and the functionally illiterate, members of our first nations and recent immigrants; all are discriminated against in the same way. What almost all of them have in common is the fact that they did not choose this lifestyle and cannot change it unaided.

I take great pride in being part of a government that has set itself the priority of improving the quality of life for all Canadians.

• (1350)

In particular, we set up several programs specifically for the homeless. However, these measures could lose their effectiveness and end up being too scattered if they were not all co-ordinated by a single minister. Fortunately, the Minister of Labour and federal

*The Address*

co-ordinator for activities related to the homeless displays remarkable energy and sensitiveness in dealing with this delicate and complex task. The Canada-wide tour that she did this summer to consult stakeholders shows that she is taking that responsibility very seriously.

When the governor general read the throne speech last week, I was very pleased to hear her say that “the Government will continue working with its partners in all sectors to address the root causes of homelessness”.

However, even a government with the best of intentions, or all levels of government working together, can never solve the problem of homelessness without the support of the whole population. Homelessness is a societal problem that must absolutely be dealt with by society as a whole. It is imperative that we develop common approaches and initiatives with all public administrations, community groups, educational institutions, the private sector and everyone who wants to contribute to the betterment of their community.

[English]

As Canadian citizens we are justly proud of our first place ranking in the United Nations human development index, but such classifications are meaningless for the individuals who struggle every day to find something to eat and do not know where they will be sleeping at night.

Over the years successive Canadian and provincial governments have achieved much, more than most countries in fact, to provide Canadians with an effective and affordable social safety net, but we still have a very long way to go before coming to grips with the problem of homelessness. Homelessness is growing in number and diversity at an accelerated pace.

[Translation]

All Canadians are about to celebrate, in their own way, the arrival of a new century and a new millennium. This is an opportunity for us to proudly celebrate a remarkable past and to look confidently to a promising future.

On the occasion of my first speech in this house, I am making the wish that, during these celebrations, we never forget that thousands of our fellow citizens need us in an urgent and critical way. We must listen to them. We must speak to them from the heart.

There are of course no homeless people in this house. However, each and everyone of us here represents some of these people in the Parliament of Canada. The homeless, as well as all those who live in need and uncertainty, are also Canadian citizens. They too are entitled to a brighter future.

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke about the problem of homelessness.

[English]

She made a very eloquent and good case for concern for the homeless. It is a very important issue that must be dealt with. She also mentioned that she is pleased to be part of a government that made the statement in the throne speech that it would continue working with its partners in all sectors to address the root causes of homelessness and to help communities respond to the needs of their members for shelter and other support. Other than that sentence I did not see anything concrete to tell me what the government is actually doing to help those people who are living on the streets and who were so aptly described by my hon. colleague.

• (1355)

Would the member comment on what practical steps she sees the government taking to provide a housing program, or something which will address the issue in a very concrete fashion?

**Ms. Yolande Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his kind comments. Indeed the Speech from the Throne was not very specific on the provisions the government intends to take to try to solve the problem.

As I mentioned in my speech, the Minister of Labour travelled widely throughout Canada last summer. We will receive her concrete suggestions in the very near future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too listened to our colleague's speech. The problem with the government is that it talks a lot but does nothing.

First, there was the appointment of the minister for the homeless, an appointment without portfolio. Then employment insurance. This I will repeat until the next election: How will people manage, especially the women, many of whom work part time and cannot obtain employment insurance because of the number of hours required?

I would like our colleague to tell us what this government, which she so strongly believes in, intends to do or should do if it really wants to help the homeless in the country, not only in words but in deeds.

**Ms. Yolande Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his remarks. The Prime Minister has already taken a big step by asking a minister to take on the problem of the homeless.

This is a relatively recent problem. It is new in the scope it has assumed in recent years. I remember watching American television programming on street people and reading reports in American papers about them, like many of you. We thought the Americans had a problem and one that we would not want here.

Unfortunately, however, it has arrived here now, and I am sure, with all the work the Minister of Labour is doing at the moment,

we will have results very soon. In any case, I hope so and I hope we will have the co-operation of all the members of this House as well.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN FORCES

**Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 3, 1998, the Canadian forces dental services forensic team became involved in the response to the crash of Swissair flight 111. The dental forensic operation lasted until the identification centre, located at 12 Wing Shearwater, closed on October 30, 1998.

Throughout Operation Persistence the 46 team members drawn from across Canada provided over 7,500 hours of forensic dental services that were crucial in identifying many of those lost in this tragic mishap. They performed superbly under extremely demanding and emotional circumstances that required a special kind of fortitude, stamina and emotional strength. Few of us can imagine the trying circumstances under which these personnel served.

On October 12, the chief of defence staff presented a Canadian forces unit commendation to members of the team in an official ceremony that recognized their exemplary actions.

I would now ask all members of the House to join me in acknowledging the fine work performed by these dedicated people.

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### CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, how can Canadians trust the Liberals when they say they will protect children and then avoid positive action on the possession of child pornography?

The recent throne speech said that the government would work with Canadians to ensure that our communities continue to be safe. Its focus will be balanced, combining prevention and a community centred approach with action to deal with serious crime.

• (1400)

Child pornography is a serious crime and in response on Friday 300,000 Canadians voiced their community-centred approach through a petition against child pornography insisting the government defend the law.

In response, the justice minister accuses Reform members of being scaremongers. Obviously the minister does not feel obligated to the community will, and also has no ability to get cabinet approval for action.

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Children are the most vulnerable members of society and they deserve the fullest protection of the law. Liberal sentiments delivered in regal fashion do not close legal loopholes or defend families. The poor Liberal justice system will only be improved when the system defenders are replaced by the system changers in the opposition.

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### YWCA

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October 17 to 23 is the YWCA's fourth annual Week Without Violence.

Each year the YWCA holds activities across Canada that help to raise awareness about violence in our communities and its impact on all of our lives. Last year local activities and initiatives touched over 20,000 individuals. This year's focus on youth is expected to touch even more lives.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the YWCA for its ongoing efforts on behalf of all Canadians. I would particularly like to congratulate the YWCA of Cambridge for its ongoing dedication to making our community a better and safer place to live. I would encourage all Canadians to participate in local activities during this year's Week Without Violence.

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### MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Nobel Peace Prize for 1999 has been awarded to Médecins Sans Frontières.

Founded in 1971 by a group of French doctors and now active in 80 countries, including Canada, Médecins Sans Frontières provides direct, in the field medical help to victims of armed conflict, without regard to political allegiances.

The committee of the Norwegian parliament which chooses the laureates has normally favoured national political leaders but it has also recognized non-profit, humanitarian organizations. The International Red Cross has been honoured three times, beginning with the first award to the Swiss founder, Henri Dunant, in 1901. The Nansen committee and the later UN High Commission on Refugees have also been recognized three times. The Institut de Droit International was an early laureate in 1904. Very recent recipients have included the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in 1985, the Pugwash Movement for Nuclear Disarmament in 1995 and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in 1997.

The award to Médecins Sans Frontières continues this contemporary trend of recognizing the role of volunteer, grassroots, private citizens' organizations in advancing world peace today.

*S. O. 31*

### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October was designated Women's History Month by the federal government in 1992 to celebrate the past and present contributions of women in Canada and to recognize their achievements as a vital part of our Canadian heritage.

October was chosen because of the historical significance of the Persons case. On October 18, 1929, after a lengthy political and legal battle led by five Canadian women, the British Privy Council declared that the reference to persons in section 24 of the British North America Act did indeed include women, thus making them eligible for appointment to the Senate.

Today marks the 70th anniversary of the Persons case decision and the 20th anniversary of the Governor General Award in commemoration of the Persons case. May we congratulate the five Canadian women who will receive this year's Governor General Award.

These remarkable women have followed in the footsteps of the famous five of 1929 and the 107 other Governor General Award recipients since 1979.

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### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a recent Angus Reid survey shows 46% of prairie farmers are seriously considering getting out of farming or have already ceased operations because of high taxes, unfair foreign subsidies and low commodity prices.

By the end of this year, thousands of farmers will be forced from their farms, not by choice, but by this government's inaction and lack of interest.

Unless the government takes immediate action to resolve the farming crisis, our farmers face a bleak future.

The Prime Minister continues to boast about Canada being the best place on earth to live. I wish he would face a group of Canadian prairie farmers and make that statement. But true to form, the Prime Minister and his government will continue to avoid addressing this very important issue.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

[Translation]

### CHILD TAX BENEFIT

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to Michel Girard, a journalist for *La Presse*,

the Government of Canada increased the child tax benefit by \$15 a month effective last July 1.

This represents an additional \$60 million in assistance to families in Quebec. But only \$10 million of it actually made its way into their pockets.

The government of Lucien Bouchard decided to cut its provincial allowance by \$50 million. Of the 660,000 families in Quebec that receive the family allowance and the federal benefit, only 103,800 saw their income go up following the federal increase.

What did Quebec City do with the \$50 million it netted by cutting its provincial allowance by the same amount as the federal increase? It put it into day care services.

Today, the government of Lucien Bouchard is cashing in on children's benefits.

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### CANADIAN HANDBALL TEAM

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last July, four young members of the Canadian handball team from Drummondville took the gold medal at the UBAE grand prix in Barcelona and placed fourth in La Coupa Interamnia in Teramo, Italy.

Martine Gélinas, Stéphanie Gagné, Catherine Brunelle and Marie-Christine Gélinas surprised everyone, because they have only been playing this sport for two years.

In addition to maintaining a rigorous training program and keeping up their studies, they had to find the money to pay for their trip. It would be a good idea if Heritage Canada were to provide basic funding to all sports federations to assist athletes. The unflagging support of their trainer and their parents played a vital role in the young women's success. Their outstanding determination deserves our recognition.

Bravo to all four, and good luck in the next competitions.

\* \* \*

[English]

### RIGHT HON. PIERRE ELLIOT TRUDEAU

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great privilege and honour that I pass on 80th birthday wishes to Canada's 15th prime minister, the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

First elected as a member in 1965, Mr. Trudeau served as minister of justice under the leadership of Prime Minister Pearson. A dashing, charismatic politician, he was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada in 1968 and in April sworn in as Canada's 15th prime minister.

During 16 years of Trudeaumania, he reformed Canada. The government passed the Official Languages Act, fought the separatist terrorists in Quebec during the October crisis and introduced the metric system in Canada. He was devoted to national unity in opposition to the separatist goals of the Parti Québécois.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to extend birthday greetings to a truly remarkable man and wish him many, many more.

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### BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the pink ribbon I am wearing today represents breast cancer awareness month. This serious illness devastates vast numbers of women across Canada. Let me note some positives in this field.

New genetic research now allows us to detect the gene in some families where the risk of breast cancer is predictable. This opens up preventive steps and surely prevention is better than treatment. Regular self-examination, new diagnostic technology and early intervention are all positive developments here in Canada.

[Translation]

In my work as a doctor, I have seen personally the tragic effects of breast cancer. I wish to pay tribute to the efforts of health professionals and volunteers, who are working to reduce the incidence and the terrible consequences of this serious disease.

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### INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

The objective of eradicating poverty, on which efforts must be focused every day, is an important part of our concerns if we wish to provide everyone with an improved quality of life.

Eradicating poverty must also be among the concerns of all governments, all organizations and all corporations. Each of us has a duty to help the most disadvantaged members of our society.

Let us hope that, with the new millennium fast approaching, each of us will be able to say that we have personally contributed to this objective, this societal necessity, of eradicating poverty as quickly as possible.

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[English]

### FISHERIES

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, by now most Canadians are aware of the crisis facing our non-native and native fishermen in Atlantic Canada.

Since the Marshall decision was handed down by the supreme court, the fisheries are in a state of confusion and fishermen are angry at the lack of leadership shown by the Liberal government.

● (1410)

I now understand why the government is negligent in its responsibility to thousands of fishermen and their families. It is, I believe, so that the DFO can institute the individual transferable quota system known in the fisheries committee as ITQs. These would in effect transfer the access of the lucrative lobster fishery from thousands of independent fishermen and their families to the control of a few corporate identities, similar to what was done to the groundfish stocks in Atlantic Canada, thus destroying the hopes of thousands of families in their communities throughout Atlantic Canada.

I would like to fire this shot over the DFO's bow: Please do not institute the ITQ system on lobster stocks.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the organization Doctors Without Borders, which has been providing international medical assistance for the past 28 years.

Doctors Without Borders was founded by three young French physicians in 1971, at the time of the Biafra crisis. The founders wanted to assert their independence from traditional medical organizations in order to be able to denounce the atrocities going on before their eyes with all the vigour born of youth.

Since then, Doctors Without Borders has been involved in humanitarian endeavours in an impressive number of conflicts and disasters, in particular the war in Lebanon in 1976, the terrible famine in Ethiopia in 1980, the earthquake in Armenia in 1988, and most recently the war in Kosovo.

As one of the founders said recently "After nearly 30 years of activities, we are not sure that speaking out always saves lives, but we do know that silence kills".

Our heartiest congratulations to Doctors Without Borders for its contribution to the ideal of peace and the elimination of suffering in the world.

*Oral Questions***MADAM JUSTICE LOUISE ARBOUR**

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the house to congratulate Louise Arbour, who was born in Montreal, who is the former prosecutor of the international criminal tribunal, and who is now a supreme court justice.

Madam Justice Arbour received the highest honour at *La Presse's* 16th excellence gala, when she was named personality of the year. She also won the award in the "courage, humanism and personal accomplishment" category.

All agree that under the leadership of Louise Arbour, international justice took a giant step. Indeed, Louise Arbour showed unprecedented determination in prosecuting people suspected of war crimes all over the world. She did a great job in conditions that were sometimes unstable and very difficult.

Canada and the whole world are grateful to Louise Arbour for having shown such leadership in issues as complex and difficult as those of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. International peace and justice are greatly indebted to her.

Congratulations to Louise Arbour and to all award winners at the gala.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Mark Muike (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend hundreds of non-native fishers and their families converged in Yarmouth to express their anger over the federal government's handling of the fishing crisis.

Despite the minister's claim of having a solution in hand on Friday, we discovered there was no such solution, which was why he had to appoint an independent negotiator.

West Nova fishers have very little faith in the government's ability to find a solution to this crisis. Why should they?

The minister of Indian affairs said that we were overemphasizing the crisis. After all, winter was setting in, not many people would be fishing and nobody's livelihoods are at stake. For his part, the fisheries minister said that he wants a long term solution before the next fishing season in the spring.

Obviously these gentlemen do not realize that the most lucrative lobster fishery is set to begin in West Nova at the end of November. Our fisher's livelihoods are at stake and I think they have a right to be concerned.

Why will the government not take the crisis seriously and immediately implement short term solutions that would at least see all fishers respect pre-established fishing seasons in the name of conservation?

\* \* \*

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month. This year, Women's History Month pays special recognition to the contribution of francophone women in Canada's history.

One francophone woman who is making history today is Julie Payette, the first French-speaking Canadian female astronaut. Julie has been accumulating honours and awards of excellence since college. She is a wonderful role model for young women, proudly proving that there are no limits to what we can achieve.

Although her formal education is in science and engineering, her contribution to the arts is also noteworthy. She is an excellent pianist and has sung with a number of choirs both in Canada and abroad. Furthermore, Julie speaks French, English, Spanish, Italian and Russian.

In June 1992, the Canadian Space Agency selected her as an astronaut and four years later she began training as a mission specialist at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas.

This past May, Julie Payette climbed aboard the space shuttle *Discovery* and headed for the International Space Station.

The success of her recent 10-day mission on the shuttle *Discovery* and at the International Space Station is a source of pride for all Canadians. She is also an inspiration to young women across Canada, encouraging them to follow their dreams in pursuing careers in non-traditional work.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

• (1415)

[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government's first act of the new millennium will be to raise taxes. On January 1, Canada pension plan premiums will rise by \$2.3 billion and bracket creep will pull hundreds of thousands of Canadians into higher tax brackets, which is not exactly a cheery way to enter the new year. We now have poverty groups, family groups, small business associations and even the banks calling for a substantive tax cut.

Why is the government to start the new century with a tax hike instead of a tax cut?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the preamble to the hon. member's question is totally false. We will be starting the new millennium with tax cuts.

However let us deal with the issue of the Canada pension plan. It is under the joint stewardship of the provinces and the federal government. The provinces and the federal government came together and decided to preserve the Canada pension plan for countless generations to come.

The issue before the Canadian people is what the Reform Party has against the Canada pension plan. Why does it want to see it disappear and why did it vote against it?

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is avoiding the issue. The statements in the Speech from the Throne about tax relief are half-truths. Over the same period that the government promises \$16 billion in tax relief it increases taxes by \$18 billion for a net increase in taxes of \$2 billion.

I ask the government again why it is starting the new millennium not with genuine tax relief but with a tax hike.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member simply does not know the facts. With the tax cuts of the government over the course of the next three years we have more than covered inflation or bracket creep. Those are real tax cuts on top of that.

The real issue before the Canadian people is not the bogus arithmetic of the Reform Party. It is why does it not come up with a plan Canadians can believe in, one that does not hide an agenda and is not opposite to the basic values of Canadians.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has notes in his margin that say "argument weak, yell like hell".

The facts are these. When workers look at their paycheques the taxes are increased, not decreased. When a mother looks at her family budget at the end of the month she has less money to spend because of the minister's taxes and not more. Businesses are going to the United States and not staying here because of the tax policies of the minister.

Why after six years of broken promises should Canadians believe the minister when he says that now he will decrease taxes?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I guess Canadians should believe the government because we know the facts and the hon. member obviously does not.

Real disposable incomes in Canada have not only stabilized but now for the first time in over a decade they are beginning to rise.

The hon. member is wrong. Unemployment in the country is now at its lowest level in over 10 years.

If the hon. member would like to see a perspective on the Canadian economy and the net result of what the government has done, I would simply ask him to look at the Royal Bank report which came out today. It basically says that the country is cooking on all cylinders.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the country is cooking on all cylinders but I do know that taxpayers are getting roasted thanks to this finance minister.

On January 1, bracket creep will raise taxes by a billion dollars. That is according to the finance department's own books. He should listen to his own finance department. He always talks about reducing taxes but all of his actions are to increase taxes.

If the finance minister really has the courage of his convictions, why will he not eliminate bracket creep on January 1?

• (1420)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member simply ought to take a look at reality. The reality is that our tax cuts have taken care of bracket creep and much more.

However, he does not have to believe me. Let me simply quote that "the taxation arrow is now pointing in the right direction, down. It behoves us then to offer a polite nod of thanks in the direction of the federal finance minister". I hate to say it, but that is what he said. He goes on to say, for all the lecturing Ralph Klein did in the mid-1990s about how Ottawa needs to get its budgetary books in order like we did at the time, Klein and Day have been left in the dust by Ottawa. That is the Calgary bunch.

**The Speaker:** I remind hon. members not to use any props in questions or answers.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it will be noted how the finance minister always runs away from the question. For someone who is pursuing the leadership of the Liberal Party that is not a great quality. I suggest maybe he wants to focus on the question this time.

My question is again for the finance minister. He knows this is the case. On January 1 taxes will take another \$1 billion out of the pockets of Canadians; 85,000 Canadians will join the tax rolls for the first time. If he really believes in tax relief, why does he not begin with a tax cut on January 1? Why will he not eliminate bracket creep?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that on January 1 taxes are going down. Taxes went down on July 1. Next year they are going down \$3.9 billion. Since we have taken office EI premiums have gone down \$4 billion. That is

*Oral Questions*

what they are going down. A substantial increase of \$1.8 billion in the child tax benefit, that is money that will be found in the pockets of middle and low income Canadians with children.

The fact of the matter is that taxes have gone down every year since we have balanced the budget and they will keep on going down.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTIONS**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Minister of Canadian Heritage said in this house that she did not know that members of her staff or of her department were aware of the investigation into CINAR, a Montreal production company.

A few minutes later, she told the media that her deputy minister knew about the investigation. Given that she had the whole weekend to do so, the minister must surely have checked things out.

Could the minister confirm that no other person from her department or from any organization accountable to her department was aware of that issue?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I said just about the opposite of what the hon. member is claiming. I said that my office had no information on this issue and that I presumed that my department was aware of what was going on, since it had already arranged for a meeting with the police.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the minister is definitely responsible for her department and the organizations that are accountable to her, my question to her is as follows. Is she aware that one of the names used by CINAR in the movie *Chassé croisé* is allegedly that of Thomas LaPierre, the son of Laurier LaPierre, who is the chairman of the board of Telefilm Canada?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the hon. member made accusations, following which I asked the RCMP to investigate. I hope he will let the RCMP conduct its investigation and shed light on the whole issue, instead of saying falsehoods here in the House.

**The Speaker:** I ask everyone to be very careful with their choice of words.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Alain Lacoursière of the Montreal urban police told *Le Point* on Friday that there should be an administrative investigation along with the police investigation. He said “This is

the investigation that Telefilm should be doing. It should give me a file so I can lay criminal charges”.

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In view of the links that appear to exist between the chairman of the board of Telefilm and one of names used by CINAR, is it the minister's intention to give Telefilm such a mandate?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already asked the RCMP to investigate. I think the RCMP is capable of investigating all the names, all the alleged names and all the people implicated in the matter.

• (1425)

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the police themselves are calling for an administrative investigation to complement their own investigation, and the minister does not seem to be aware that people in her department or in agencies responsible to her could have links to this matter, how can she claim that this matter will be fully brought to light?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because of the allegations made last week that I took responsibility for requesting an RCMP investigation.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BILL C-80**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 200 food safety scientists have sounded the alarm today. They are warning that our government is not able to ensure the safety of our food and that the whole food safety system is in jeopardy.

The scientists are especially worried about Bill C-80, the proposed food marketing bill, that it will further erode our ability to ensure the safety of our food.

My question for the health minister is simple. Will the government abandon this dangerous bill?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me respond to that part of the question dealing with the food safety employees of Health Canada.

I did indeed receive a letter from them last week. I asked the deputy to meet with them and deal with it, but I want to reassure the member that we take very seriously our responsibility to ensure food safety for Canadians. Since I have been minister we have done a number of things to try to ensure it.

One of the first things I did when I got there was to cancel the proposed cuts to the food directorate. We have \$65 million from the most recent budget to improve food safety. We are continuing with the recommendations of the science advisory board—

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

**Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister and the government are so concerned that they are prepared to throw the do not harm principle right out the window. The scientists are coming to the minister and to the public because they have deep concerns. They do not believe what he has just said.

They have said we are in a disastrous situation and we are on a perilous course of action. I want to know from the Minister of Health: Are the scientists wrong?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the scientists are of course right to express concerns they honestly feel.

I am responding to them as I am responding to the hon. member by saying we are both on the same side of this issue, which is the side of consumer safety and safety of food. So long as I am minister the scientists at Health Canada will have the resources and the mandate required to ensure that safety.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, last week the minister of agriculture in a CBC interview said he would use all the resources at his disposal to help farmers.

Last week Alberta provided \$100 million. The U.S. government provided \$8.7 billion. When will the minister use his influence to put forward similar resources to help stop the bleeding in agriculture?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have already demonstrated that in that we have already put \$900 million into assisting farmers. I think farmers are very glad that we formed the government because the hon. member's party platform last time said that they would merge the agriculture, environment, natural resources, and fisheries and oceans ministries.

The projected savings they said they would make in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada would be \$600 million. We put \$900 million in and they wanted to take \$600 million out.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in the provinces where Canada delivers the AIDA program they have delivered \$90 million to date. To date, 8,000 AIDA applications have been approved and 10,000 have been denied.

Does the minister not believe that those 10,000 farmer do not need assistance? If he does believe that then when will he give them some hope and put some money in their pockets?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's statement about how much the AIDA program has delivered already is incorrect.

To four provinces where the federal government delivers the program it is now well over \$200 million. Last fall the hon. member's party said that it believed the emergency assistance could be delivered at a cost to the federal government of approximately \$276 million. That is all it said was needed. We are putting in \$900 million, over three times what it said was needed.

\* \* \*

● (1430)

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of us are alarmed at the increasing level of friction and tension in the east coast fishery.

Today we learned that the West Nova Fishermen's Coalition is going back to court to do what this government should have done all along, which is to apply for a stay of judgment in the Marshall decision to allow first, for a cooling off period for everyone involved and second, to give time to determine the future role of non-aboriginals in the fisheries.

Will the government support their appeal to the court which asks for a stay and a clarification of the Marshall decision?

**Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the government's position is very clear. We very much respect the supreme court ruling that there is a treaty right. We said that we would live within the spirit of that judgment. In fact, there was a meeting this morning with chiefs from Atlantic Canada to look at how we can move on the process. My colleague the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is continuing to meet with them to see how we can look at the broader implications and continue that discussion so we can have a long term solution on this issue.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the fishermen want a clear answer to this question.

During last week's emergency debate on this fishery, the Liberals joined with the NDP and Conservative Party in refusing to consider a stay of judgment. This past weekend we saw the result of that bullheadedness. There is increasing friction with hundreds of boats in the harbour and potential for violence hanging over everybody's head.

This is the last day to apply for a stay of judgment, which I repeat, will allow for a cooling off period and clarification of the

*Oral Questions*

Marshall decision to establish what the roles are for both aboriginals and non-aboriginals in the future fisheries.

Will the government support the West Nova Fishermen's Coalition application for an appeal of the Marshall decision?

**Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it should be pretty clear to everybody in the House that it is better to negotiate than to litigate. That is our position. We want to negotiate. We want to make sure that we sit around the table.

We have always said it is through dialogue and co-operation that we are going to get the real solution, not through going back to the courts, not through asking that we have another look at the supreme court ruling. We have a supreme court ruling. We will recognize that right. We will live within the spirit of that judgment.

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[Translation]

**AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTIONS**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has just told us that she requested an RCMP investigation into the copyright case.

Will she confirm that there had already been an RCMP investigation into this case prior to 1997 and that no charges were laid?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not comment on RCMP investigations. On Friday, further to allegations made in the media and by the opposition member, I requested an RCMP investigation.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to make things perfectly clear, the minister requested an RCMP investigation. But an RCMP investigation was conducted prior to 1997. We do not know why, or how, but no charges were laid.

The Montreal urban police conducted an investigation and found that there had been criminal dealings. How does the minister think this new RCMP investigation will come up with anything different from the first investigation, if indeed there was nothing?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot make any comment about an earlier RCMP investigation. All I know is that, on Friday, allegations were made in the media and by the Bloc Québécois member, following which I asked the RCMP to conduct an investigation.

[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister still is not willing to admit that thousands of farmers will not get any AIDA money out of this government.

A year after Reform forced the government to debate the farm income issue in the House, only 30% of Saskatchewan farmers have received a federal cheque.

Why can this government not get emergency assistance to farmers who fell through the AIDA cracks, and do it before the end of October?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the government responded very early to the issue.

We have had discussions and are continuing discussions with the farm safety net advisory committee, with my provincial colleagues and with my cabinet colleagues.

We have responded to the issue. We are directing as much support as we possibly can to those farmers who are under financial stress.

• (1435)

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is the program has not worked. The agriculture minister has failed to deliver on his December 1998 promise to get cash to all financially stressed farmers in time for the spring planting. Premier Klein has his \$100 million plan that includes disaster relief and low interest loans. The farmers in Alberta will get their money immediately. Why will this government not follow the Alberta lead and use disaster relief and low interest loans, those two things specifically, to provide immediate assistance to farmers?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are being very careful that what we do as the federal government does not affect us tradewise. In doing that, we are also targeting as much possible help as we can to the producers. Federally we are treating the producers in every province that meet the criteria of the aid program exactly the same.

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[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Human Resources Development showed an absolute lack of

*Oral Questions*

sensitivity to the problems women are having with the employment insurance program.

This morning, a Canada Labour Congress study was released. It confirms what the Bloc has been saying for the past three years: employment insurance reform penalizes women, particularly low wage earners.

Is the new minister going to act promptly to correct the unacceptable situation deplored by the Canada Labour Congress?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to a study by the Canadian Labour Congress which will not be published until next month so it is hard for me to comment on the statistics or data.

But there are data which we are all very proud of. The most recent labour market data say that Canada's unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in nine years at 7.5% and the unemployment rate for women is the lowest it has been in 20 years.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government's intentions relating to parental leave as they are set out in the throne speech put the proposed changes off until 2001.

How can the minister accept such a distant date, and why will she not act now to correct one of the major injustices toward women in the employment insurance reform?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to hear the Bloc supporting a very important initiative announced by the Prime Minister last week, which is that we will double parental benefits by 2001. That will give parents 12 months to spend at home with their children. It will be flexible. The family can decide whether it will be the mother or the father who stays at home. It will also include adoptive parents. This is a very significant undertaking on the part of this government. I am glad that the Bloc supports it.

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**YOUNG OFFENDERS**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, 861 days is how long we have been waiting for the justice minister to introduce new young offenders legislation, 861 days. There is another bill coming and another chance to get it right, but who knows how many we have to see. In the meantime over 30,000 violent crimes have left more than 30,000 victims in their wake. That is about 34 violent crimes a day.

Why will the justice minister not simply admit that the YOA is DOA and do something to fix it?

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, we have already introduced the criminal youth justice bill again. It is to be considered by the committee in the very near future and dealt with accordingly.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is going to hold the record for trying to bring in legislation. It can keep bringing in bill after bill but the point is this has not been fixed.

The justice minister has had a choice. She has been in office for 861 days talking about this marvellous new solution. It is not happening. She can blame the official opposition or any scapegoat she chooses but the problem has not been fixed. Will she go down in history as the minister who actually brought young offenders to justice or in the name of prevention, allowed for thousands of new victims that should never have been there?

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have introduced the bill. The justice committee had extensive consultations on the youth justice system. It came in with a wonderful report called "Renewing Youth Justice". As a result of that report, we have new legislation which will be dealt with expeditiously by the government. We are moving forward on this issue.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at a press conference this morning, an important coalition comprised of the Fédération des infirmières et des infirmiers du Québec, the Quebec section of the Canadian Hemophilia Society and the young activist Joey Haché called upon the government to compensate Hepatitis C victims.

• (1440)

Since this is the government's constitutional responsibility, what is keeping it from showing the victims some compassion?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has already earmarked more than \$1.3 billion for people infected by hepatitis C. The Government of Quebec has already accepted our proposal to share \$300 million just for those infected outside the 1986-1990 period.

To me and to the government, this is a fair and appropriate approach.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Last Friday the government tabled its response to the report of the Standing Committee on Health on organ and tissue donations in Canada. After media reports and comments made by the Reform Party health critic over the weekend, can the minister clarify whether the government has closed the door to the national registry of organ donations?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I read with some disappointment the comments by the Reform Party health critic.

What we announced last Friday is very important for a number of reasons. First of all, it was the first time that all governments of the country agreed to work together to make increasing the organ donation rate a national priority. Second, we formed a national council to help make that happen. The provinces very importantly have agreed to invest the kind of money needed to do what is really important which is to put teams in hospitals to counsel those who are the relatives of the dying to encourage the donation of organs. That is going to make a real difference.

\* \* \*

**PRISONS**

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask about a resort that has been brought to my attention called Frontenac Institution. Do not let the fact that this is a prison fool you. Here are some of the highlights in the brochure which I received. It has a golf course, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, baseball, picnic tables, barbeques, a pool room, a jogging track and fishing. Yes, even fishing.

Has the solicitor general completely dropped the principle that a prison should be about work ethics or even punishment or is he simply trying to compete with Florida?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in our correctional system we have minimum, maximum and medium institutions. When a person is convicted, Correctional Services Canada evaluates the offender. If he is put in a maximum institution and there is some improvement, he goes to a medium institution. Before he is released to society he is put in a minimum security institution. This is done for public safety reasons.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether they want to break out or break into this place. Hardworking Canadians have little time or money for leisure due to

the excessive taxes of the government, yet prisoners at Frontenac Institution are off fishing and playing golf.

I ask the solicitor general why should law-abiding Canadians continue to serve time paying high taxes while inmates at Frontenac prison are sent on extended vacations fishing and golfing?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this summer I visited a number of institutions across Canada. I know my hon. colleague does not want to mislead the public. I can assure everyone that being in a minimum penal institution in this country is not a resort.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I urge member to please listen to the responses to the questions which are posed. It makes question period much easier for all of us.

• (1445)

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Mr. Speaker, quite simply what my hon. colleague has to realize is that most offenders come from the community and will go back to the community. What Correctional Service Canada does, with public safety being the number one issue, is to make sure that these people are ready to return to the community.

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**NATIONAL PARKS**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible national parks, and I believe it is the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

I am sure that the minister will be concerned about reports today that the panel on ecological integrity in Canada's national parks appears about to report that the national parks are in serious trouble, that the ecological integrity principle that the parks are supposed to be managed on is not being applied consistently, and that scientific talent is thin in the parks. There are a number of very serious descriptions of the malaise in the national parks.

What new measures is the minister planning to take in order to deal with this obviously serious situation?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question and, in particular, his interest in the results of the ecological integrity panel.

In fact, the government actually launched the ecological integrity panel review as a result of the findings of the Banff-Bow Valley report, which basically pointed out how parks are at risk ecologically when they spend too much time on commerce and not enough on scientific analysis.

When we receive the final results of the ecological integrity report, which we expect by the end of December, we want to work co-operatively with all the players to make sure that we put science first in Canadian parks.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the minister say that, but will she say unequivocally that when this panel report comes down and Canadians see clearly that it is not just Banff but many other parks that are at risk, that for the first time ecological integrity will become number one, with us no longer being enticed by the thrill of turning our national parks more and more into an opportunity for making money instead of enjoying what little is left of nature that has not been exploited by commercialism?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we struck the panel the reason I personally sought out the participation of Jacques Gérin was because he is the former deputy minister and is known and respected by people concerned with ecology around the world.

We believe that we need an ecological template for all of Canada's national parks. The Banff-Bow Valley study was a wake-up call, a wake-up call that we intend to apply by ensuring that ecological integrity is the number one clarion call for every park in Canada.

\* \* \*

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, this month Ms. Mawani, the chair of the Immigration and Refugee Board and a friend of the minister, completes her term.

This seven year appointment will outlast the mandate of this government and will have to oversee the implementation of a new immigration act. Will the minister commit today to involving the citizenship and immigration committee in the selection process of candidates instead of naming just another well-connected Liberal friend?

**Ms. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question because it gives me an opportunity to correct the record.

Ms. Mawani has served for 10 years as chair of the IRB. The House will note that this government was elected for the first time less than 10 years ago. It is true that her appointment is coming to an end and that there is a review under way for a successor.

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, here is the minister's opportunity to keep at least one election promise, an open and accountable government. Maybe the minister will let the committee do this job as parliamentarians working within a parliamentary democracy for a change.

#### Oral Questions

**Ms. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out to the hon. member that I had the opportunity to meet Ms. Mawani for the first time shortly after my appointment, when we discussed, appropriately, the procedures and policies of the board, which is an arm's length, quasi-judicial institution.

I want to say to the hon. member and to all Canadians that competence is the first criteria with this government's appointments.

\* \* \*

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Quite recently I attended a meeting at Nepean City Hall where a number of citizens expressed concern about the safety of transporting a MOx fuel sample through their communities. What is the federal government doing to address these concerns and to ensure that those who live along the transportation route will not be subject to unnecessary risk?

• (1450)

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our approach to MOx fuel testing is a foreign policy initiative to help, if we can, rid the world of nuclear weapons.

A proposed testing of a very small amount of plutonium oxide is fully governed by Canadian laws to protect health, safety and the environment. Let me emphasize that this is a test only.

With respect to transportation, plans have been published, local officials have been briefed, public open houses have been held and a 28 day public comment period has just concluded. Transport Canada will review all of that input to satisfy itself that the public interest is properly safeguarded.

\* \* \*

#### HEALTH

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the health minister has rejected the standing committee's recommendations to establish a national registry for organ transplants. The minister's office said it did not have time to fully explore the financial implications of such a proposal. That is not unusual for the minister when it comes to setting up registries. His gun registry is already 300% over budget.

Can the minister tell us whether the \$275 million his government has spent on a gun registry would have been better spent on an organ donor registry that would actually save lives?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member can always be relied upon to get his facts wrong, always. It is no surprise that he would ask the question he has just put.

The committee did not recommend a national organ donor registry; the committee recommended a national effort by all governments working together to increase the rate of organ donation in this country by taking specific concrete steps.

We have accepted those recommendations. We are working to achieve them. The provinces have agreed that it will happen. By November we will have a working plan to make sure it does.

Once again the Reform Party is completely out to lunch.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indian Affairs intimated last week that the Marshall decision went beyond the issue of fishing rights for native peoples and included all natural resources, namely forestry, the gathering of wild fruits and the extraction of natural resources.

My very simple question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Is the government's position the one put forward by the minister?

[English]

**Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is meeting with the aboriginal communities from Atlantic Canada right now. We are doing what we said we would do, which is to have a dialogue and make sure that we talk.

The supreme court ruling clearly said that there is a treaty right for fishing, for gathering and for hunting. We respect that right. Now we need to make sure that we get around the table and start working with the parties that are affected, including the provincial governments, to come to a long term solution.

\* \* \*

**HOMELESSNESS**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister responsible for homelessness if she thinks we will face another winter of deaths on the streets because of a lack of action by her government on housing.

After her cross-country tour Canadians have a right to know what she will recommend in her report and why her report is not public.

After all the fanfare last spring the government now seems intent on clawing back people's expectations.

What are her recommendations and what action will the government take to end homelessness?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have explained to the hon. member on several occasions, the responsibility that the Prime Minister gave to me was to co-ordinate the issue of homelessness because of all the reports that were coming in to our offices. It is not a task force report.

What the staff and I are doing is taking all of the recommendations that were received and I will be presenting to caucus and to our members the recommendations I received through reports coming in as well from my trip.

I have to say that the support I received from cabinet and caucus members—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Chicoutimi.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The cuts in health care have created totally unacceptable problems.

• (1455)

Could the minister tell us whether the fact that people are obliged to wait two, four, six and eight weeks for operations is in accordance with Canada Health Act?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that, a few months ago, in the budget for this year, we increased transfers to the provinces by \$11.5 billion, and the provinces promised that the additional funds would be used for health.

It is now up to provincial health ministers to use this money and to reorganize health care services to ensure that the services are available to the public.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ENDANGERED SPECIES**

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that endangered species legislation will be brought forward this session as was mentioned in the throne speech. Can the minister assure us that critical habitat will be protected within this legislation?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to assure the hon. member that the



endangered species legislation or species at risk legislation will be brought forward during this session. I trust it will be passed before June of next year. It is critical that this legislation include provisions for habitat because habitat is the critical factor for probably 75% of the endangered species recovery program. Without the habitat we do not have the species.

I can assure the member that we will be bearing her remarks and her proposal in mind when this legislation comes forward.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last week in the House the solicitor general declared: "Fighting organized crime is the number one law enforcement priority of the government". The Canadian Police Association recently referred to organized crime in Canada as an epidemic.

If fighting organized crime is the number one priority of the government, can the solicitor general please explain why it spends hundreds of millions to register shotguns owned by duck hunters rather than improving public safety by giving the RCMP the resources it needs to fight organized crime?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, and I am pleased my hon. colleague is well aware, this government has indicated that it will give the RCMP the tools to do the job. For example, we gave CPIC \$115 million to make sure it was brought up to date. We put \$18 million into a DNA databank. I am very pleased the opposition has come to realize that this government is fighting organized crime.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government has known since at least last March that it must appoint a new CEO of the CBC, the most important cultural institution in Canada and in Quebec.

But, since that time, the position has been filled only on an acting basis, apparently because the Prime Minister is under political pressure.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Does the minister agree that, for the good of the CBC, it is imperative that a transparent selection process be put in place to pick this important cultural steward and that competence be the sole criterion?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an appointment will soon be made and I hope that the hon. member will be satisfied with our competence-based appointment.

### Routine Proceedings

[English]

### NATURAL DISASTERS

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Co-operation. Last month at the time of the devastating earthquake in Taiwan, many countries, including the United States, Germany, Japan and Russia immediately sent search and rescue teams. Why did the Liberal government refuse to send Vancouver's respected urban search and rescue team both to help in the rescue and to get badly needed experience? And, why did the Government of Canada not strongly refuse China's outrageous interference with the delivery of humanitarian aid at this time of need in Taiwan?

**Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, aid to Taiwan was not affected at all by China. We acted immediately with respect to financial aid, which we distributed to a number of local organizations in Taiwan as well as to the Red Cross.

• (1500)

With respect to the issue of search and rescue, directly supporting development of the search and rescue team has not been part of CIDA's practice in the past. However, as the new minister I have actually reviewed this policy.

We are in the process of communicating with the Vancouver search and rescue team. I am hoping that if there is any need in the future we will be in a position to deploy them.

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### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government response to 11 petitions.

\* \* \*

### CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to amend another act in consequence.

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

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-69 in the previous session at the time of prorogation. I request that it be reinstated to

*Routine Proceedings*

the stage it had reached at prorogation, pursuant to order made Thursday, October 14, 1999.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-69 was at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 36th Parliament. Accordingly, pursuant to order made Thursday, October 14, 1999, the bill is deemed adopted at all stages and passed by the House.

(Bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

**RECOGNITION OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY ACT**

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-224, an act to establish by the beginning of the 21st century an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization to recognize the crimes against humanity as defined by the United Nations that have been perpetrated during the 20th century.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first I want to take this opportunity to join millions of Canadians to wish happy birthday to former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

• (1505)

Second, this bill was previously introduced in the last session of parliament as Bill C-479. I am reintroducing it in this session of parliament.

I also take this opportunity to thank the millions of Canadian who supported the bill throughout the last 10 months. I hope to have their support again in the coming months while we pursue the bill all the way through to third reading.

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

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**TOBACCO ACT**

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-225, an act to amend the Tobacco Act (substances contained in a tobacco product).

He said: Mr. Speaker, again this is the same bill that was introduced in the previous session of parliament.

I hope to have the support of members of parliament this time around so we can introduce the bill and label it as the tobacco act. It asks parliament to add each and every substance contained in a tobacco product so smokers can see and read what poisons they are inhaling as they smoke.

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

**PARLIAMENTARIANS' CODE OF CONDUCT ACT**

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-226, parliamentarians' code of conduct.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very please to introduce this bill which is essentially the same bill that was introduced in the last parliament as Bill C-488.

The purpose of this enactment is to establish a code of conduct for members of the Senate and the House of Commons and to provide for an officer of parliament to be known as the ethics counsellor to advise members, administer disclosures of interest and carry out investigations of complaints under the direction of a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons.

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

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**ORGAN DONATION ACT**

**Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-227, an act to establish a national organ donor registry and to co-ordinate and promote organ donation throughout Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing a bill to establish a national organ donor registry to co-ordinate and promote donation throughout Canada.

The bill would provide the legislative response needed to address the demand for a national co-ordinated organ donor system in Canada. The lack of available organs in the country results in unnecessary loss of lives, loss of quality of life and many needy recipients.

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

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**CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND SAFETY BOARD ACT**

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-228, an act to amend the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act and the Canada Labour Code as a consequence.

He said: Mr. Speaker, with the extreme growth that has taken place in interprovincial and international highway transport in the last few years, there is a serious gap in safety regulations with respect to very large vehicles. Any accident involving heavy interprovincial vehicles is now investigated only by the province in which the accident took place, unless the province makes a special request to the Transportation Safety Board to become involved.

The bill would require the Transportation Safety Board to have authority over any accidents occurring involving large trucks and buses in interprovincial and international service.

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

\* \* \*

• (1510)

#### CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

**Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-229, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (letter that cannot be transmitted by post).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce a bill to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (letter that cannot be transmitted by post).

During the last session of parliament this bill was known as Bill C-409. Bill C-409 is an important piece of legislation as it protects the Canadian consumer from telemarketing mail scams. It will ensure that the Canada Post Corporation does not deliver contests, lotteries or prize cards that require individuals to pay out before they are able to claim their prize. The bill will also regulate the use of logos that mimic federal government logos.

Before the House prorogued, Bill C-409 was about to receive its first hour of debate at second reading. This legislation has not been altered in any way since prorogation. I trust it will resume its place on the order paper.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill C-409 at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 36th Parliament. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 86(1), the order for the second reading of this bill shall be added to the bottom of the list of items in the order of precedence on the order paper and shall be designated as votable.

\* \* \*

#### NATIONAL EPIDERMOLYSIS BULLOSA AWARENESS WEEK ACT

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-230, an act respecting a national epidermolysis bullosa awareness week.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to introduce my private member's bill, entitled an act respecting a national epidermolysis bullosa awareness week.

The bill seeks to designate the last week in October as National Epidermolysis Bullosa week or, as it is known, EB week. By doing

#### Routine Proceedings

so it hopes to raise awareness of this very rare and debilitating genetic disease. In addition, we hope to encourage both public and private investment in research, development and treatment and to find a possible cure.

This disease is characterized by fragile skin and recurrent blisters that cause affected individuals and their families severe physical and emotional pain and suffering as well as financial hardship.

We hope that the bill will not only bring awareness to the disease but that we also learn about the disease, learn how to pronounce the disease or in short to call it EB disease.

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

\* \* \*

#### INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHY PREVENTION ACT

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-231, an act to prevent the use of the Internet to distribute pornographic material involving children.

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I introduce the bill I wish to send congratulations to my hon. colleague, the Attorney General of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chris Axworthy, who originally introduced this bill but then left.

The purpose of the bill is to protect our children. The Internet is an explosive new material in terms of media. It has a very negative side in terms of attracting innocent children into the hands of pedophiles. Pedophiles are using the Internet now as a tool in order to coax our young children into very obscene acts and in many cases into death.

The purpose of the bill is to protect our children and those unsuspecting in the country from the powerful use of the Internet by incorporating the users of the Internet and governments, provincially and federally, to institute laws and legislation to protect our children from the evil effects that the Internet can have on them from the pedophiles of the nation.

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

\* \* \*

• (1515)

#### HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH ACT

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-232, an act to provide for a Hepatitis Awareness Month.

*Routine Proceedings*

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing a bill that I introduced last year which basically calls for the month of May to be known as Hepatitis Awareness Month.

The disease of hepatitis inflicts over 600,000 Canadians in the country. Although we have months recognizing breast cancer and other ailments which inflict our citizenry, I believe, after working with those with hepatitis in Nova Scotia, Mr. Bruce DeVenne, and Mr. Joey Haché here in Ottawa, that it is time that the Government of Canada and especially us, as legislators, recognize the month of May as Hepatitis Awareness Month.

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

\* \* \*

**INCOME TAX ACT**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-233, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (medical expenses).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing a bill that I introduced earlier this year. As baby boomers and people throughout Canada are looking to herbal alternatives to cure what ails them, the bill will enable any licensed physician who prescribes a herbal alternative in lieu of a prescription drug to allow that patient to claim that herbal alternative as a medical tax deduction.

When I originally introduced the bill, I had thousands and thousands of signatures supporting this initiative. I am sure that colleagues on both sides of the House will support this valuable initiative as well.

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

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-234, an act to amend the Criminal Code (taking samples of bodily substances).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward this private member's bill again on the suggestion from Bev and Lloyd Bergeson of Cremona, Alberta who lost their daughter Denise to a dangerous driver.

The bill would amend the Criminal Code and would enable police to take, without delay, any samples required to determine if there is any presence of drugs or alcohol in the urine, breath or blood in the event that there is a death.

I strongly support the bill on behalf of the family. I assume that members across the House would be supportive in taking this kind of action.

(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-235, an act to amend the Divorce Act (marriage counselling required before divorce granted).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce this bill to require mandatory counselling prior to the sanction of divorce. The divorce rate in Canada exceeds 40% and there are over one million common-law families in Canada. Their breakdown rate is over 50% higher.

The bill is compatible with the recommendations of the Joint Commons-Senate Committee on Custody and Access which deals with issues such as shared parenting, mandatory mediation and that children are the real victims of divorce.

The bill basically hopes that we will have parenting plans in place for children of broken families and also that we address the important problem of post-divorce acrimony.

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

\* \* \*

• (1520)

**NATIONAL PARKS ACT**

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-236, an act to amend the National Parks Act, (Stoltmann National Park).

He said: Mr. Speaker, all over the world the forest cover is shrinking because of agricultural pressure, desertification, urbanization and clear cuts.

The forest cover in Canada, despite claims to the contrary by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and other groups, is also shrinking. It is also declining in value and historical significance because of changes in forest composition after the first cut.

The bill aims at preserving one of the few remaining old growth forests. It is located in the Elaho Valley and known also as Stoltmann Wilderness Area. Twice in September I visited this forest where rare Douglas fir trees, up to 1300 years of age, grow. This area is part of the mainland in the Pacific coast mountain range, an ecosystem which is not yet represented in the national parks system.

This unique heritage of ours should be protected for generations to come rather than fall victim to the chainsaw for the benefit of the short term.

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

## AN ACT FOR THE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-237, an act to amend an act for the recognition and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to amend the Constitution Act, 1867.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed unfortunate that the government has chosen to abandon the last session of parliament, forcing hundreds of private members' bills like mine to be reprinted and reintroduced at considerable expense to Canadian taxpayers.

The bill would strengthen property rights in federal law. Unfortunately, property rights were intentionally left out of the charter of rights and freedoms, leaving Canadians highly vulnerable to the arbitrary taking of property by government; legally owned property like legally acquired satellite dishes and firearms. My bill would fix this by making it more difficult for the government to override the property rights of its citizens by requiring a two-thirds majority vote of the House.

My bill also strengthen the property rights provisions of the Canadian Bill of Rights by providing protection of our right to have compensation fixed impartially, protection of our right to receive fair and timely compensation and guarantees every Canadian their right to apply to the courts when the government violates their property rights.

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

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## CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-238, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (mail contractors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill deals with the rural route mail couriers, the people who deliver our mail in the country. Our point is these are not independent contractors as such, they are wholly dependent on Canada post for all they do. Therefore, the relationship is more that of an employer and an employee and not an independent contractor.

However, the Canada Post Corporation Act specifically bars them from bargaining collectively. They are not allowed to organize into a union or take part in free collective bargaining. We think this is wrong. They are the only group of workers in the country who are specifically barred from organizing a union.

The bill would simply eradicate one clause in the Canada Post Corporation Act and allow them to bargain collectively.

## Routine Proceedings

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

\* \* \*

## WHISTLE BLOWERS PROTECTION ACT

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-239, an act respecting the protection of whistle blowers and to amend the Auditor General Act, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

● (1525)

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill seeks to protect workers who may blow the whistle on some issue they find in their workplace, for instance, the misuse of funds, the employer polluting some stream or whatever. We want workers to feel comfortable and free to blow the whistle on these illegal, immoral or unethical things without worrying about losing their job.

Within the bill, the whistle blower would go to the auditor general who would then investigate and find out if it was made in good faith. If it was, he would go to the minister in charge and cause an investigation to take place.

We believe this is long overdue. Too many workers have been frightened about turning in things that they know to be wrong for fear of discipline in the workplace. The bill would look after those workers.

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

\* \* \*

## LABOUR MARKET TRAINING ACT

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-240, an act to provide for the establishment of national standards for labour market training, apprenticeship and certification.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the devolution of labour market training to the provinces has been an absolute fiasco. We now have 10 different provinces doing different training for one career. We have a carpenter trained in New Brunswick whose certification is not recognized in British Columbia. It is absolutely crazy.

The bill would introduce national standards for the entrance requirements in all the certified trades, the curriculum and the certification process. We would then have continuity. We would have a national human resources strategy for labour market training even though it has been devolved to the provinces in such a hurried mishmash that it is no good to the industry and no good to Canadians the way it stands.

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

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

**YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-241, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act and to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof.

[English]

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill is being reintroduced and will bring about changes to the current young offenders act. I suggest it will have that application as well for the new Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The bill is aimed at lowering the age of accountability from the current age of 12 to the age of 10. It is not aimed at increasing the number of children before the courts but to give our current justice system a mechanism to help children who run afoul of the law, at the urging of others in many instances, and to allow the courts and our justice system to respond. The bill would lower the age of accountability from 12 to 10.

I would urge all hon. members to give the bill due consideration and support.

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

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-242, an act to amend the Criminal Code (Order of prohibition).

[Translation]

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me every time I rise to speak in the House. The bill I am introducing is very important for all Canadian children.

[English]

The bill would bring about changes to the Criminal Code, section 161 in particular, and is aimed at children who are the most vulnerable in the country right now. It would also empower judges to reduce contact between sex offenders and children. In particular, we know there is a difficulty with recidivism of pedophiles and abusers of children.

This private member's bill arose at the urging of Ms. Donna Goler of Kings—Hants, Nova Scotia. She herself was a survivor of horrendous sexual abuse and is a person who has been very much advocating this change.

On behalf of Miss Golder and all children, I would urge that all members of the House support this important change.

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

● (1530)

**PETITIONS**

## CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, members know that before the break I introduced a number of petitions from citizens concerned about cruelty to pets. During the summer that has been exacerbated by a horrific example of a dog being dragged by a pickup truck until it was raw and battered. This has caused an avalanche of interest in this very important matter. People have been asking for greatly increased fines, for lifetime prohibitions for people convicted of pet cruelty from owning pets, and things of that sort.

On behalf of these petitioners I once again call upon parliament to work toward swift and effective action to modernize Canada's laws dealing with crimes against animals and that the penalties for such actions be made strict enough to act as a deterrent against such behaviour.

## CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition. I have presented similar petitions from petitioners who point out that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is the most important provider of Canadian programs that reflect Canada. Also the CBC has the unique ability to connect Canadians with each other and to help Canadians discover each other.

The petitioners call upon parliament to ensure that Canadian old time fiddle music be deemed to be heritage music and be featured on a regular weekly one hour program on our national radio, CBC.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today for me to table this petition containing 2,087 signatures from Okanagan Valley residents who are deeply concerned at the harm caused by young offenders. These people call upon parliament to permit publication of names of young offenders in the newspapers and also to make young offenders pay restitution for their crimes.

## THE CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House of Commons.

The first one has some 500 signatures. The petitioners pray and petition parliament that parliament oppose any amendments to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or any other federal legislation which will provide for the exclusion of reference to the supremacy of God in our Constitution and laws.

## CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners ask parliament to consider very carefully the removal of section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

## THE CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition in which several of my constituents are calling upon parliament to uphold the present wording of the Constitution and to preserve the truth that Canada was and is founded upon the principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.

Several people have commented on this in my riding. They are very concerned that everyone take heed of that point. I certainly endorse the petition strongly.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there seems to a rush on petitions today.

Pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present a petition which comes from concerned citizens in my riding of Lethbridge. It contains 35 signatures.

The petitioners call upon parliament to support the immediate initiation and conclusion by 2000 of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

• (1535)

## CLOWNS AND SANTAS

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition signed by concerned citizens from my riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale. Clowns and santas in particular need to be controlled through mandatory background checks since there is currently an automatic assumption by the public that clowns and santas, who often entertain in homes, are safe strangers. Therefore, the petitioners call upon parliament to encourage mandatory background checks for clowns and santas throughout Canada.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by 682 people, many of them students, from central Alberta. These constituents are requesting that the Canadian government confront China directly on the human rights abuses taking place in Tibet. They are extremely concerned about the issue of China-Tibet relations and ask the Parliament of Canada to pressure China to address this issue.

## TREASURY BOARD

**Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition that was presented to me by my

*Routine Proceedings*

constituents in Kitchener Centre. The petitioners request that parliament halt the plans of Treasury Board to appropriate the surpluses in the public service, the military and the RCMP pension plans. They also ask that the Treasury Board end all actions that undermine the confidence and morale of the public service, armed forces and RCMP personnel.

This petition has been certified and I am pleased to present it today.

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am extremely pleased that hundreds more petitioners are talking about cruelty to children that is in the form of pornography. The petitioners pray that parliament take all necessary measures to ensure that possession of child pornography remains a very serious criminal offence. I am proud that these petitioners may not be the last of hundreds and hundreds of signatures that are coming in from my constituents on this issue.

## GASOLINE ADDITIVES

**Ms. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition that has been certified correct as to form and content. Petitioners from the Grand Bend, Port Franks and Thedford areas have signed the petition.

The petition states that the use of the additive MMT in Canadian gasoline presents an environmental problem that affects every man, woman and child in Canada. The petitioners call upon parliament to set by the end of this coming year national clean fuel standards for gasoline with zero MMT and low sulphur content.

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first petition has been signed by 97 Canadians from the Hay River area. They request parliament to grant the concerned aboriginal fishermen, the Deh Cho, a licence to export fish and fish products and to establish their own national and international markets.

## ADOPTION OF CHILDREN

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by 39 people in my riding. It calls on the government to pass legislation that would provide for a deduction of up to \$7,000 in expenses related to the adoption of children.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During the time allotted for the presentation of private members' bills, a second item listed by the member for Wild Rose was inadvertently missed.

I ask for unanimous consent to revert to introduction of private members' bills to allow him to present his private member's bill.

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to revert to the introduction of private members' bills?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-243, an act to amend the Criminal Code (dangerous offender).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward this private member's bill which will amend the Criminal Code regarding dangerous offenders where an inmate may be declared a dangerous offender at any time during his incarceration.

In the past 10 years a report has been sent out by the solicitor general's office indicating that there has been a total of 2,292 new victims of violent crime at the hands of violent offenders who were released from prison either mandatorily or on probation. This enactment would prevent the release of such people as Mr. Auger who managed to murder Melanie Carpenter a few years ago. It would prevent what is going on this very day in Edmonton where an effort is being made to warn society of another dangerous sex perpetrator who is being released in that city. Releasing these kinds of individuals does not protect Canadian society. This bill would prevent further problems in the future.

• (1540)

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

\* \* \*

**BLOOD SAMPLES ACT**

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-244, an act to provide for the taking of samples of blood for the benefit of persons administering and enforcing the law and good Samaritans and to amend the Criminal Code.

He said: Mr. Speaker, last year there was a very unfortunate incident in my riding. A young man apprehended a thief who was shoplifting from a store and unfortunately quite a bit of the perpetrator's blood spilled on him. There is no legal way to force that thief to give a blood sample for disease testing. For several months afterward the young man and his family went through the emotional anguish of extensive drug prevention therapy just in case there was HIV present. It was also a very expensive and a very trying time for the entire family and especially for the young man.

This bill will eliminate the terrible emotional anguish for good Samaritans who find themselves in similar circumstances in the

future. The rights of police officers, health professionals and good Samaritans who try to protect life and stop crime must take precedence over the rights of the perpetrators of any wrongdoing.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Gar Knutson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE**

## HEPATITIS C

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have received a request from the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for an emergency debate, pursuant to Standing Order 52.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52 of the House of Commons, I am asking this house to hold an emergency debate on government compensation for victims of hepatitis C who were infected by blood transfusion in Canada before 1986 and after 1990.

The government has always refused to allow parliamentarians to discuss this issue. Worse still, the Minister of Health has refused to meet representatives of hepatitis C victims, in spite of repeated requests to that effect.

Yet, the Krever commission clearly established that it is in the interest of all Canadians and Quebecers that the blood supply and distribution systems be as transparent as possible.

Members will agree that this need for transparency requires the federal parliament, which is responsible for regulating blood and its constituents, to deal with all relevant issues. In that regard, there can be no doubt that responsibility for compensating hepatitis C victims who were infected before 1986 and after 1990 rests squarely with the government.

The Krever commission also asked the government to set up a no fault compensation plan. I attach a copy of that recommendation to the letter I sent to you.

For all these reasons, I believe it is imperative that we parliamentarians be allowed to debate this critical public health issue.



*The Address*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Notwithstanding the case made by the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, I feel that, at this point in time, his request does not meet the criteria governing emergency debates.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Without questioning your decision, I would just like you to tell me something. I believe that if we were to consult Beauchesne's, we would find cases quite similar to this one, in which the government rejected a decision made by a royal commission of inquiry.

• (1545)

I believe there are precedents where parliamentarians were allowed to discuss such issues. I would appreciate an explanation. Why, given the case I made, does the chair feel that my request must be turned down?

I would like to know the basis of your ruling, with which I will fully comply, but which seems ill-founded at this point.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry the member does not agree with the Chair's ruling, but it is not customary to explain why a request for an emergency debate is being denied.

I wish to remind the member that today we are having the debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, which will continue later this week. It is a general debate. We will also have, as the member well knows, seven allotted days between now and December, and his party will be free to raise this issue during one of those opposition days. I am sure the member can convince his colleagues to have such a debate on one of those days.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

#### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak to the throne speech.

As we stand before a new century there is a growing sense of optimism, confidence and pride in the country. Canada is one of the

greatest success stories of the 20th century. We began as a small colony with little industry and no real place in global affairs.

Canada is the place to be in the 21st century. We look with pride on the achievements as an independent and prosperous nation with a dynamic economy, a strong and democratic society, and a sense of community, a nation with unrivalled quality of life.

Canada is starting the next century or the new millennium with the honour of being the first ranked country of the United States for the sixth year in a row. The Liberal government intends to ensure that Canada remains the best country in the world in which to live.

When we took office six years ago we put forward a comprehensive and balanced plan. We have stuck to that plan and it has worked. Canada is on the right track. The nation's finances have been restored. Key programs have been modernized. We are enjoying the longest economic expansion since the 1960s, and the unemployment rate has dropped from 11.4% to 7.5%. It is almost 4% lower than when we took office a short time ago.

With our balanced approach we will continue to strengthen Canada by recommitting ourselves to economic policies that will allow us to keep the national debt on a permanent downward track, reduce taxes for Canadians and make strategic investments in the top priorities of Canadians. A strong and dynamic economy is a cornerstone of our quality of life, providing the means to build a more equitable society, a healthier population and stronger communities.

Tax relief and improved tax fairness are essential to improving the standard of living and quality of life of Canadians. Reduced taxes mean that Canadians have more money available to spend, which helps create a great number of new jobs and economic growth which benefit us all.

In the last two budgets taxes have been cut by \$16.5 billion over three years, cuts that will benefit every Canadian and take 600,000 low income Canadians off the tax rolls.

• (1550)

We will further reduce taxes to increase the after tax incomes of Canadians. Canadians will be pleased to know that the government is committed to laying out a multi-year plan for tax reductions in the next budget. However, the government remains committed to never letting the nation's finances get out of control again. We have brought down back to back balanced budgets for the first time since 1951-52 and we have put the debt to GDP ratio on a permanent downward track. Our administration will keep the debt to GDP ratio down as it goes.

According to statistics every billion dollars in exports supports as many as 11,000 Canadian new jobs. Our growth in exports goes a long way to explain why 1.7 million new jobs have been created in Canada since October 1993. As an outward looking country with

*The Address*

a trade oriented economy we intend to step up trade promotion in key sectors and to launch an investment team Canada strategy to promote investment in Canada. We will continue to create opportunities for Canadians to access foreign markets and to promote Canada as the ideal place in which to invest.

We will increase our support for life-long learning to continue building the most highly skilled workforce in the world that is part of the Canadian advantage in a knowledge based economy. The government has committed itself to put in place the knowledge information, cultural and physical infrastructure needed for the 21st century.

Another major focus of our government has been the seven million children in Canada. The strength of our society will depend on the investments we make today as a nation for the families and children of tomorrow. The federal government will continue to work with provinces, territories and other partners to provide the necessary support.

The centrepiece of our progress to date is the national child benefit, the most innovative new national social program in a generation. Thanks to the NCB an additional \$1.7 billion annually is going to low income families with children. The federal contribution will increase to \$2 billion annually by July 2000, bringing the total federal assistance for families with children to almost \$7 billion a year. The federal government will make a third significant investment in a national child benefit by the year 2002.

We are also proud of the new national children's agenda. We are developing with the provinces and territories a comprehensive strategy to improve the well-being of Canada's children with a special focus on the problems of low income families. As part of this agenda we will work with the provinces and territories to reach an agreement by December 2000 on further joint initiatives to support early childhood development. The federal government will also put more dollars into the hands of families with children through further tax relief. Families will also benefit from initiatives that include lengthening and making more flexible the employment insurance benefit for maternity and parental leave.

In terms of Canada's youth our goal is to give the youth generation of Canada, no matter where they live, a shot at personal success in the knowledge economy, a job with the future that pays well and an opportunity at becoming the best and the brightest there are. We are committed to helping young Canadians get the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in the 21st century.

For example, we have announced the Canadian opportunities strategy, the Canada millennium scholarship fund, the Canada educational savings grant, the youth employment strategy, tax relief on interest payments on student loans, and have helped to connect every public school and library in Canada to the Internet. We plan to draw on the expertise as well as the talents of young

Canadians to create new Internet access sites in communities across Canada.

● (1555)

Furthermore, we intend to provide thousands of Canadians with the opportunity to participate in Canadian exchange and international internship programs and to volunteer in community and national environmental projects.

Our sense of community and commitment to working together has helped Canadians seize opportunities and rise to challenges. Strong communities depend upon the participation of all members. The government will strengthen its partnerships with communities and volunteer organizations that serve and sustain them.

We will work with all partners to help communities meet the needs of their members. In particular we will work to eliminate barriers to the mobility of citizens within Canada so Canadians are not denied government services or access to work or education because of the province of their origin. We will enter into the new national accord with the voluntary sector that will lay the key foundation for an active partnership with voluntary organizations.

We will work to ensure persons with disabilities are fully included and we will help new Canadians adapt to life in Canada. We will also work to ensure that our communities remain safe.

Feeling safe and secure in our homes and communities is essential to our quality of life and contributes to Canada's comparative advantage. Our government has taken important strides to support this Canadian priority. While the national crime rate fell to a 20 year low in 1998, every crime committed is one too many. That is why the Liberal government will remain vigilant, taking further community based crime prevention measures, to ensure that our communities are safe and healthy places in which to live.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member who just spoke about the commitment that he has, or that his government has, toward young people, or is the commitment primarily to the banks of Canada? It is particularly with reference to his last comments when he talked about student loans and the privilege that young people have subsidized interest rates on their student loans.

It is true that while they are attending university or a post-secondary institution of some kind the government pays the interest on these loans to the banks so the student is free from paying them.

When the student graduates he or she is then obligated to repay the loan at an interest rate exceeding the prime rate in the bank system. Is the government's primary concern about young people, or is the government's primary concern to absolve the banks from incurring any risk for these, our most educationally elite people? These people will lead industry in their areas. What is the real purpose behind this whole operation?

*The Address*

**Mr. Jerry Pickard:** Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased with the question of my colleague across the way. It gives me an opportunity to reinforce some of the points that I just mentioned about youth.

When we stop and think about it, the Canadian opportunities strategy is about helping young people get experience, helping young people work in the environment and helping develop a record of work experience by putting programs in place that allow them to be out in the communities working.

Concerning the educational grants given to students, we certainly are doing the very best we can to make sure there are grants for young people to develop youth environment strategies. Any type of opportunity where young people get an opportunity to work in programs is very good.

When we stop and look at the reduction of interest rates on student loans, the member is not suggesting that was not a tremendously great idea. I think he is suggesting go further, go further, go further. That has been the policy of the Reform Party. The sad part is that its members say to cut taxes but spend, spend, spend. I have heard them today alone suggest 10 policies which in fact—

• (1600)

**Mr. Werner Schmidt:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member has deliberately misconstrued what I said a moment ago.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid that deliberate misconstruction may happen from time to time. Sometimes it is not deliberate and sometimes there is no misconstruction. However, it is not a point of order, it is a question of debate.

**Mr. Jerry Pickard:** Mr. Speaker, I clearly remember the hon. member's comments. He asked "What are you doing for youth?" That is exactly what I am commenting on now.

The fact is that members of the Reform Party have said time after time, interestingly, "Spend money here; spend money there". I could cite specifics, but the fact is that they have asked for tax reductions on one side and they say "spend, spend, spend" in every program. The problem is, we cannot do both. That is why Canadians have put them where they put them, across the way.

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague for Chatham—Kent Essex made the point that we can look forward to the future with optimism and pride. Can he explain to the farmers of the Annapolis Valley, especially those who in the last three years have been faced with drought and those who have just in the last three or four years come into business, who cannot take benefit from the AIDA program, how they can have pride and

optimism for the future? Not supporting these farmers is deplorable and it cannot and should not be tolerated.

**Mr. Jerry Pickard:** Mr. Speaker, I accept the question from my hon. colleague in the spirit in which it was given.

There is no question that we must ensure that industry in Canada, be it farming or any other type of industry, gets the proper support mechanisms required. As a Liberal government we have tried to negotiate with industries across the board on the best types of programs that could be put in place for those industries and we have been working hard as well with the provinces. It is not just the federal government that gets involved in this; it is the industries themselves and the producers in those industries.

There has been a lot of difficulty with the situation in Atlantic Canada, as well as the situation in western Canada. We all feel that we must do as much as we can. That is why the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food stood today in the House to say that the government had put \$900 million into trying to bring supports in place for the agricultural industry. One has to admit that we are trying our best to handle things in a way that is reasonable and sustainable for the future.

I am not saying that our system is perfect. I would never say that our system is perfect. However, we have to realize that we are trying to make strides and to do the best we can. Many of these situations were unanticipated. Given the opportunity we will develop programs and safety nets that will make certain agriculture is safe in this country.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting to rise in reply to this throne speech, as this allows us to tell those who are listening to us that, to us, this speech seems drab and empty.

Government members on the other side of the House may try hard to make us see the positive side of this throne speech, but every newspaper article we read the day after the throne speech agreed with what all four opposition parties were saying. This speech has no clear policy and no vision.

Rather, this speech is an election platform; most commitments will take effect between 2001 and 2004, and probably during the next election campaign, which leads us to believe that the Prime Minister will still be there for the next campaign.

• (1605)

Let us consider one example: parental leave. Overall, this seems to us to be good news, except that the parental leave proposed as a new program is not going to start until 2001. Everyone wonders why it is not now. The money is already there, it is not a problem, so why not start the program up?

*The Address*

As hon. members are aware, the funding for this program comes from the employment insurance fund. Only 40% of people qualify for this fund, and women and young workers are the ones most affected. If access to employment insurance benefits is not changed, one may well wonder who will be lucky enough to benefit from parental leave.

First and foremost, October 12th's throne speech is a long shopping list. That list includes the government's commitment to a slight, long term and conditional tax reduction, to reducing the debt still further, to investing in capital projects, and to creating a broad range of programs ranging from improving the national child tax credit, to home care, to education.

We are familiar with the Liberals' promises. The numerous promises in the throne speech appear to be just window-dressing. We have never been given the real cost of these commitments. There is talk of compassion for families and the poor, but the only emphasis is on the homeless. Yet the government does not give us its vision of what programs and measures it will implement to help the homeless. It is fine to support the homeless in the throne speech, but since 1993, this government is no longer involved in social housing programs and has not invested anything in them. So much, then, for compassion.

Recent years have shown us that government commitments were anything but solid. Many still wonder about the ability and real desire of the government to honour its commitments. Other examples come to mind: the GST, pay equity and international aid, for which the government promised to provide .7% of GDP.

My colleague, responsible for daycare, tells me that the 150,000 places in daycare that were promised in recent budgets have yet to be provided.

That said, the fact that the government says it wants to do everything at once is a very clear indication of the fiscal leeway it has this year and of the surpluses that will be distributed in the next budget. As they say, they got the bucks. However, since they want high visibility as they move into the next millennium, they are offering a sprinkling of new programs instead of going after the real problems.

What is even more distressing is that these surpluses have been accumulated on the backs of the unemployed. There is the \$25 billion from the employment insurance fund, because \$5 billion a year accumulates in this fund. There is the \$30 billion in the public service pension fund—if this were private enterprise, such scheming would be considered outright theft—and there are the cuts to transfers to the provinces.

• (1610)

The cuts in provincial transfer payments have hit the public very hard. For the benefit of those listening, I am talking about a \$33

billion cut. Then the government wonders why there are health and education problems. It makes cuts and crows about the money it is saving, but the provinces are stuck with the unenviable task of running programs on nothing. They do not have the money and are having trouble maintaining services.

It is disgraceful to slough one's problems off onto the backs of others. In Quebec alone, an additional 200,000 people had to turn to welfare in 1998. They no longer qualified for employment insurance.

Health systems throughout Canada are in terrible shape and the provinces must work hard to avoid the appearance of a two-tier health system, one tier for the rich and one for the poor.

It is not just Quebec that is facing problems in its health care system, but all the provinces. The government would have people think that the problems are limited to Quebec, because of its sovereignist government, but that is not true. We must broaden our horizons and look at the other Canadian provinces, which are forced to turn to the United States to provide health care for their inhabitants.

In this regard, let us remember what Jean Charest said "Forget Lucien Bouchard. He is not the problem. The problem is the cuts made by the federal Liberal government to the Canada social transfer". This from Mr. Charest in May 1997.

Now that the budget is balanced, it is obvious that the ruthless cuts and overtaxing to which the federal government keeps resorting in spite of the public's pleas are giving it more money than it needs, but the government is still avoiding its responsibilities.

The government prefers to spend that money on new programs, instead of fulfilling its responsibilities, which include alleviating the plight of the unemployed by putting money back into the employment insurance fund which the government pilfered, helping the sick by giving back to the provinces the money it took from them, and giving a break to the middle class by lightening its tax burden—let us not forget that it is the middle class that pays for our social programs. Instead of helping all these people, the government prefers to spend and to interfere in provincial jurisdictions. In Quebec, we already have homecare and pharmacare programs. Therefore, why not give the money to Quebec, to improve what is already in place?

I will conclude by saying that instead of using common sense, the Liberals are beginning again to spend money on all sorts of new programs whose only sure impact is to empty taxpayers' pockets. Why? This is all in the name of visibility and propaganda, coast to coast.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about, what she coined, our two-tier health care

*The Address*

system. As far as I am aware, the federal government deals with health through the Canada Health Act, which has the five principles of our health system: universality, accessibility, portability, publicly funded and comprehensive.

As far as I am aware, and I am very sure of my facts, Canada has a health system which serves all Canadians and it has nothing to do with how much money one has.

Would the member please clarify for this House exactly what she meant by a two-tier health care system in Canada? While I understand that anybody can travel to any other country to purchase health care, in Canada that is not the case. Could the member please clarify her statement?

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Pauline Picard:** Mr. Speaker, I did not say that we had a two tier system, I said that we were heading that way.

When transfer payments to provinces are cut by \$33 billion, including \$10 billion for Quebec alone, it is obvious that health care is in jeopardy.

Quebec does all it can to maintain the five major principles of medicare. We believe in universality and accessibility and when we are a sovereign country these five principles will be maintained.

We believe in those principles, but what can a province do when its funds are being cut off and hospital costs are skyrocketing? I remind the House that our population is ageing and needs more health care. Furthermore, new technologies, like laser treatments and other medical equipment, are increasingly expensive.

When Quebec needs more money to buy new equipment and to give health care to an ageing population but its transfer payments are cut by \$10 billion, how do members think it will be able to maintain the five great principles of medicare?

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the new session opened with a Speech from the Throne, in which the government was supposed to highlight its new policy thrusts during the second half of its mandate.

As justice critic for the Bloc Québécois, I carefully examined the throne speech and I was sorry to see that it only confirmed that the government wants a Reform style justice system.

Since it paves the way for the next election, the throne speech, inevitable, was greatly influenced by the right and the intolerance movement with which both the Liberals and the Reformers seem to be so cozy. Under these circumstances, political expediency is the rule: public perception prevails over public interests.

The Reform Party, which has been actively promoting law and order ever since its election to this House, as we have seen many times, took advantage of the shift to the right and, in the last two federal elections, campaigned on a platform that called for a harsher youth justice system. Reformers decided to fight tooth and nail against what they saw as the excessive clemency of Liberal policies toward young offenders.

Given the situation, it is unlikely that the government will reconsider its plan to reform the Young Offenders Act. This is unfortunate, because the government will be missing an opportunity to show how effective the current legislation is and to distance itself from the demagogic policies of the Reform Party.

Bill C-68, the Young Offenders Act, as it was called when it was introduced, died on the Order Paper, since we started a new session. However, statistics on young offenders tell us it was a pointless piece of legislation anyway.

Statistics clearly show how effective a young offenders act can be if it is properly enforced. Many experts in Quebec have condemned the justice minister's eagerness to sacrifice several decades of expertise. Nevertheless she is standing her ground, claiming that a so-called flexibility will allow provinces, especially Quebec, to continue enforcing the model of their choice.

Such flexibility, a kind of opting out, which is as virtual as a stroll on the bow of *Titanic*, is not tangible and the minister knows it full well.

The system the minister has been proposing so far is based on the nature and seriousness of the offence, thereby ignoring the young offenders' needs.

• (1620)

As a matter of fact, the bill—and this is important—did not even mention the special needs of teenagers. However, it is precisely because the Young Offenders Act allows for individual treatment based on each teenager's own characteristics that Quebec has the lowest juvenile crime rate in Canada.

During her summer vacation in Alberta, the Minister of Justice must have had the time to review the request from the Bloc Québécois and the Quebec government to withdraw Bill C-68 or, at the very least, to amend it in order to allow the province to continue enforcing the Young Offenders Act its own way, the Quebec way.

By granting this reasonable request, the minister would make it possible to keep intact an approach that has already proven itself. On the other hand, an outright rejection might lead to improper handling of young offenders.

According to the Speech from the Throne, "the Government will reintroduce legislation to reform the youth justice system".

*The Address*

We hoped that the term “reintroduce” would not mean reintroduction of all the provisions of Bill C-68 on young offenders, a bill no one in Quebec wanted. However, based on the rumours going around the Hill, I fear that the minister will be introducing Bill C-68 in its entirety within days. Should this be the case, I trust that members will remind the Minister of Justice that it is not in the interests of either Quebecers or Canadians to back such a reform, since it is not warranted by the present situation.

The statistics the minister is quoting in support of the Young Offenders Act demonstrate that she does not need to do anything to change that act, only to require that those provinces that do not enforce it do so, in order to achieve the same results as we have had in Quebec.

Those involved in this area in Quebec have worked tirelessly to prevent juvenile delinquency from leading to “chronic delinquency”; it would be unfortunate to impose upon them an instrument unsuited to youth rehabilitation.

In the course of my summer reading, I came across a quote from Honoré de Balzac “Once the convicts were marked, once they were given their numbers, they took on an unalterable character”. It is my belief that, with the young offenders legislation, or the amendments the Minister of Justice wants to make to the Young Offenders Act, these young people will be marked forever, branded, considering all the publicity that surrounds this issue.

When the time is right, and when the minister reintroduces—as rumours on the Hill would have it—the bill to amend the Young Offenders Act, we shall see what transpires, but the fear is that the minister will go back on the prior commitments.

Too much effort has been invested in Quebec to date for us to be forced in future to regretfully apply the Balzac citation to ourselves. For our collective security, the Minister of Justice must abandon her plans once and for all.

Unfortunately, the experience with young offenders legislation reform is not the only one of its kind. By way of example, the debate on the reinstatement of life sentences for persons driving while impaired is another illustration of the need for sensationalism of the federal justice system.

By way of reminder, the government initially agreed with the Bloc Québécois and amended Bill-82 to retain the 14 year maximum sentence for persons driving while impaired and causing death. During the negotiations preceding the adjournment for the summer recess, the Bloc Québécois contended that a life sentence was unreasonable, despite the seriousness of such an offence.

It was a mistake to think that the government would stop there. Everything indicates, once again, according to the rumours on the Hill, that the government will introduce another bill to obtain a life sentence for impaired driving causing death.

We will see that, on the subject of justice, the Liberals, the Reformers and, to some extent, the Progressive Conservatives, are all on the far right.

• (1625)

At page 23, the throne speech provides:

The Government will focus attention on new and emerging threats to Canadians and their neighbours around the world. It will work to combat criminal activity that is becoming increasingly global in scope, including money laundering, terrorism, and the smuggling of people, drugs and guns.

It continues:

The Government will strengthen the capacity of the RCMP and other agencies to address threats to public security in Canada—

I do not know if the government realizes that there is a world of difference between what it says in its speech and what it does in reality. Since the Liberals took office in 1993, funding for the war against drug trafficking and organized crime has been reduced by \$11 million. The throne speech talks about strengthening our capacity in that area when, in fact, there has been a decrease in funding.

As strange as it may seem, even though the federal government is aware of a 12% annual increase in drug related crimes, as reported in one of its own documents, it has reduced the number of police officers investigating these kinds of crime.

Maybe reality has caught up with the Liberals but they do not know exactly what to do. They should listen more carefully to certain proposals made by the Bloc Québécois, including the bill introduced by the member for Charlesbourg to withdraw \$1,000 notes from circulation to help in the fight against money laundering. We presented all kinds of information.

I will close by saying that, at some point, the Bloc Québécois will reach out to the federal government to conduct a serious study on the whole issue of organized crime.

I see the Minister of International Trade. I think that, as a member from Quebec, it would be interesting if he could co-operate with the Bloc Québécois to set sound policies—

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon:** A policy that would show respect for Quebec.

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur:** Exactly, and this concludes my remarks.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in the House to offer comments on the Speech from the Throne, which was so ably delivered to us by Her Excellency the Governor General last week. I also want to thank her for her excellent and moving installation speech. I am sure that all of my colleagues in

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the House join me in offering best wishes to Her Excellency as she begins her term of office.

Her appointment is of special significance to the residents of my riding of Papineau—Saint-Denis. Indeed, many of my constituents are immigrants to Canada. Many arrived quite recently. I am proud that Her Excellency inspires us all and demonstrates that in this country, Canada, all citizens, old and new, have access to all offices, even to the highest office in the land.

[*Translation*]

The residents of my riding of Papineau«Saint-Denis are also delighted that Her Excellency the Governor General will be joined at Rideau Hall by her husband, John Ralston Saul, one of the great thinkers of our time, a philosopher whose reputation and credibility extend well beyond our borders. I know he is particularly well thought of in France.

• (1630)

In the throne speech, the government stressed the need for Canadians to open up to the world, and to be aware of our role and our responsibilities in this respect and also of the great opportunities and challenges that this entails.

Not the least of these opportunities are those that come about through international trade and capital movement. As all members are well aware, Canada has founded its economy on external trade. Our present and future prosperity and growth are largely dependent on international trade.

In Canada, one job in three is directly linked to international trade, and 40% of the GDP depends on it. This is the highest percentage of all industrialized countries in the G-8.

A mere five years ago, we exported 25% of our GDP. We have therefore gone from 25% to 40% in just under five years. The vast majority of the 1,700,000 new jobs created since 1993 are the result of the increase in exports.

[*English*]

As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, Canada's economy is more open than any of the other leading industrialized countries. We have a population that comes from countries all over the world. In many instances Canadian businesses, because they have such a culturally diverse and rich workforce, have the great advantage of not only being aware of the customs and practices of other nations but of being able to do business in many different languages. Our investment in diversity over the years is turning into a major asset for us.

To ensure that we continue to enhance that very real advantage, we intend to increase our trade promotion efforts in those sectors that have high export potential. Some of these exports did not exist

even a few years ago, but thanks to some very dedicated, innovative and very clever people, whole new economic sectors are now growing up where nothing existed before.

Our biotechnology industry for example is pursuing some of the most leading edge innovations in the world. Our environmental industries are growing at an incredible rate. Our information technology sector is large and getting larger with investments in high tech all over the world. The same is true in many other sectors of our economy such as agriculture, agri-food and natural resources.

In other words, we are an important player in the global economy. As a government, we want to help our industries to develop the linkages with the world that will help bring growth and jobs here to Canada. We also want to take more direct action to encourage companies to locate in this country. Therefore we will be presenting legislative changes that will make it easier for global corporations to bring their headquarters to Canada.

As the throne speech stated, we also intend to create investment in Canada, a co-ordinated effort by all governments and the private sector to promote the unique opportunities that are available here.

In addition, we will continue to support innovation and the development of new technologies. Doing so is good for Canada and it is also good for our trading partners.

[*Translation*]

Of course, one thing that is very favourable for Canada and its trading partners is the introduction of a rules-based international trade system. In fact, we are one of the most active advocates and promoters of this system. It is important that we be active in this area because our country, Canada, is neither the biggest nor the most powerful country in the world. We must continue to co-operate with like-minded countries in order to ensure that the rules are accepted by all and not dictated by the largest players. This requires skill and perseverance in all circumstances. Soon, the WTO's ninth round of multilateral trade negotiations will begin in Seattle.

• (1635)

We hope to be able to build on the successes of the previous rounds. During these negotiations, Canada will continue to promote the strengthening of the international trade system. We will continue to ask for the rules to become more transparent, predictable and enforceable. We will continue to urge the World Trade Organization to keep pace with technological and social change.

We want a system that would guarantee a level playing field, give Canadian businesses in all sectors easier access to the world markets and respect the needs, values and culture of Canadians as well as the environment.

*The Address*

Issues are brought to the attention of the World Trade Organization on a daily basis. The recent interim decision on the Auto Pact is just one example. Unfortunately, I am clearly not at liberty to comment on this issue today because the decision must remain confidential until it is made public. I just want to say that we are actively consulting business people and other governments on this issue, and more specifically on its impact on NAFTA, and we will have another announcement to make.

Some people are also concerned about the United States putting health and education on the table. I want to clearly reiterate in this House that our health system is not being threatened and will never be questioned during these negotiations. Our universal health care system is not negotiable.

Of course, if we can find ways to export our health and education services, we will undoubtedly go ahead and do it. But, as the Prime Minister said many times, our universal health care system is central to our way of living. We will not let it be weakened in any way. We will promote and protect the economic, social and cultural interests of Canadians. In Seattle, I will raise as well the issue of the World Trade Organization as a body, including its structure and its procedures. I hope to be able to put forward specific proposals to improve it. Many think the WTO is no longer of any use since we have NAFTA with the United States, which accounts for 85% of our exports. I want to remind the members that the World Trade Organization is still very useful and needed, including to fight protectionist pressure from the United States.

[English]

Another long term goal mentioned in the Speech from the Throne is our intention to work with our partners in the hemisphere toward the establishment of the free trade area of the Americas by 2005. I will be very pleased to host the 34 democratic countries of the hemisphere in Toronto in November, to continue to work toward the establishment of that zone of free trade of the Americas.

In Canada we have the great advantage to be the neighbour of the very strong and dynamic American market. This however should not stop us from looking all around the world to develop other markets. That is what we are doing with the free trade area of the Americas.

As the world trading system opens up as never before, as we enter the age of globalization, an age of new knowledge economies, we have to be aware that this new phenomenon is shaping the choices we make as a society. In Canada we believe very much that it is important to humanize globalization. It is important to remind ourselves that there is a human purpose to the economy and we want everyone to be able to buy in.

[Translation]

The humanization of globalization is one of our government's objectives. I would like to share with the House some of my

thinking, for example, on the issue of culture, on the role of artists in society and thus on the importance of cultural diversity for a country like Canada. I find that the role of artists in society is not only to express emotions felt by society but also to shape these emotions.

● (1640)

At a time when we have to undergo changes as radical as those brought about by the globalization of the economy, I find it extremely important for every country to continue to make room for artists and allow artists with this responsibility to shape the emotions felt by people. It is extremely important to allow them to work to enlighten us, as a society, on what it is we are going through.

Let us look at the deep emotions, the excitement as well as the insecurity felt by people dealing with globalization. We realize that the insecurity and the excitement can both be captured by artists, who can give form to them and help us understand how societies live with this phenomenon. Hence the importance of cultural diversity.

In our own society, the society I come from in our country, Quebec society, I look at the role of the artists and the automatistes in the global rejection movement in 1948. I look at Gratien Gélinas' theatre in 1948 as well, his *Ti'Coq*. These artists were the harbingers in 1948 of the quiet revolution that took place in Quebec in the 1960s. Twelve years ahead of time, these artists showed the extent to which Quebec was stifled and had to be liberated from many of its past experiences.

So, the artists are the ones to see what is coming first. I therefore think it extremely important to give this matter careful attention.

I would also like to tell the House how much the phenomenon of globalization changes the nature of exclusion as well. For 200 years, we have fought exploitation. With industrial capitalism came exploitation. In other words, people were exploited in this industrial capitalism, however, even exploited, the individual exists in a social context. Individuals can organize, form unions. They can negotiate and obtain better laws.

The exploitation we have fought for the past 200 years is now over, because, unlike industrial capitalism, financial capitalism means the exclusion of more individuals. Exclusion is much more radical than exploitation, because exclusion means a total loss of bargaining power. In the case of exclusion, there is nothing to negotiate and no one to negotiate with, hence the importance of humanizing globalization, of remembering that the economy has human finality and that it exists to serve the whole population to grow.



*The Address*

These are the concerns we will bring to the major rounds of negotiations in November. These extremely important phenomena are fundamental.

[*English*]

It is extremely important to me that people understand that there is a balance with which the Liberal government has been approaching things, a balance that has to be concerned with this because markets cannot solve every problem. Of course our commitment should be to make markets work better, but at the same time governments need to pursue policies that reflect the democratic values and inclusiveness that ultimately make economic activity more sustainable.

As the Speech from the Throne made clear, we intend to do more in the coming months to ensure that Canada continues to be an inclusive society, a society that values the contributions of all its people, a society in which everyone is given a fair chance to participate by helping people to learn new skills and to take new opportunities, a society in which children are given the best start in life and are given the support they need to grow up healthy and safe, and a society that supports and practises the concept of sustainable development for our environment so that future generations will also be able to build their own dreams.

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

I think Canada is in a better position than most countries to succeed in the new context of globalization, in large part because of our history and in part because of our geography.

As the throne speech indicates, Canada was born at a time when countries were formed in the crucible of war or revolution. In the 19th century, the norm in the traditional nation states, as they emerged throughout the world at the time, was for majority to assimilate minority and majority to eliminate differences. The traditional nation-state was based on a single language, a single culture, a single religion.

Here in Canada, on the contrary, we have chosen another path. We have chosen to build a country that would not become a traditional nation-state. We chose a Canadian approach to reconciling differences. We chose to place tolerance, acceptance and respect of others at the core of our country's identity. We therefore chose to develop a political citizenship rather than an ethnic, linguistic or religious one. That political citizenship allowed diversity to become, not a threat to our identity or our existence—as some try to make it out to be—but instead a strength, an asset.

Canada is a bilingual and multicultural society, one used to the reconciliation of differences and mutual respect. Today we are faced with globalization, which imposes the phenomenon of

diversity throughout the world. We in Canada have 150 years experience with diversity, which means that, faced with the phenomenon of diversity imposed on us now by globalization, our country will know better than any other in the world how to deal with it and how to use it to the benefit of all of its citizens.

Moreover, I believe that people everywhere in the world are interested in our experience. The most radical and the most fundamental question that will be raised in the new century with the phenomenon of globalization will be: is it possible to live together, equal and different? That is the most radical and the most fundamental question. With this throne speech, we want Canada to represent the optimistic response to that fundamental question. Yes, we can live together, in equality and difference. That is the human and optimistic answer.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I would like the minister to address. I thank him for being here today to address the Speech from the Throne but there are some things that are missing in the speech.

Where is the plan and where is the high level attack that we need as a country to put against the unfair foreign subsidies that are killing our agriculture community? We did not see it in the speech and we did not hear it today.

One thing the minister touched on, which is more to the point, is U.S. protectionism. We have an industry in Canada that exports \$2.2 billion worth of beef and cattle a year to the United States and an unjust, baseless tariff that has been placed on cattle going across the border. When the tariff was adjusted the other day from 5.57% to 5.63%, the government considered it a victory. That victory is taking millions of dollars out of the cattle industry in this country every day.

• (1650)

I would like the minister to comment on what he is going to do. The northwest beef producers have been in touch with the government. They have suggested changes that could be made to the health regulations for cattle coming from the United States that would help to solve this problem and that would send a message to the ITC that Canada is willing to work at solving this.

Would the minister comment on exactly what his plans are and when this issue will be solved?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the opposition member for giving me the opportunity to add more comments to my speech. There are a number of things I did not raise in my 20-minute speech because obviously one cannot touch on every issue.

Concerning the European export subsidies, my colleague, the minister of agriculture, has been very clear. At the end of August,

*The Address*

we presented the government's position showing our plan and our objective of working very hard at the next round of negotiations to eliminate the European export subsidies. We find these subsidies absolutely detrimental and are working very hard toward eliminating them. The government has stated this position time and again and we will continue to work on it.

As for cattle, we recognized last week that in part of the decisions we were favoured. For instance, on the countervail subsidy side, we won that part of it.

The member will be pleased, as will the House, that on the countervail subsidies we are very pleased that the U.S. upheld its initial decision and found that Canadian exports of live cattle do not benefit from countervail subsidies, so it is a good decision.

On the question of whether Canadian cattle were being dumped, that is to say being sold at prices less than the cost of production, the department of commerce reconfirmed an earlier ruling that Canadian cattle were indeed being dumped into the U.S. market. As a result, most Canadian producers will now have to pay a 5.6% duty on their cattle exports to the U.S.

However this duty will not be made permanent until the U.S. international trade commission decides whether Canadian cattle exports threaten or injure the domestic U.S. industry. We expect the decision on November 8.

We remain hopeful that they will determine that Canadian exports are not injuring the U.S. domestic industry. We will continue to work closely with the Canadian cattle industry.

**Mr. Gordon Earle:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder, with the minister's consent and the consent of the House, if we could extend the minister's time for questions by about 10 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to extend the time for questions and comments by about 10 minutes?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we would like the minister to give us more time.

I listened with interest to the address in reply to the throne speech given by the member for Papineau—Saint-Denis. On this side of the House we are getting tired of hearing that it feels good to know that Canada is the best country of the world, the government is letting it go to its head.

To say that Canada is not a traditional nation state as the minister said again today and as he wrote in a book well worth reading, is a contradiction of the throne speech itself.

As I asked in my own speech last week, how many times is the word national used in the throne speech? The throne speech mentions that Canada has a national government and yet the minister claims it is not a nation state. This is a contradiction the minister might want to explain. Could it be that he disagrees with people who say Canada has a national government?

I noticed that regarding negotiations at the WTO, under the heading "international trade", the throne speech does not say anything about the provinces taking part in such negotiations. I would like to know whether the minister intends to involve the provinces in these negotiations and make sure they are asked to approve any future treaty dealing with issues coming under provincial jurisdiction in the Constitution.

• (1655)

Does he intend to involve parliament in the negotiations? Is he willing to have the outcome of such discussions and negotiations reviewed by parliament, not only by the foreign affairs committee, but also by the House of Commons?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry is criticizing the Canadian government for constantly saying that Canada is the best country in the world. I would like to tell him that his problem is not with the Canadian government, but with the United Nations. Indeed, it is the United Nations Development Program that, each year for the past six years, has noted that respect for others and the quality of life in Canada were absolutely remarkable. Therefore, the member may have more of a problem with the United Nations than with the government.

He went back to what I said about Canada not being a traditional country, a traditional nation state, and wondered if there was a contradiction between the throne speech and my way of thinking.

The member for Beauharnois—Salaberry must look at 150 years of history and at the country we have built to see that it is indeed a country, contrary to any nation state.

What is a traditional nation state? It is a political power that has formed an alliance with a nation, generally the majority nation. That is what happened in France, in Great Britain, in Germany and in Italy. The state formed an alliance with the majority nation and systematically assimilated minorities and tried to eliminate any differences.

Here, in Canada, the country we have built is not a traditional nation state because, contrary to what happened in other countries, we have built our country on the reconciliation of different peoples and different nations. That is Canada's strength today.

*The Address*

Since we are a country that did not try to eliminate diversity but, rather, made it central to its identity, I say that in this era of globalization, which imposes diversity everywhere, we have a great advantage in that we have been experiencing such diversity for 150 years, including here in this parliament.

Madam Speaker, you are tolerant toward me, so I will continue to provide replies to the questions that were put to me.

I can assure the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry that last week we had an excellent work session with the provincial ministers of trade. We had very wide consultations and very productive discussions. We are determined to work closely together to ensure that the next round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization will prove as satisfactory to Canadian businesses as did the first eight rounds. I can assure you that we will work very hard to achieve that goal.

As for getting the house involved, we will do all that is necessary with our excellent Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I will of course be very pleased to work with the committee and with the house.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Penson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you can see the amount of interest in the House today as we have the Minister for International Trade here. There was a motion asking for a 10-minute extension of questions which was denied. I think those people have ducked out. I wonder if we might try that again. There are different people in the House at the moment and there is an interest. I would ask that the minister be allowed to be questioned for another 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I will ask on your behalf for the unanimous consent of the House to extend the period by 10 minutes. Is there unanimous consent for this request?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, if members have been paying attention to the news out west they will know that Alberta was troubled over the summer by the antics of an environmental radical bent on destroying the oil industry. For clarification, I am referring to Wiebo Ludwig and not the new environment minister, although I understand the hon. member for Victoria has the sport utility owners quaking in their heated leather seats.

• (1700)

I am anxious to respond to the Speech from the Throne because once again Canadians were forced to endure the platitudes of a political party committed to an unworkable big government agenda. As the newly appointed opposition critic for the environment, I would like to address this important aspect of the Liberal agenda.

I would like to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Lethbridge, for his hard work on this portfolio. My colleague has consistently defended the interests of average Canadians against environmental policies that ignore the essential component, people. He is a voice for common sense and we can be sure he will bring the same talent and dedication to his new responsibilities in agriculture.

I would like to address two broad policy concerns which were addressed in the throne speech, first, the concern regarding global warming and second, the concern regarding endangered species legislation.

With respect to global warming, I have three questions for which I seek clear answers. Is the planet really warming? What is the cause of this warming? What is the potential consequence for average Canadians of this warming?

Scientists and environmentalists are not in agreement as to the validity of global warming. While climate models produced by computers predict that there should have been some warming over the past 18 years, satellite data collected monitoring global temperature since 1979 actually indicate a slight global cooling. Therefore these data refute the claim that there is a long term warming trend.

Furthermore, even if we are to assume that the planet is warming, and I must stress that the evidence is inconclusive, we must next consider what the root causes of this warming are. Have 100 years of industrial activity upset the balance of the ecosystem, or are we witnessing a natural warming trend beyond our control? According to ground level temperature records, most of the increase in the world's temperature over the past 100 years occurred before 1940, before the main input of human induced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Finally we must also consider the actual impact of global warming and the fact that this phenomenon exists. Environmentalists have long concluded that while there may not be a clear warming trend or a clear cooling trend, we are seeing instability in our global ecosystem that is causing erratic weather patterns. If the planet cools, do deserts turn into tropics? If the planet warms, do growing seasons last longer? What is the likely outcome of global warming?

I would like to stress again that before we pursue a national energy program style of politics, we must have conclusive evidence

*The Address*

that global warming trends are real. We must be certain that these trends are the result of industrial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Finally, we must be certain that the effects of this warming trend will be negative for average people.

When we have conclusive evidence that shows all these three conditions, the Reform Party will be the first to demand action. However we will not embark on a reckless and irresponsible campaign that will cripple our economy and send hardworking people to the unemployment lines.

On the issue of endangered species, in the *Globe and Mail* this morning I read that the government has failed to achieve adequate habitat preservation in the national parks. Government stewardship has not achieved the objective it intended to achieve. This conclusion comes from an independent task force led by Jacques Gérin.

This record of failure is interesting when we compare it to the very recent results achieved by a private sector company. TransAlta has just completed a massive strip mine reclamation project in Alberta. Because the company owns the land and because it has an incentive to ensure that the property remains valuable, care was taken to restore the property to its original condition. Today where the strip mine once provided vital energy to our nation, a wildlife habitat now exists that is recognized the world over as an example of successful private stewardship.

Those at TransAlta did not do this because the Minister of the Environment threatened to put them in prison if they did not. This company had the reclamation plans in place one full year before any provincial or federal statutes were passed regulating the impact of resource industries. They did it because it made good business sense.

I would like to quote a former chairman of TransAlta who worked on this project. Marshall Williams said "it made business sense that land on a major tourism route into Jasper be reclaimed and perhaps sold at a future date for a reasonable return".

A wildlife habitat was created because it made good business sense. This is a powerful demonstration of the success of private property rights in ensuring the preservation of the environment in harmony with sustainable development.

• (1705)

When property rights are respected, there is little conflict between sustainable development and both habitat and resource management. Where conflicts do exist, a policy of co-operation and partnership will ensure that wild areas are preserved for all Canadians with the costs borne equally by all Canadians.

The government's idea of an environmental partnership is a prison cell and a pair of handcuffs. In past attempts at creating endangered species legislation, the Liberals were prepared to levy

fines up to \$250,000 or five years in jail as punishment against otherwise honest, law-abiding people. The government's idea of environmental education is fearmongering and misinformation.

Instead of challenging the critics of global warming or ozone depletion, the Liberal government has disgracefully politicized environmental science. When the leader of the Reform Party challenged the junk science of the Kyoto agreement, the government responded with personal attacks.

The government's idea of a common sense environmental policy is more taxes: tax cars and tax gas and force low income Canadians to give up the pleasure and freedom of mobility; after that, tax industries and emissions and send hardworking people to the unemployment lines. That is the Liberal plan for the environment.

Canadians deserve better than that from their government and they deserve better from the Minister of the Environment. If problems such as climate change and dangerous levels of persistent toxins can be resolved, it will very likely necessitate a ban on all speeches given by the government benches. Their hot air is what is really causing global warming.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech. I have to concur in regard to global warming.

I remember 35 or 38 years ago we were ranching up in Dead Man country out of Savannah, British Columbia. I was also trapping at that time. It was some cold, 55 below. One of the big news articles of the day was to prepare for a new ice age. That was the government's selling point, prepare for the new ice age. It was cold enough we could almost believe it. It became a big topic with all the other ranchers and that maybe everybody should get ready. The government had us frightened about what was going to happen. I was fairly young then. We wondered whether we had enough winter feed in for the cattle and everything else. Lo and behold, the next winter it was a fair bit milder and it was really nice.

After falling into that trap back then and getting worried and upset about different things, I came to the conclusion that this is a big money scheme. These issues become big dollars, big business for many different groups. Today it is the ozone and global warming; next year it is just as likely to be prepare for the new ice age.

I would like the hon. member's comments.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Okanagan—Shuswap for his very pertinent intervention. From my hon. colleague's intervention, there is no doubt that whatever certain groups tend to say or wherever the politically correct argument of the day lies is where the present government and obviously past governments tend to go.

There is no doubt that when working hard in minus 55 degree weather, as many farmers do, they are asking where this global warming is, if it actually exists. They are hoping for it.

I wanted to make clear in my speech that the government has to step back and take a critical look at what sort of policies it is implementing today. They are going to affect future generations. It must look at what sort of effects they are going to have on industry as well. People who are working hard to make ends meet are being put on the welfare lines simply because of poor management decisions by the government.

I was trying to encourage this government to think about it. As a younger Canadian in the House looking forward, in trying to create sustainable development in this country, let us take a step back. Let us make sure that when we make decisions that are going to be implemented today that they are going to be compatible with the future of the developing economies and of the environment. Let us not make rash decisions that are going to end up backfiring on future generations.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the Reform Party member.

However, I do not think that the expression global warming really tells the public what is at stake here. It would be more appropriate to talk about climate destabilization. This is what causes the flooding, ice storms and tornadoes that destroy crops and towns, and that kill people.

The government has not met the challenge—in fact there is not even any mention of that challenge in the throne speech—of dealing with the climate destabilization we are currently witnessing. How can we ensure that people will be able to face the various problems that this destabilization will generate?

I would like to hear the comments of the Reform Party member on this aspect of the issue.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Quebecois member has expressed another point of view in the debate on the environment.

I think that the government should really sit up and take note. For example, it should be telling us about the effects on the environment of climate destabilization. I think the government should perhaps examine this point of view more closely, instead of telling us about vague things like global warming.

I thank my colleague for his question. Perhaps we can consider this further at a future date.

*The Address*

[*English*]

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, this is my opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to digress for a moment as I have had an interesting experience this last week or so.

My mother has been visiting with me here in Ottawa. She reminds me of the wonders of serving in this place. She has come from Alberta to stay with us for a month. Her reaction to the things we do here has been enlightening to me. Her almost childlike enthusiasm, seeing the things that she has seen, reminds me that this is a very special place and a very special opportunity. It reminds me as well of what a privilege it is to serve my constituents and express their ideas and constructive thoughts.

I have had a recent responsibility change in parliament. I served as health critic for the official opposition for quite some time and have moved to another responsibility, intergovernmental affairs, which hardly anyone knows what it means.

I would like to take this opportunity as well to express my thanks to those individuals who made my job as health critic so enjoyable. I had an opportunity to associate with and have interchange with associations across the country, medical, nursing, dental and chiropractic associations and many individuals who had strong positions.

For instance, the public who fought for freedom in health foods and in alternative therapies were very powerful individuals. They made their positions so strongly known that the government changed some of its direction in those areas. I met some victims who contracted hepatitis C from tainted blood. Their powerful position, especially that of a young man, made the government look shaky in some instances.

I would like to focus on little Joey Haché, a young man with an illness that should have made him weak, should have sapped his strength, but instead has made him strong. I want all Canadians to know how proud I am to have known him and to have had a little opportunity to interchange with him.

• (1715)

Now, to this new job in intergovernmental affairs, I looked through the throne speech to see all the things that related to unity in our country, which is the main responsibility that particular job entails. I want to be very careful that the wording I use is exact because Reformers believe that Canada can be united by reforming the federation on the principle of equality and through a rebalancing of power. Knowing what that means and what, from my party's perspective, we mean in terms of unity, I looked carefully at the throne speech to see what it said on the issue of unity.

*The Address**[Translation]*

This was the government's response:

The best way to achieve the promise of Canada for every citizen is to work together to build the highest quality of life for all Canadians. [—]The Government of Canada therefore reaffirms the commitment it has made to Quebeckers and all other Canadians that the principle of clarity, as set out by the Supreme Court of Canada, will be respected.

This is the Government of Canada's response on this very important matter: the clarity of the question, the majority acceptable, and the negotiation process. These are not the best way to ensure Canada's unity.

As the Reform Party sees it, the way to ensure our country's unity is to make changes in the federation. For instance, we would like to strengthen or improve the exercise of federal legislative and administrative authority in the following areas: defence, foreign affairs, monetary policy, regulation of financial institutions, criminal law, definition of national standards, equalization payments, international trade and interprovincial trade.

These are important matters that come under federal jurisdiction. We must try to strengthen or improve the exercise of provincial legislative and administrative authority in the following areas: natural resources, manpower training, social services, education, language and culture, municipal affairs, sports, housing, and tourism.

*[English]*

These are to diminish federal intrusion into exclusive areas of provincial responsibility. What does that mean to my home constituency in Alberta? That means that many of the things that Albertans are disappointed with and unhappy with in the way our federation works would be answered. What would that mean for those disaffected in Quebec? In my view, and in the view of my party, it would mean exactly the same thing, a rebalancing of the powers of confederation based on the principle of equality. That is quite different than just simply saying there is one way, the status quo. That has been the complaint I have heard over and over again from my Quebec colleagues, many of whom feel there is no other option but to split from this country.

My colleagues across the way seem to think that the option is to stay rigid. We believe that there is a *troisième voie*, a third way, another mechanism to reach the same goal: a stronger federation, not for those in these halls but for our children.

Some other things that we think would go a long way toward improving our country would be changes in the way things work in this House. We believe that we could involve members of parliament better to make backbench MPs feel that they have a powerful place here by freeing up votes on issues that should not be a vote of confidence. If a vote causes a bill of the government to fail, there could simply be a vote of confidence in the government so that the government itself would not fail. That is done in other jurisdic-

tions. It is mind numbing to my constituents at home why we have the convention that the failure of a bill would cause the government to fail. There are very few bills that should cause the government to fail.

• (1720)

One other important thing would be to have the ability to fire a liar, and that is to recall a politician who has made a promise and then lied. And I do not mean just to have a politician resign and then run again.

We also believe that we could involve the public better in terms of being able to initiate by citizens' initiative information or laws that are not coming from the government and binding national referenda on major important issues, especially moral issues. Three hundred and one individuals in the country should not decide an issue of such importance.

These things, in terms of direct democracy, we are convinced would make a huge difference to the way this place works and also to the way politicians are looked at and thought of.

Time is always short. The government had very little to say about unity, maybe hoping that the unity problem would gradually diminish. I have looked at the unity debate over the last 30 years and have found that the interest in sovereignty goes up and down, and it is usually from combative things that are done in this place that sovereignty gets its strength.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House on this issue and I look forward as well to an interchange with Canadians who will guide me and help me to be at least a proper debater in this area.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, first I would like to congratulate my Reform colleague for his appointment as his party's intergovernmental affairs critic. I am sure he will be as keen and dedicated in his new role as he was as health critic. I am looking forward to debates with him and the intergovernmental affairs minister, as undoubtedly they will be worthwhile debates.

I would like to point out to him that indeed very little was said in the throne speech about unity. The word unity can only be found once in the throne speech; the government might think it will keep the country together if decisions—I mean the important decisions—are made in Ottawa and carried out by the provinces.

Obviously this is the way we feel the federal government thinks federalism should be. Actually, not so much the federal government because the words federal and federalism hardly occur in the throne speech.

I would like to know whether the Reform intergovernmental affairs critic has noticed, as we have, that the government wants to

*The Address*

centralize, and whether his party is not discouraged by this government's attitude when it comes to changing the way we look at the future and federalism in Canada.

**Mr. Grant Hill:** I thank the hon. member for his question.

For us Reformers, the problem is partly the centralization of the federal government's business. It is not the only problem. There are other issues and a balance is necessary in this debate. We would like the question to be clear, we would like to know what constitutes a clear majority and we would like to know about negotiations, should a referendum end with a victory for the yes side. We would also like to know about changes to the federation, positive changes for Quebecers and other Canadians. This is very important.

• (1725)

This is a major concern. It is not a concern that affects just one province or one group of Canadians, but one that concerns everyone.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I also congratulate my colleague on his new portfolio. I think he will do an excellent job.

When it comes to rebalancing powers, many people often confuse the position of the official opposition. Could he add some clarity, that we are not just talking about independent states far away from the government but a better working relationship?

Often when we talk about rebalancing people look to see if we are trying to advocate independent provinces that have no regard for the federal government. We are looking at the opposite. We want the federal government to show more respect for the provinces and to let them take on more decision making and work in a much better fashion than is happening now.

Would my hon. colleague comment on that particular relationship?

**Mr. Grant Hill:** Madam Speaker, that is a very helpful question. There are things that the original constitution laid out as exclusive responsibilities of both the federal government and the provincial governments. There is no question that there has been an intrusion into those areas of provincial responsibility. My colleagues from the Bloc will point that out every time it happens.

We look for a strengthening of the federal role in certain areas and a strengthening and improvement of the provincial role in other areas. Most importantly, we look for a co-operative approach, if there is to be money spent on specific things that the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over, and not simply an edict from on high. That helps in other parts of the country and, in my view, it certainly helps in Quebec.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I too wish to offer my congratulations to the governor general.

I had a pretty interesting summer. For a Liberal MP it was actually a pretty easy summer because people in my constituency appreciate the efforts of the government, the way it has managed the finances of the nation and the way in which there is a great deal of employment, particularly in my area of the country. There were times when I referred to it as a love-in.

When we ended the congratulatory exchanges between member and constituent, one of the issues that kept coming up was the behaviour and performance of parliamentarians. Canadians do not really understand what it is we do here. I spent a lot of time trying to explain what it is that we do. What they see is question period. That is what they believe parliament is all about.

I had some difficulties in explaining to them that parliament is something more than us making silly fools out of ourselves in question period. I tried to explain that question period was something having nothing to do with questions or answers. It is probably best described as lousy political theatre.

My constituents are bored and indifferent to the process of parliament. It is my view that our behaviour brings parliament into disrepute. I do not see any point in assigning the blame for that, but it is a shame. Not only does parliament end up in disrepute, it means that parliament is not seen as a forum for debating the larger issues of the day. It is an anachronistic irrelevancy and more, and Canadians just switch channels rather than engage in political debate.

One of the reasons we do not involve ourselves in the big issues of the day is that we end up in partisan slinging matches which do us no credit at the end of the day. I am as guilty as any other person in the House. I anticipate that notwithstanding this speech and to the contrary I will not greatly improve my behaviour.

• (1730)

However, in an effort to be non-partisan I want to compliment the Leader of the Opposition on his remarks and to pick up on some of the comments he made in his speech even though I do not have 100 minutes.

The thrust of his remarks was that the serious issues of the day were being dealt with by the courts rather than by parliament because parliament seemed to be quite prepared to duck the issues and to let the courts decide. He also stated that transferring the charter of rights from a system of checks and balances, as is found in the United States where there is a clear legislative function, a clear administrative function and a clear judicial function, has not

*The Address*

translated well in a parliamentary democracy such as ours where the legislative function and the administrative function are clearly fused, which in some respects leaves the judicial function out on its own.

He went on to cite a number of decisions that leave a great deal to be desired in their interpretation and application. He made reference to the Singh decision which has imposed upon our nation a refugee determination system that is both costly and cumbersome. The government is stuck with a costly and problematic refugee system which shows its flaws when migrants show up on our shores with absolutely no intention of making any claim for status.

He cited the Shaw decision on child pornography as being offensive to many Canadians. He made reference to the M and H decision on same sex and the application that the same sex decision solves one problem and creates two more. He made reference as well to the Marshall treaty about which we have heard a great deal.

These decisions in isolation are quite sound. Legal reasoning within the confines of a courtroom have a certain purity and logic but leave a great deal to be desired in application. I am not here to blame judicial activism. I believe the courts would only be too happy to return to what we used to call in law school black letter law.

For instance, on the issue of spousal definition, Mr. Justice Cory said:

The issue of how the term spouse should be defined is a fundamental social policy issue and Parliament should decide it and Parliament should listen to and balance the competing social issues, the philosophical issues, the legal, moral, theological issues that go into this definitional process. The courts shouldn't be deciding it. Parliament should be deciding it and the courts should defer to Parliament.

The reality is that the foregoing issues have not been addressed by parliament in any meaningful way notwithstanding that they are well within the competence of parliament. There is no party or government that runs on a pro-pornography platform. As a practising politician, there are a lot of these issues I would be just as happy to duck. These issues are largely the result of parliamentary neglect rather than judicial activism.

There is little enthusiasm on the part of the court to assume a jurisdictional competence that is properly the preserve of parliament. Rather than simply complaining about judicial activism and the inactivity of parliament on some of the larger issues I would like to make a specific suggestion.

Picking up on the comments about family by the Leader of the Opposition I would suggest that the legal environment as set out in M and H is as follows. First, discrimination between unmarried heterosexual couples living in a conjugal relationship is contrary to the guarantee section in section 15 of the charter. Second, discrimi-

nation between married and unmarried common law spouses is contrary to section 15 of the charter. Third, discrimination between married and unmarried couples is not contrary to section 15 if is intended to promote family, children and marriage and has a socioeconomic basis that parliament can articulate.

We have heard several suggestions. One of the easiest suggestions is to do nothing. Others suggest we should use section 33 to do an override. Might I suggest a more nuanced approach to this major social issue. For want of a better term may I suggest that it be called the three silos concept. The first silo is that of marriage. The second silo is that of a registered domestic partnership. The third silo is that of an unregistered domestic partnership.

Marriage is a unique institution of great significance to many Canadians particularly of religious and cultural communities. I recommend that the government make a strong and positive statement rather than simply use double negatives so that any legislative ambiguities may be cleared up.

The second silo is that of registered domestic partnerships. An operating principle of this second silo would be that it deconjugalize the relationship so the state stays out of the bedrooms of the nation. It is, after all, a former prime minister's 80th birthday today. He was the one who coined the great phrase that the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation. Surely that should be an operative principle in anything we discuss.

• (1735)

The second point in the domestic registered partnership is that legislative entitlement and responsibility are based on dependency rather than conjugality. I do not quite see why that is so problematic for people. I do not really know why the state should again be pursuing what happens in the bedrooms of the nation. It should be a test of dependency rather than of conjugality.

The third point of the operating principle of domestic partnerships is that they be treated the same as marriage unless parliament can demonstrate some compelling socioeconomic reason otherwise.

Fourth, it should recognize that the family has many forms in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Fifth, the government should open a register for domestic partnerships for same sex conjugal, same sex non-conjugal, opposite sex conjugal and opposite sex non-conjugal, with the only proviso that there be one relationship at a time and that any rights or benefits not be greater than anything that would be acquired by marriage.

Sixth, we should expunge the concept of spouse from the lexicon, save and except for those people who are married, and replace that language with that of partner.



*The Address*

Seventh, we would eliminate other forms of discrimination between conjugal and non-conjugal couples.

Eighth is the principle that registered domestic partnership is severed on death. It may be dissolved in the same manner as any partnership.

The third silo is that of what is called a non-registered domestic partnership, which would essentially be the same as a second silo although in this particular instance the individual couples claiming this benefit would have to prove on the balance of probabilities that in fact they did live in a relationship with some dependency.

I believe that the foregoing represents to the courts a measured and fair response to the court decision. It reflects a variety of views and a divergence of opinions and accommodates the essential elements of the court decisions. If in fact parliament were to adopt this kind of reasoning, the government would be able to draft an omnibus bill. It is my belief that there would be virtually no one in the House who could vote against the positioning because of the wide range of views that are accommodated. I would argue that parliament properly should reflect that wide range of views.

To return to the theme as I have outlined it, I would prefer to see parliament dealing with the big issues of the day rather than exercises in partisan foolishness. I would prefer when I visit a public school or a high school that I could point to colleagues who have made thoughtful contributions to the big issues on both sides of the House.

I appreciate the opportunity to present those views and I look forward to questions.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks of my hon. colleague opposite. He made a very thoughtful and thought provoking speech. I know that as an active and able member of the justice committee he holds very sincerely to the ideals he has put forward.

I listened with particular interest when he spoke of parliamentary neglect as opposed to judicial activism. I guess it goes without saying that as a member on the government side he is in a very unique position in his ability now to move the government to being more active in some of the social areas that he touched upon.

I want to focus my question to him specifically on an issue that I know he holds dear to his heart. It involves the job that is currently before our police forces, the RCMP and municipal forces across the country. He would know that today the Canadian Police Association held a press conference where it spoke on some of the issues it feels are priority issues for it and consequently is hoping to awaken the government with respect to some similar issues.

In particular, I would like to get the member's comments arising out of the throne speech where some of the policing issues I feel were not given a great deal of attention or a great deal of emphasis. We know that there were announcements, or perhaps more appropriately I would call them reannouncements, of the general commitment that the government has to policing services. However there was never really any detail put forward as to what it intends to do.

The hon. member would know that the RCMP in particular is facing a near crisis with respect to the increase in drug trafficking, illegal immigration, organized crime and crime stemming from the increase in Mafia, and I am talking about Mafia from outside Canada obviously.

• (1740)

I wonder if the member would address specifically what he feels the government can do and if his support is there with respect to increased resources that would assist the police in their efforts to fortify themselves for the storm of increasing criminal activity that is resulting in increased crime and the public pressures with which they are contending. At the same time resources have been cut and they are not in a position to respond adequately. I would suggest that the same situation exists in our armed forces.

Specifically with respect to the police I am wondering what it is he suggests we should be doing and what the government intends to do about this increasing problem in Canada.

**Mr. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough for his comments. I thought my speech was about three silos, registered domestic partnerships and so on. However I was asked a question about policing which I do not think I mentioned.

Having said that, in some respects the response of the government to many of these issues should be to refer a number of them to the justice committee in particular or to other committees as the case may be. I do not know that policing issues take any greater priority than any other issue.

For instance, I just completed an interview with the CBC on homelessness where some people are advocating a 1% solution, that 1% of all budgetary revenues on the part of the federal government be devoted to homelessness. On the face of it that has a superficial attractiveness to it. In my area of Toronto and the GTA we have a particular problem with homelessness which is frankly nation-wide.

How that ranks in priority to any resources that the police may need I do not know. I know when the police come before the justice committee they do make excellent presentations and what they say is frequently heard. For instance, on the issue of child pornography in the Shaw decision I really do not know why that should stick to

*The Address*

the government or to any particular party because no one is in favour of that kind of activity.

That is the kind of thing that should be coming before the justice committee, with the competing values to be analysed, the competing requests for priority, whether they are police priorities or other kinds of criminal justice priorities, and then a reasoned decision is reached.

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to join in the throne speech debate. Let me open with a quote from the throne speech:

We stand before a new century confident in the promise of Canada for our children and grandchildren.

As the opening of the second session of parliament coincides with the turn of the millennium, it is invigorating to see that our government has the knowledge and foresight to engage itself in the long term betterment of its population. Canada's quality of life is second to none. Yet without proper management it is difficult to sustain.

I applaud the government's untiring work not only to support our nation but to encourage Canadians to grow beyond the envelope. Our children and our children's children will ultimately benefit from the new direction our government is now taking.

I understand full well the benefits and consequences of our social system. In a recent era of cutbacks and slowdowns many Canadians have seen the fabric of our social safety net fray, but that era is finally behind us.

Outlined in the throne speech Canadian needs are being addressed to ensure that their lives are significantly improved. With better services being provided for early childhood education, health, the environment, families and our infrastructure, Canadians can face the challenges of the 21st century with confidence.

The task at hand is in no way simple. It will require perseverance and grit for every Canadian to see benefit from this new direction. The throne speech states that "the strength of Canada is reflected in its rich diversity". This simple phrase speaks volumes about Canada's ethnic makeup and the bounty all Canadians reap from it. It is amazing to think in a world torn asunder by wars of ethnic and religious hatred that Canada stands apart like a beacon of tolerance. This pluralistic cohabitation has led to an immense wealth of culture, plucked from the very communities that make up Canada's geography.

• (1745)

A people are made up of their past and their future. The synergy of these two creates Canada's national identity. It is this identity that culture seeks to preserve, to bottle it in words or movement, to

embellish it in works of art or in monuments that grace our parks. With new technologies come new possibilities for enhancing our cultural heritage.

The 21st century will allow us to bring the world into the classrooms and homes of every Canadian. No longer are Canadians hindered by the vast distances that separate them. The digital age is upon us. By plugging in, people will be able to explore the world around them without leaving the comfort of their chair. Our government must embrace this medium by linking our cultural resources and ensuring access to all Canadians. The benefits gained by such quality exposure are immeasurable.

If we speak of cultural heritage then it must also hold true for the military. Canada just recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Boer War, yet I wonder how many Canadians really know much about it. Canadians owe it to our veterans to ensure that the memory of their deeds remain in our collective psyche.

Every regiment's imprint runs deep in their respective communities. Each has its own story to tell and they often do it with fervour. Regiments like the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Hasty Pees, the Loyal Eddies, the Rileys and the Prince Edward Island Regiment. The list goes on and on. As veterans pass and memories fade, there is a generation of children and grandchildren now making themselves aware of Canada's proud war history and affirming their important role in educating generations to come.

As such, we are standing on the forward edge of a new era where digital technology will move beyond anything we can imagine and will provide government with the tools to marry the past and future into a seamless venue to attract and amaze viewers.

Imagine ourselves participating in a World War I dogfight in the skies over northern Europe or experiencing the emotions as we crash ashore in Normandy on June 6, 1944. Using leading edge technology to improve our cultural attractions, this type of viewer interaction is a real possibility. Renewed emphasis on our National War Museum will not only enhance the prestige of our historical past but will also the government to focus new technologies into bringing the past alive.

Today's youth seem to lack the knowledge of the great deeds our forefathers performed in acts of utter selflessness and courage. I wonder how many people today really and truly understand the meaning of Passchendaele, Vimy Ridge, the Scheldt or Hill 355. The government has a duty to pay homage to that past, to elevate and preserve their memory for time immemorial.

The Canadian War Museum will not only honour those who served in war and peacekeeping but will also ensure that their legacy of heroism and sacrifice is not forgotten by generations that have never experienced war.

*The Address*

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened quite intently to the hon. member's very eloquent speech. I commend him on pointing out the importance of the rich diversity of our country.

I was somewhat disappointed with the throne speech. While it speaks about Canada as being a bilingual country in which both men and women of many different cultures, races and religions participate in economic, social and political life and our diversity is a source of strength and creativity making us modern and forward-looking, that seems to be where it stops. The words are good but I think most of us would agree that words without action do not really mean a lot.

It saddened me during the last session when I had to approach the government to explain to the House why the appointment of a black female judge to a unified court in Nova Scotia did not take place. To this day I have not yet received a response to satisfactorily explain what took place in that situation.

• (1750)

What we really say to people in our society comes through by our actions more so than the words that are written in a speech. If this speech is to be meaningful as we move forward into the 21st century, if we are to give more substance to these words, then the actions have to prove and bear out that we really mean what we are talking about in terms of the diversity of our country making us strong and people having equal opportunities.

When the hon. member mentioned the military, I thought about our veteran merchant mariners who are still fighting for justice, still seeking some form of compensation to make up for the injustice that was done to them following the war. Those kinds of actions or lack of action by the government say more to people than words in a throne speech talking about being supportive.

Does the hon. member have any comments to make on those particular instances? Could he also perhaps indicate how he sees his government moving forward in a real positive way to give some substance to the words that are in the throne speech?

**Mr. John Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, I would really like to respond to the first part of the member's question but I do not have the background on the issue at hand. As I do not know the situation thoroughly, I feel I would be overstepping the knowledge I have in order to give an answer.

We both see eye to eye and we will continue to work on behalf of our veterans who crewed the ships during the war and were lost in heavy numbers or were taken prisoner well in advance of many members of the Canadian forces. It is certainly my wish to see a wrong righted in that area as well.

I do not think I can say much more other than to say that we do see eye to eye. As we are both on the same committee, we will both

continue to work for the betterment of our naval seamen who worked, some of whom lost their lives and now have very little compensation for their efforts.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in standing to speak to the throne speech, I must say that there were no big surprises.

Since I hold the critic responsibility for the Reform Party in the area of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, I eagerly scanned the throne speech to see what was in there that related to aboriginal people and the challenges that aboriginal people and government face in Canada today. I was not surprised but I was disappointed to see that there was no change in direction on the part of the government and that it is steady as she goes.

The government feels that it is charting the right course. It obviously continues to use words like partnership, gathering strength and all kinds of nice words and phrases that would leave the average person listening to the throne speech with the impression that progress has been made, is actually being made and that things are continuing to improve.

I can assure the House that nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, for aboriginal people in Canada things continue to go downhill. The social problems on reserves continue to worsen. The economic circumstances for aboriginal people living on reserves continue to worsen. The programs that have been put in place by successive governments over a long period of time in the country have actually, if anything, been counterproductive to the health and welfare of aboriginal people in Canada.

As an example, the Government of Canada decided to invest in aboriginal economic development back in the early 1990s. It spent \$1 billion on aboriginal economic development over a period of four years. These facts are all contained in the Auditor General's Report to parliament. Over the same period of time that the \$1 billion was expended, the economic conditions on reserves worsened, the unemployment rate continued to increase and the overall picture continue to worsen, to darken, rather than to improve.

• (1755)

The question one naturally asks is why would the government continue to go down the same road when there have been no positive results and there continue to be negative results? Do we not learn as human beings from experience? Do we not look to the past to gather and analyse information to assist us in making decisions about what we are going to do in the future? That is really what learning and human history is all about. The government has refused to do that.

Naturally, one asks why we would go through the trouble of having all of these government departments that can track the impacts and effects of various government programs and expenditures if we are not going to pay attention to the results. I have come

*The Address*

to the conclusion that the government by choice automatically insulates itself from the realities of its own policies. It does not want that feedback. It does not want to know that its policies are failures.

The government does not want to know because it does not want to admit that it has failed. The government lacks the vision and the courage to think outside the box, to think in some new way that could perhaps be of great benefit not only to aboriginal people but to the country as a whole. Obviously, the country has a challenge in front of it which badly needs to be addressed.

The Liberals do not have the courage to face that challenge. They do not have the courage to admit that the way things have been done in the past, the policies that have been implemented and the taxpayers' money that has been expended has not been of any benefit to native people in Canada.

Is the government not willing at least to analyse the results of its policies? We would think that at least a majority of native leaders would be interested in going through that analysis and going back to government and saying that what the government has been doing has not been working and they need a change. Why are the chiefs and councils across Canada not engaged in a process of examination and analysis? Why are they not advocating for change?

I think the reason becomes clear when more time is spent looking at what the department of Indian affairs does and how it has a relationship with native leaders across Canada and native leaders at the national level. There is a symbiotic relationship. Both parties are unwilling to admit failure because they fundamentally do not want to change the status quo. The reason most native leaders do not want to change the status quo is that they are caught up in the system. Some direct personal benefit accumulates to them as a result of being part of the system.

One of the things that strikes me as I travel from place to place and talk with grassroots aboriginal people is that they feel as fundamentally disconnected from their leaders in many cases as do ordinary Canadians from their political leaders. There is a sense of frustration that the programs are supposed to be benefiting them as individuals but they are not hitting the mark.

One has to do a critical analysis to determine why that is the case. The greatest mistake the federal government has made and continues to make and shows no sign of changing when it comes to native people is it continues to treat native people as collectivities rather than as individuals. It wants to deal in programs and policies that are related directly to collectivities. That is why we see certain things in modern treaties that are being negotiated.

The Nisga'a treaty is mentioned in the throne speech. We are going to have a lot more to say about it in the coming weeks when the government actually introduces the legislation. Fundamentally it sees the Nisga'a as a collectivity of some 5,000 people. It does not see the individuals. It looks at the Nisga'a people, and aboriginal people in general, as being some kind of homogeneous

group that thinks the same way, that wants the same things and that fundamentally has a culture that is different from the rest of Canada and therefore must be treated differently.

• (1800)

Of course, what gets lost in the shuffle when that happens is the individual. Individual rights are put on the back burner in favour of collective rights, and individual aboriginal people are coming to that realization in a major way in the country. Individual native people are coming to understand that their rights as Canadians are fundamentally sidelined in favour of these collective rights that are somehow supposed to benefit them, but they see very clearly that those benefits are not accruing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. It being 6 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment, and the amendment now before the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 3)

YEAS

Members

Abbott  
Alarie

Ablonczy  
Anders

*The Address*

Asselin	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey	Karygiannis	Keys
Bellehumeur	Benoit	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Bergeron	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Knutsen	Kraft Sloan
Bigras	Borotsik	Lastewka	Lee
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Leung	Limoges (Windsor—St. Clair)
Brien	Brison	Longfield	MacAulay
Cardin	Casey	Mahoney	Malhi
Casson	Crête	Maloney	Marleau
Dalphond-Guiral	de Savoye	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
Debien	Desrochers	McCormick	McDonough
Doyle	Duceppe	McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
Dumas	Duncan	McTeague	McWhinney
Epp	Forseth	Mifflin	Milliken
Fournier	Gagnon	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold	Mitchell	Murray
Golding	Grewal	Myers	Nault
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay	Nyström	O'Brien (Labrador)
Guimond	Hart	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Harvey	Herron	Pagtakhan	Paradis
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Parrish	Patry
Hilstrom	Jaffer	Peric	Peterson
Johnston	Jones	Pettigrew	Phinney
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Laurin	Lebel	Pratt	Proctor
Loubier	Lunn	Proud	Provenzano
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Manning	Redman	Reed
Marceau	Marchand	Richardson	Riis
Mark	Mayfield	Robillard	Robinson
McNally	Ménard	Rock	Saada
Mercier	Meredith	Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison	Serré	Shepherd
Muise	Obhrai	Solomon	Speller
Penson	Perron	St. Denis	St-Julien
Picard (Drummond)	Power	Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Price	Ramsay	Stewart (Northumberland)	Stoffer
Rocheleau	Sauvageau	Szabo	Telegdi
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)	Thibeault	Torsney
Solberg	St-Hilaire	Ur	Valeri
St-Jacques	Stinson	Vanclief	Volpe
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Wappel	Wasylcia-Leis
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Whelan	Wilfert
Turp	Vautour	Wood—157	
Venne	Wayne		
White (Langley—Abbotsford)—93			

## NAYS

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clouthier
Coderre	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Drouin
Duhamel	Earle
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarmieri	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Ifody
Jackson	Jennings

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Lalonde	Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
Normand	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

The next question is on the amendment.

**Mr. Bob Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent to apply the results of the vote just taken to the motion now before the House.

**The Speaker:** Is there agreement to proceed in such a fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*The Address**(Division No. 4)*

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alarie	Anders
Asselin	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bigras	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien	Brison
Cardin	Casey
Casson	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Dumas	Duncan
Epp	Forseth
Fournier	Gagnon
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Goldring	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay
Guimond	Hart
Harvey	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Jaffer
Johnston	Jones
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Laurin	Lebel
Loubier	Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Manning
Marceau	Marchand
Mark	Mayfield
McNally	Ménard
Mercier	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Muise	Obhrai
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Power
Price	Ramsay
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Solberg	St-Hilaire
St-Jacques	Stinson
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp	Vautour
Venne	Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)—93	

## NAYS

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clouthier

Coderre	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Drouin
Duhamel	Earle
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keys
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lee
Leung	Limoges (Windsor—St. Clair)
Longfield	MacAulay
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Nault
Nyström	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Proctor
Proud	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Riis
Robillard	Robinson
Rock	Saada
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Serré	Shepherd
Solomon	Speller
St. Denis	St-Julien
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stoffer
Szabo	Telegdy
Thibeault	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Wasylcyia-Leis
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood—157	

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Canuel	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Lalonde	Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
Normand	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment defeated.

It being 6.35 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.35 p.m.)



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