



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, November 3, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

**The Speaker:** As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Saint John.

*[Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem]*

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]*

### VETERANS WEEK

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Veterans Week will offer Canadians an opportunity to honour the sacrifices of our veterans.

I wish to pay tribute to the more than 1.4 million Canadians who stood in harm's way to safeguard our freedoms and liberties, and in particular, Chatham-Kent born Pilot Officer Leslie Peers, who gave his life during World War II while assisting the French resistance fighters.

Last July, Canada and its allies gathered in France for a memorial service. This was the first time in 55 years that a Canadian delegation set foot on the gravesite to officially commemorate the valiant efforts of Pilot Officer Peers and his six crew members.

This weekend will be another first. French resistance fighters are presenting to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 28 in Chatham-Kent their battle flag. I am told that no French battle flag has ever left France unless taken by an enemy in battle.

Canada stands proud. The bond between Canada and France endures. We remain very proud of our veterans.

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### WAR VETERANS

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's proud war veterans are now, and should remain, the

recipients of the enduring respect of all Canadians for the very high price for peace paid this century past.

We parliamentarians fully recognize that our existence and privileges enjoyed today are due to the efforts of Canada's war veterans and their 110,000 fallen comrades resting throughout the world.

We wish to support greater recognition of Canada's wartime contributions on this passing of the most violent century of all time.

We ask all Canadians to observe a two minute wave of silence to begin in Newfoundland, sweeping across the country in a silent wave through each time zone.

We parliamentarians of Canada should proclaim our support and pledge to encourage a two minute silence in our constituency at the 11th hour of the 11th day in the 11th month of 1999.

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### RURAL HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and the new federal rural health directorate have been working hard to tackle the special health problems of rural Canada in towns like Peterborough.

The national summit on rural health research in Prince George brought together all stakeholders in rural health care.

There are, in effect, two health care systems in Canada: one for the big cities and one for the rest of the country. While it is clear that some major health facilities have to be in cities, there is no reason that basic rapid response modern care cannot be available to all Canadians. It is the task of the federal government to make sure that our health care system is available to all.

I urge that Health Canada be given the resources to translate its fine preliminary work into action. This will improve health care for all rural Canadians.

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### TAKE OUR CHILDREN TO WORK DAY

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is bring your children to work day. It is an opportunity for them to experience various occupations by shadowing their parents

*S. O. 31*

and friends. This is vital, as it allows children to broaden their horizons as to what the future may hold for them.

My daughter Lara Treiber and her friend Sofie Faga are spending the day accompanying me. They will experience my life as a member of parliament on Parliament Hill. The day will include attending committee meetings and question period. They have come to meet and share the ideas and experiences of others.

All young Canadians participating in this event will have the opportunity to learn that in today's world there is a recipe for success. It encompasses education and creative energy. It inspires courage and the ability to envision the future and recognize the challenges that still lay ahead.

As parents today we must lead the way and set an example for others and for those who follow in our footsteps. I commend everyone who has chosen to bring a child to their workplace for the day to share the knowledge and experience they have acquired.

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**PORT OF VANCOUVER**

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, farmers and west coast shippers are nervously watching the clock today to see if last minute talks will avert work stoppages that threaten to halt their shipments and decimate their earnings.

At the port of Vancouver a long simmering dispute between the Maritime Employer's Association and the longshoremen's union threatens to close that port by next week. A shutdown could see \$89 million a day in Canadian trade disappear down the drain.

• (1405)

Why should farmers worry? After all, did the Liberals not decree that grain like the mail must go through? But wait, there is a wrinkle in this Liberal labour plan. If the grain does not reach the port it cannot be shipped out. A contract dispute between Agricore and the Grain Services Union could stall shipments from 400 Alberta and Manitoba elevators by next week.

When will the government recognize that last year's tinkering with the labour laws did not work? It is time to give labour and management the tools to solve their differences—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Perth—Middlesex.

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**WAR VETERANS**

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we are about to enter a new century, we can well imagine the excitement felt by all Canadians at the turn of the last one. We were a small nation in almost everything but size and promise.

Yet shortly after the century began the first world war would take 60,000 of our citizens. They would die at Regina Trench, Passchendaele, Vimy Ridge, Beaumont Hamel and Courcellette, to name a few of the battlegrounds that continue to mark our history.

Their sacrifice would indelibly mark Canada as a nation that could be called on to help stamp out oppression and occupation wherever it occurred.

Today there are very few first world war veterans that remain with us. They are national treasures. We must not let their passing dull our memory. Long may we honour those who died so long ago so that their children and their children's children might inherit a great nation. We, their inheritors, pledge to keep their stories alive for the children of the 21st century.

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**VETERANS WEEK**

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the highest military award for bravery in the Commonwealth is the Victoria Cross and on it are inscribed two simple words, "For Valour". Since the theme of Veterans Week this year is "A Century of Valour", it is appropriate to acknowledge that on a per capita basis Canadians have won more VCs than any other Commonwealth nation.

[*Translation*]

The first was awarded to Alexander Dunn for heroism in the Charge of the Light Brigade. Our 95th and last Victoria Cross was awarded posthumously to Robert Hampton Gray for a successful attack on a Japanese warship an hour before the Americans dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, which brought World War II to an end.

[*English*]

In war and in peace Canadians have answered the call to duty. The fact that so many VCs were awarded to our citizens is symbolic of the bravery of all those who represented our country under the most difficult of circumstances.

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[*Translation*]

**LE GUIDE DES PAPILLONS DU QUÉBEC**

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this summer an important work on the butterflies of Quebec and Labrador by Louis Handfield, a notary in Mont-Saint-Hilaire, in the beautiful riding of Chambly, was published. It comprises 1,100 pages of text and colour plates.

It is the outcome of thirty-five long years of research and observation and thousands of hours of data collection; it is destined to become an encyclopedia of knowledge in this field.

When I attended the book launch, Mr. Handfield spoke of his one regret: the lack of co-operation by Heritage Canada, which does not allow specimens to be collected in national parks.

On behalf of Mr. Handfield, and in the name of science, I call upon Heritage Canada to make an exception to this ban for entomologists research and studies.

I must again express my admiration for Mr. Handfield, a modest, frank and straightforward gentleman and for his work, which is sure to be a priceless reference tool for at least the first hundred years of the new millennium.

Congratulations, Louis, for this wonderful contribution to natural science.

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#### NORTEL

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a major announcement was made by Nortel yesterday. It is going to invest close to \$340 million in facilities in Canada, creating 1,450 specialized occupation positions in Montreal and 850 in Ottawa.

The company is doing so in order to meet the constantly growing demand for optical telecommunications products to be used with the Internet, this being an area in which Nortel is considered a world leader.

The Canadian government is delighted with this good news for the economy, since it proves that conditions are right for new investments such as this one announced by Nortel. These conditions give confidence to key economic decision makers.

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• (1410)

[English]

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, farm families in northern Alberta are suffering terribly because of this summer's extreme drought conditions.

Many of the municipalities in the province of Alberta have declared this region a disaster area. This should qualify affected drought areas for federal tax deferral on the sale of breeding livestock.

The federal minister of agriculture responded by recommending to the finance minister that he approve tax deferral for farmers affected by the drought. The finance minister must be just too

interested in spending his multibillion dollar EI surplus to notice the troubles of farmers. So far there has been no response.

These farmers have suffered enough hardship. The very least the finance minister could do is step up and help these farmers by giving them desperately needed access to the tax deferral provision.

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#### WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the plan for the WTO meeting in Seattle in December is to liberalize investment, agriculture and services, thus allowing the public sector, including education, water, health care, social and postal services, fire and police services, to be eventually carved up by multinational corporations.

The NDP along with the Canadian Labour Congress and many other Canadian groups and individuals oppose further liberalization of the WTO. We demand that investment and services be taken off the table and that Canada's ability to govern itself for the sake of all and for the purposes of social justice be compromised no further than has already been the case as a result of NAFTA and the current WTO rules.

It is time for the Liberals to rethink their uncritical approach to the current model of globalization. Canadians want to have their policies decided by their elected representatives, not by WTO bureaucrats or even ministers who take their advice from the global corporations.

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#### MADAM JUSTICE BEVERLEY MCLACHLIN

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we welcome the announcement of the forthcoming promotion of Madam Justice Beverley McLachlin as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. She will be the first woman to be appointed to the chief justiceship.

Her early teaching work in the law faculty of the University of British Columbia was followed by service on the County Court of Vancouver and the Court of Appeal of British Columbia. She had been Chief Justice of the B.C. Supreme Court prior to her present appointment on the Supreme Court of Canada.

We salute Madam Justice McLachlin's demonstrated qualities of classical legal analysis, coupled with a recognition of the practical possibilities and also the limitations of judicial activism in social and economic policies.

As a trained philosopher as well as a jurist, Madam Justice McLachlin offers great promise for her new role of leadership of the Supreme Court of Canada.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

**Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I speak for the municipalities in my riding, including those of Mercier, Châteauguay, Delson and Saint-Constant, which sent me resolutions and are calling for the immediate implementation of a second infrastructure program, as was mentioned in the latest throne speech.

The first program, funded a third by the federal government, a third by the provinces and a third by the municipalities, was really successful because the federal government fully respected provincial jurisdictions, which it unfortunately does not always do.

The riding of Châteauguay is impatiently waiting for the federal government to give back some of its many budget surpluses taken from the provinces so we may finish two projects begun some 20 years ago: the renovation of the Saint-Constant railway museum and highway 30 in the direction of the 401 to take some pressure off the south shore bridges to Montreal.

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[English]

**DIAMOND MINING**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, diamond mining in the Northwest Territories is an exciting, productive new industry that began with the development of the Ekati mine last year. Now the Diavik diamond mine in the Lac de Gras area outside Yellowknife is hoping to receive government approval to continue its development process.

When these two mines are in operation Canada will become the fourth largest diamond producing country in the world. These mines and other potential diamond sites provide a much needed source of revenue for the territorial governments as well as employment opportunities for all northerners. The Ekati mine is expected to be in operation for 20 to 25 years and represents a \$1 billion investment.

The Diavik project is currently waiting to find out if further environmental reviews will be undertaken. Diamond mining is environmentally friendly, but companies are awaiting ministerial approval. Hopefully it is soon coming.

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**HELLENIC REPUBLIC**

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of External Affairs of the Hellenic Republic is currently on an official visit to Canada. His presence symbolizes the warm ties that bind our two nations.

● (1415)

While in Canada the minister reiterated his guiding principles of stability, democracy and unity worldwide and particularly in the Balkans. In endorsing these laudable principles we as parliamentarians should also support his efforts to establish a permanent Olympic truce, suspending all hostilities during all Olympic competition to serve as the seed to greater world peace.

Canada-Greece relations have been strengthened by the efforts of the Hellenic foreign minister and our foreign minister who have been working closely together to promote democratic principles, peace, unity and to combat injustice everywhere, thereby continuing to build on Hellenism's legacy of noble statesmen.

As a Canadian parliamentarian of Hellenic origin, I am proud of the continuous efforts for peace and the promotion of human security of both my birth country, Hellas, and my adopted country, Canada.

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Greek]

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada now says that there is no farm crisis. He sits behind his desk, orders up some statistics from his officials and comes to the conclusion that the crisis has disappeared. He never bothers to talk to farmers and their families. He never bothers to visit the farms. He simply calculates the crisis out of existence.

When did the Prime Minister become so disconnected from western Canadians that he is more willing to listen to federal number crunchers than he is to farmers themselves?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is very concerned about the farm crisis. He is certainly willing, as he has already demonstrated, to listen to farmers and their representatives. That is why he was willing to have a very early meeting when a delegation came from western Canada involving premiers and people of all stakeholder groups. That showed the Prime Minister's interest, which continues, in working with all concerned to find a fair and reasonable solution to this serious matter very soon.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, thousands of Canadian farmers are staring bankruptcy in the eye and wondering how on earth they will get through the winter. Thousands of farm children are suffering along with their

*Oral Questions*

parents, wondering how their families are going to make it at all. Meanwhile in Ottawa the Prime Minister and his minions are putting together a \$47 billion spending spree but cannot even deliver the \$900 million in emergency aid to keep farmers afloat.

How many farmers have to lose their farms and face bankruptcy before the government and the Prime Minister will acknowledge there is a crisis?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the opposition party said that we should not support farmers and that we should cut the ministry et cetera, this government came to the aid of farmers to the extent of \$900 million. We have changed the program since then to include and to give more support.

The numbers the hon. member talked about were numbers people in the western delegation were fully aware of. They were aware of that before they came. If they did not share that with their premiers then they would have to ask that question to the provincial officials that came to visit last week.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, talk about priorities being out of control. According to sources, the federal government is spending \$125,000 per person on illegal migrants, but when hard-pressed Saskatchewan and Manitoba farmers come looking for emergency assistance, the government says that there is no crisis and no need for help.

If the Saskatchewan and Manitoba farmers were to get in a rusty boat and throw their Canadian passports overboard, would they qualify for \$125,000 in capital grants this fall?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1998 and 1999 alone the the federal government and the Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments provided \$984 million in assistance through the safety net programs to the farmers in those two provinces. When we add the AIDA support for 1998 and 1999 we will be adding another \$550 million worth of support to producers. It is not enough. We wish we had more. We wish we could find more resources. We are looking at it and we are doing all that we possibly can with the resources available.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, how much more than a \$95 billion surplus would be good enough for the minister?

• (1420)

The Prime Minister and the minister say that things are really rosy, that the farmers should be celebrating and dancing in the streets. I was just in Saskatchewan and those people are really hurting. It does not take long to figure it out.

I spoke with a family who has been farming on that farm since 1910. The young fellow who is farming it now will not last through this generation. His three boys are probably going to have to move off the farm.

Why will the Prime Minister not go out to Saskatchewan and talk to them on their home turf, face to face and tell them things really are not so bad?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member. Did she tell that young farmer what the Reform Party's policy was?

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, funny darn thing. He was a Reformer and he is proud of our policies.

The Prime Minister may think that food happens to grow at the supermarket, but we know that real families are behind all that real food production.

Farm families are in deep trouble and the minister knows it. They need help and what do they get? They get the Prime Minister telling them things really are not as bad as they seem, and the fact that they are losing their farms is just part of a positive trend that is sweeping the prairies and it feels so good.

When will the Prime Minister go out there and tell these people face to face that it is just happy days are here again?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the hon. member said the individual was a Reformer. I can understand why. Maybe the farmer she spoke to had read the *Star Phoenix* on August 16 of this year in which the hon. member who just spoke said that more subsidies for Canadian farmers are not the answer.

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[Translation]

#### ECONOMIC STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at first blush, the Minister of Finance seems to be sitting very pretty.

He is proposing tax cuts and new programs, but he is forgetting the gaping hole in this lovely scenario, the \$33 billion he is not giving back to those who are providing direct services to the public, i.e. the provinces.

When will the minister plug this hole and give back to the provinces the money he cut?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, although there were cuts in transfers very early on, these cuts were not as extensive as those inflicted by the provinces on municipalities, as was the case in Quebec, for instance.

Second, in last year's budget, we increased the health transfer by \$11.5 billion over five years. We also increased equalization payments, and Quebec alone received an additional \$1.4 billion in such payments.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, these cuts amounted to \$932 million in cash transfers. That is much more than what the municipalities were cut, as the Minister of Finance is well aware. The Minister of Finance is not naive. He can do the math; what matters is what he does with the money once he has it.

The truth is that cash transfers have decreased. The federal government has more money than responsibilities.

How can the minister stand by while those providing direct health, education, and social services to the public do not have the funds needed to do the job, and those with no responsibility for these sectors build up surpluses? That is the problem.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, the member is talking about health, but we increased health transfers by \$11.5 billion last year.

As for the universities, research and development, we established the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, 33% of the funds from which will go to Quebec.

In the throne speech, we announced new research chairs, which all universities were quick to approve. It is very clear that the federal government is assuming its responsibilities and we will continue to do so.

• (1425)

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance of Canada, since being appointed, has taken \$32 billion away from the provinces. That is fact. It is undeniable.

In yesterday's economic statement, the Minister of Finance talked about a lot of things, but said nothing specific about indexing the tax tables.

Can the minister not make a commitment now to tell taxpayers what they want to hear, that he will be indexing their tax tables?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are going to do a lot more than that. We are going to look at what we have already done. Next year, the government will have cut personal income tax and compensated for indexing at least four or five times.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is swimming in billions in surplus. Could he explain how, on matters not under his jurisdiction, matters of provincial jurisdiction, such as childhood, the family and education, he took it upon himself to make announcements, but was unable to be more specific about tax cuts?

On the subject of the announcement he has just made and the transfers to the provinces, does the minister not realize that he should have been specific on these two points and that it is his duty to tell the public today just what he is going to do?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I indicated our intention very clearly yesterday not only to cut taxes, but to lower taxes for the middle class and those most disadvantaged.

So, I put the question to the hon. member. Why did the Bloc Québécois, in its political statement on taxation, refuse to lower taxes for the most disadvantaged, for all those earning less than \$30,000?

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. leader of the New Democratic Party.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CHILD POVERTY**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tax cuts versus new investments. That is a debate about how to deliver help. But the question is not about how; it is about who, as in who most needs help. On that question the government is totally confused.

Why has the number of children living in poverty in this country increased each and every year since the Prime Minister came to office?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's facts are quite wrong. If one looks at the last published numbers, those for between 1996 and 1997, the number of children living in poor families has actually declined from 21.1% to 19.8%.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about lives. When the government cares and it wants results, it sets targets. The government set targets for deficit reduction. Now it is setting targets for decreases in taxes for high income earners.

Why are there no targets for family farms in crisis? Why are there no targets to rebuild health care? Why are there no targets to eliminate child poverty to ensure that all our children get the best possible start in life? Is it not really because the government just does not care?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, anybody who has watched what this government has said and done over the course of the last five years will understand the very deep feeling of concern that we have for families living in poverty, for farm families in this country, and to improve the lot of the ordinary Canadian.

That is why we put another \$2 billion in the national child tax benefit. That is why we have increased CAPC. That is why we increased the prenatal nutrition program. That is why we have increased head start. The fact is that this government has acted, and it has acted consistently.



*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has told Canadians that they should move to another country if they want real tax relief.

Does the finance minister share the views of the Prime Minister that if Canadians want real tax relief they should leave Canada?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is not what the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister said that it is the responsibility of government, while setting an economic climate so that the private sector can create jobs, to take care of those who cannot help themselves. It is the responsibility of government to alleviate the plight of children in poverty. It is the responsibility of government to provide accessibility to universities. It is the responsibility of government to take care of Canadians so that they too have an equal opportunity to succeed.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, what we have not heard is the Prime Minister say that it is the responsibility of government to reduce taxes.

The finance minister's economic statement stated that tax reduction was a priority, not an afterthought. Yet in the Prime Minister's recent Speech from the Throne there was only half a page devoted to tax reduction and 24 pages devoted to \$32 billion worth of new spending.

The Prime Minister wrote the throne speech. The finance minister wrote the economic statement. The question Canadians are waiting to be answered is who will be writing the budget. Will it be the free spending, 1970s style Prime Minister, or will it be the wannabe, tax cutting finance minister?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, whether it be the throne speech, whether it be the economic update yesterday or whether it be the budget, it will be the government that will respond and the government will speak with one voice.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, at the end of the finance minister's live show yesterday in London, we were left with two hard facts. The first is that on January 1 taxes will go up. The second is that the only detailed plan the government has is for \$47 billion in new spending.

My question is for the finance minister. Yesterday in London why is it that we had lights and we had cameras but we had no action on tax relief?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the lights are out across the opposition benches.

Let me simply explain that yesterday was a fiscal update. The taxes and the details of tax reduction are done in budget. I would certainly ask the hon. member to be part of the finance committee and to consult with Canadians. I look forward to the recommendations of the finance committee and I look forward to the budget in February-March.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, fine words but they will not pass the paste up test for most Canadians.

We are seeing a 15 cent cut in EI premiums but a 40 cent hike in CPP premiums on January 1, a big tax hike.

Canadians want some tax relief right now. Their taxes are still going up. If the minister has supposedly cut taxes already, like he claimed yesterday, why is it that Canadians are not seeing it on their paycheques?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** First, Mr. Speaker, of course they are. They have seen a 3% reduction toward the elimination of the surtax. They have seen a \$675 increase in the threshold below which Canadians do not pay any taxes. We now have a situation where a family of two earning \$30,000 pays absolutely no federal taxes. Where a family is earning \$50,000, there is 15% decrease in taxes.

Those happen to be the facts. What we have also said is that in each and every budget, beginning with the next one, we will continue on that path.

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[Translation]

**ECONOMIC STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FINANCE**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in 1993 one million children in Canada were living in poverty. This year, the figure is over 1.5 million. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance bemoaned their situation when presenting his economic statement.

Can the minister tell us whether this terrible increase in the number of poor children in Canada is the result of Canada's good economic performance or of the accomplishments of the Minister of Finance since 1993?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we are enormously concerned that there are children living in poverty. This is, moreover, the reason my colleagues in Cabinet have expanded several very significant programs.

• (1435)

I would like to mention a few: a \$2 billion increase in the national child benefit; an improved child care tax credit, for a total

*Oral Questions*

of \$45 million yearly; expansion of the community action program for children by \$100 million yearly. And we will continue to—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how can the minister shed a tear for poor children when he himself has contributed greatly to child poverty by excluding thousands of unemployed people from employment insurance benefits, thus impoverishing their families?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, employment insurance is a program which provides benefits to Canadians who were working and who now find themselves without work. Let us understand that \$7 billion a year goes to families with children through the national child benefit and the child tax credit. Those are part of the legacy of the government.

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#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in spite of the hundreds of millions of dollars that the government spends on research and development, Canadian companies are still at the bottom of the heap when it comes to R and D spending.

Yesterday, the finance minister's response was to throw more money at the problem. That is not the answer. The answer is to bring down the government's sky-high taxes.

When is the industry minister going to convince his colleagues to do just that?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have the most generous R and D credits of any industrial country and they are working very well.

At the same time, we have outlined the approach we intend to take to tax reduction. We intend to make personal income tax reduction the priority. We intend to make families with children a priority within that. We also made it very clear that the government intends to move on business taxes to make sure that we have as competitive an area as possible when we have the room to manoeuvre to do so.

We understand full well the necessity of improving R and D. The issue really is why does the Reform Party not understand. Why has it opposed every single measure the government has brought forth in that area?

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, no matter what the finance minister says, there are many prominent Canadians who just do not agree.

Two weeks ago, Quebec economist Pierre Fortin gave this advice to the government "Reduce the public debt and cut taxes". He did not say spend. He said cut taxes.

What exactly is keeping this message from getting through?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is stopping the results of what we have done from getting through to the other side?

Let us talk about the debt to GDP ratio. In the last two years, Canada has had the most substantial drop in the debt to GDP ratio of any industrial country. That is what we have done. We have cut income taxes. We have cut them in each of the last three budgets. We are three years ahead of where the Reform Party said it would be if it were in office, but of course it will never be in office.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government refuses to admit that it gave Onex assurances that the 10% rule would be changed, even before parliament was brought into the picture and before Onex made its offer on August 24.

However, a memo dated August 16, 1999, states that Onex was seeking a commitment from the Minister of Industry, the Minister of Transport, and the Office of the Prime Minister that the 10% rule would be dropped before going ahead with its offer. What does the government have to say about this?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is mistaken. The government gave no such assurance. He is quoting from documents provided by Onex, and I repeat that the government gave no such assurance.

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is extremely serious. The government refuses to admit what it did but, according to this memo, Onex did indeed require that the government drop the 10% rule before making its offer.

• (1440)

Will the government admit that it knowingly gave Onex a leg up by promising in advance to amend the legislation so that Onex's offer would meet legal requirements?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we made no such promise. The information contained in the hon. member's memo is false. We gave no such assurance.

*Oral Questions**[English]***TRANSITIONAL JOBS FUND**

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the sorry saga of improper dealings with transitional jobs fund moneys in the Prime Minister's riding continues.

The human resources department set up two unusual trust funds to keep from having to cancel a TJF grant the Prime Minister announced for a company that soon after headed for bankruptcy. We have now learned that both trust funds broke treasury board guidelines and one even illegally violated the Financial Administration Act.

Why was helping out the Prime Minister more important than honouring legal financial controls?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question gives me the opportunity to remind the House of the importance of the transitional jobs fund. Over a period of three years, the government has invested \$300 million and leveraged that into \$2.7 billion, creating 30,000 jobs for Canadians.

The program works and it works well for Canadians.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the jobs fund works well for the Prime Minister.

The point is that it is not being legally and properly administered. This minister is responsible and does not seem to care beyond just some nice cant about how good the fund is.

Well the fund is being mismanaged. It is Canadians' money and the minister should start paying attention. What is she going to do about the mismanagement of the fund?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us clarify that the program is available to all areas of Canada where unemployment has been extremely high and it has been progressive.

In terms of the projects that the hon. member was referring to, they were managed appropriately. They went through the acceptable review process. That has been fully addressed.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***PLUTONIUM IMPORTS**

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there is unanimous opposition to the plan to import plutonium.

In fact, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs rejected it in December 1998, and public opposition is growing. Yet the government is determined to carry out MOX trials at Chalk River as early as next month.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. How can the minister initiate a debate on the route the plutonium will take, when the House has not yet voted on the appropriateness of importing it?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all countries have a duty to support nuclear non-proliferation. Through Canada's nuclear sites, we can make a real contribution to world efforts for disarmament.

*[English]*

On this issue, the Canadian government has sought public views on the shipment of these samples. We have briefed local officials. We have held public forums. We have provided all answers to all questions. We have provided a public comment period. All of that input is now being weighed very carefully by the government and particularly by the Department of Transport before a final decision is taken.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Canadians believe it is urgent that we protect Canada's water from removals and exports. Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs inform the House when he plans to introduce legislation on bulk water exports and removals?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this is a crucial issue. The government has been following a three-track approach.

First, the Minister of the Environment has been working with his provincial counterparts to develop a broad domestic consensus.

● (1445)

Second, we were co-operating with the United States through the International Joint Commission. A report has been tabled.

Third, and perhaps most important, I intend very shortly to bring in amendments to the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act which will provide very effective protection for Canadian water and make sure that we cherish this very important resource for Canada.

*Oral Questions***AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in the 1997 election I ran against a Liberal cabinet minister by the name of Dr. Jon Gerrard on the Reform platform for agriculture. I am here and he is there.

The Prime Minister must be the only one who believes that Saskatchewan's farm income has improved by \$400 million overnight. Certainly no farmer I know will see the benefit of this bureaucratic—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member can put his question.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** With these numbers that have apparently been cooked up in the last few days, why is the Prime Minister hiding the truth about the farm income crisis?

**The Speaker:** We are getting very close in the use of our words such as hiding the truth in this kind of question period. I would ask the hon. member to withdraw the words hiding the truth.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, I withdraw hiding the truth.

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the same process involving the same officials and all the same parties were used to put numbers and projected income for farm income together in July, the hon. member and his party did not say that they were bogus numbers or that they were cooked up.

Exactly the same people were involved. The numbers are a little better because there were increases in crops, increases in the use of NISA programs, et cetera. I am sorry the hon. member is disappointed that there was a bigger crop in the west this year, for example, than was anticipated in July.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister should know that when forecasts are made up by economists and Statistics Canada they use conservative figures that are realistic.

What has happened is that the figures are now reflecting the most optimistic thing the Prime Minister can think of: farmers are doing well; they have \$1.5 billion.

Why are they still out there suffering and losing their farms? Has the Prime Minister chosen to listen to bureaucrats instead of farmers?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat. The very same process with the

very same people in the very same organizations that put the numbers together in their projections for July of this year were used and were involved, including the officials in each of the two provinces that were involved in July, will be involved for next February, and were involved in these.

Those officials have been involved in this process since October 15 of this year. They were fully aware, full participants and had their input. Changes were made—

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

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last month's update for prairie provinces on the 1999 farm income forecast has finally been public.

For Saskatchewan the net farm income will be significantly below the five year average. In fact it will be significantly below the five year average for next year as well.

Why did the government hide behind these numbers as an excuse not to give either hope or relief to farmers when they were here on Parliament Hill last week?

• (1450)

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was no hiding behind any numbers at all. I would have to assume that the officials in the provinces cleared those numbers with their politicians. If they did not, I guess the member should ask those politicians why their officials did not share them with them.

The numbers are better than projected in July of this year. We are all glad of that. That does not take away from the fact that a number of producers are hurting out there. That is why we continue to look at and continue to make changes to assist in every way we possibly can.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, why does the minister confuse the issue? Why does the government not commit to helping prairie farmers who have been decimated by the slashing of agriculture domestic support payments proposed by these folks over here and readily accepted by you guys instead of—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I ask the hon. member to go directly to his question.

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Farmers cannot compete with the foreign subsidies which we know they are facing. I would simply ask the minister what he will do about it and when.

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot about it. We would like to do more. Yes, we would. We have been continuing to make changes to assist more producers, and we are not done making changes yet.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO PROVINCES**

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that within three to five years, \$25 to \$35 billion dollars would be spent, or invested, in existing or new programs.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Is he open to the idea of reinvesting these billions of dollars into transfer payments to the provinces, or is he shutting the door permanently on any new possibility of transfer payments to the provinces?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all the hon. member needs to do is to look at what this government has done in the past two years.

The first thing we did after eliminating the deficit was to increase transfer payments to the provinces.

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has a problem. Between now and 2003 or 2004, transfer payments will be at the same level as they were before the cuts.

With his surplus and his great 40-day consultation, is he prepared to consider new amounts for transfer to the provinces? A number of programs administered by the provinces within their own areas of jurisdiction are in difficulty. Is the minister's mind open or closed to the idea of transferring more money to the provinces in coming months or years?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is the same question, for which I have the same answer. When the past actions of this government are examined, what was done last year for example, there has been a \$11.5 billion increase over five years. It is very clear that the federal government is prepared to assume its responsibilities.

Now, as far as the committee's recommendations are concerned, I am most anxious to hear what it has to say to us.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ANTI-TOBACCO ADVERTISEMENTS**

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the health minister. Health Canada has produced a new series of anti-tobacco advertisements.

Since some 45,000 Canadians died from tobacco related diseases last year, could the minister explain what the government hopes the new ads will accomplish?

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[Translation]

In reality, when it is said that 45,000 Canadians die each year from tobacco-related diseases, this means one adult in four dies in this way. This is an extremely serious situation, and we have spent about \$120 million in the past four or five years on anti-smoking campaigns.

The series of ads to which my colleague is referring was very effective, and we want to go even further in our anti-smoking campaign.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister told Canadians that there should not be a debate about numbers. At the same time the Prime Minister has chosen to hide behind some very slippery numbers.

• (1455)

The farm crisis is not about numbers. We have to get past that. It is about people. It is about families. It is about parents who cannot afford to take care of their children. It is about losing a way of life that has existed in the country for generations.

Why is the government choosing to stand behind some slippery numbers instead of facing the people they are destroying?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have not stood behind numbers. We come out with facts when the facts are there. We explain those facts in co-operation with everybody else.

Because we do not believe in providing no support like the Reform Party does, we put forward \$900 million. We have changed the program and we are not finished announcing support yet. I look forward to providing even more assistance.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFF RESERVE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE**

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government is ignoring its responsibilities by failing to include native people not living on reserves in its programs and funding.

In the Marshall decision, the government is once again giving a restrictive interpretation to the decision by the supreme court in refusing to consider off reserve aboriginal people.

*Oral Questions*

Why is the Minister of Indian Affairs content to be responsible for aboriginal people living on the reserve but not those living off it?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the legal responsibility in the law with respect to first nations people living on reserves is clearly with the Government of Canada.

In relation to other aboriginal peoples, the solutions that we need to find in the country to enhance our relationship with aboriginal people and improve their quality of life is a partnership arrangement involving not just the Government of Canada but also the provinces and all others, including those in the private sector who can make a genuine contribution.

We all need to take this issue fundamentally very seriously.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister's farm income projections for Saskatchewan are deeply flawed.

Saskatchewan government officials say that input costs like fuel have skyrocketed, not dropped like he says. Revenues will be less than he claims on durum and other items. So far there have been \$325 million in errors and counting. In western Canada there have been bogus projections from a discredited Liberal government.

At least Trudeau was honest enough to just give us the finger. Why will the minister not admit that there is a real farm income crisis and announce some real farm aid now?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we recognized that a long time ago. That is why we have done what we have done. That is why we are continuing to find ways in which we can do more.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in yesterday's economic fiscal update the Minister of Finance claimed the government was committed to helping children.

The minister can start helping children by introducing the option for parents to jointly file their income tax returns using a separate tax table or incorporating the concept of income splitting.

Will the finance minister commit today to investing in the best proven institution for children, the Canadian family, and permit the

option of joint filing or income splitting for those Canadian families who choose to do so?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a Commons subcommittee held hearings and submitted a report on this matter last spring. It was a very valuable report and one that the government has certainly taken into consideration.

The finance committee will now be out. The hon. member is certainly welcome to make representations. As before, we will listen to what the finance committee has to say.

\* \* \*

**CULTURE**

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last spring the trade subcommittee travelled across the country listening to the concerns of Canadians pertaining to the protection of our culture.

In the upcoming WTO negotiations in Seattle what action is the Canadian government taking to ensure our independence to determine and maintain our own cultural policy?

[Translation]

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question, particularly so on the eve of this round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization.

Canada has taken a leadership role in this. The Minister of Canadian Heritage is currently in Paris. With her French counterpart, under the aegis of UNESCO, she is chairing a round table on cultural diversity.

In addition, we are very proud to be associated with the Government of Quebec in launching the coalition for cultural diversity under Robert Pilon. We wish him both strength and success.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

[English]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** We have a distinguished guest with us today and a distinguished group of people.

I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency George A. Papandreou, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

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

**The Speaker:** Also today in the gallery we have a group of teachers from all parts of our country who are participating in the Fourth Annual Teachers' Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy.

*Tributes*

[Translation]

The objective of this forum is to promote better understanding of the Canadian political process.

[English]

Please welcome these teachers who are educating the next generations of Canadian citizens.

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

**The Speaker:** Today we are going to hear tributes for a former New Democratic Party member of parliament, Alf Gleave.

\* \* \*

### THE LATE ALFRED PULLEN GLEAVE

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words of tribute to a former colleague of ours, Alf Gleave, who at the age of 88 passed away in August of this year.

Alf Gleave was the member of parliament for what was known then as the riding of Saskatoon—Biggar. I had the honour in 1968 to be his seatmate. He was 58 years old. I thought that was pretty ancient at that time as I was 22. I am beginning to see that it is a lot younger now than it used to be. Alf Gleave was a wonderful person to have as a seatmate.

He was elected to parliament in 1968. He was re-elected in 1972 and sat in the House until 1974.

• (1505)

Before he entered politics Mr. Gleave was a farmer. He farmed near the town of Biggar, Saskatchewan from 1938 until 1972. When he was elected to parliament he immediately became very well known, partly because he was the former president of the National Farmers' Union of Canada. When he was elected in 1968 he was chosen immediately as the chairman of the New Democratic Party caucus and he served in that position for a number of years.

In 1968 and 1969 we had a debate which was a bit like the debate we are having now. It was a debate over a farm crisis, mainly over what we called in those days tough and damp wheat or tough and damp grain. He quickly became a national figure, leading that debate in the House of Commons at a time when debates on public policy centred much more so in this place than they do today. He was a leader in that capacity for a long time.

Alf Gleave was born in Ontario, but he moved to Saskatchewan when he was six years old. He farmed as a young man and he continued to farm until 1972. Before he entered politics he was the president of the National Farmers' Union of Canada, and before that he was the president of the Farmers' Union of Saskatchewan from 1949 until 1954. He was also a director of the Canadian

Federation of Agriculture. In 1964 he was appointed as a member of the Economic Council of Canada. He was also a director of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and a number of other organizations in the province of Saskatchewan.

Between 1959 and 1962 he served as an advisor to the federal government during the international wheat agreement negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland. Those were very important negotiations, which meant a lot to prairie farmers as they obtained an agreement for the export and sale of grain around the world.

He was also very active in the co-operative movement, the general co-op movement, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the credit union movement in our province, and indeed across the country.

After his political career ended in 1974 he remained very active in many of the organizations that he had been active in before. He was also a regular columnist, having a bi-monthly column in The Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* on agricultural issues through much of the 1970s and 1980s. He was energetic. He was always involved. He always spoke with a great deal of compassion on issues concerning rural Canada, western Canada and agriculture in particular.

In 1991 he wrote a book called *United We Stand*. As Mr. Gleave passed away at the age of 88, he was up in years when he wrote this book. It is one of the more comprehensive histories that I have ever read of prairie farmers between 1901 and 1975.

Mr. Gleave was always very active. He was very effective in advancing the philosophy that when farm people and rural people are better off, the people in the cities and the towns across this country are also much better off, and that when the economy is strong on the farm, the economy of the country is also strong because agriculture indeed is the very foundation of our economy. I can remember him rising beside me through those six years, asking questions and making speeches which employed that philosophy time and time again.

I would like to express on behalf of myself, my party and I am sure all members of parliament who knew him, our great respect for a very decent human being and for a very intelligent human being. He was a very passionate advocate of the causes of the farmers of this country, both before he got into politics, when he was in politics and after he left politics.

I also want to extend our condolences to his wife Mary, who was always at his side, to his family and to his many friends, not only in Saskatchewan, but indeed right across Canada.

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise in the House today to speak of the passing of a man who gave his life and his energy to the well-being of the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada, Mr. Alfred Pullen Gleave.

*Tributes*

Though born in West Zorra Township in Ontario, Alf Gleave's heart and home were on the prairies. Living in Biggar, Saskatchewan, with his family from 1918, he was first and foremost a farmer and very proud of it. He built his life in this honourable profession, so inherently important to the province of Saskatchewan. The farming community, in turn, looked to him for leadership on many issues. He was a life member of the National Farmers' Union. In the first 20 years of his working life he served as a director and then president of the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union and then the National Farmers' Union respectively. His dedication to farming will be fondly remembered by the people of the Biggar district and indeed by farmers all across Canada.

• (1510)

His deep commitments carried Mr. Gleave into the political arena. From 1968 until 1974 he was the elected member of parliament for the constituency of Saskatoon—Biggar. A member of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Gleave earned the respect of members from all parties. He was chairman of the NDP caucus from 1968 until 1972 and served as the party's agricultural critic.

His priorities were always clear in his writing, in his speeches and in the issues that he chose to pursue locally, nationally and internationally. One could never have any doubt about where he stood.

It is fitting, I suppose, that we mark his passing at a time when a federal byelection is under way to fill a vacancy in the House for the very riding which he once represented. Always a competitor, Alf Gleave would be thoroughly enjoying the race.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I want to join all hon. members in extending our sympathies to his wife and family, as well as his very broad circle of friends.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, members of parliament from Saskatchewan and the party that I represent, I am pleased to pay tribute to a man who not only came from Saskatchewan and made Saskatchewan people proud of his efforts, but a man who, like so many people from my province, was proud to come from that province which often suffers great adversity.

As has already been mentioned, he was a grain farmer, but his interests, like so many grain farmers, went beyond the actual farm itself. Alf wanted to do something for all of Saskatchewan. His quest and his goal was to do just that.

He served as president of the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union as well as the National Farmers' Union. He gave much of his time and provided Canada with much insight into the agricultural situation in Saskatchewan. As my hon. colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle mentioned, he also served on many boards, sometimes in an advisory capacity. He was indeed a credit to Saskatchewan.

I bring to the House a quote of Alf's. He wrote that each generation must fight for what it wants because good things do not just happen. That statement was never more true than it is today. That is exactly why we will find a real fight going on in all of Saskatchewan, in all of the west, in the hope of saving, in many cases, fifth generation farmers from complete disaster.

Farmers who lived through the thirties did not just complain about the living conditions; they went out and did something about them. Sometimes adversity brings about strong character. That is exactly what Alf Gleave gave to Canada, to the House and to the New Democratic Party.

I am proud to have lived very close for 12 years to the seat that Alf represented in the House.

• (1515)

It was Alf's sincerity, courage and dedication that has made a tremendous example for people to follow that goes beyond political parties.

On behalf of my party and on behalf of all of the people in the House, I want to extend our condolences to his family and to everyone everywhere in Canada who remembered him fondly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I too wish to pay tribute to Alfred Pullen Gleave, who sat as a member of the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons from 1968 to 1974 and represented the riding of Saskatoon-Biggar.

A farm producer, grain farmer and seed grower by profession, he was a member of agricultural unions and, as the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle reminded us earlier, was president of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union and the National Farmers Union. As he wrote in the introduction to his autobiographical *United We Stand—Prairie Farmers 1901-1975*:

[English]

“Political action was an extension of the farmer's movement. I used it as well as I could to advance western Canadians' interests in general and the farmer's movement in particular.”

[Translation]

During the six years he sat in the House, he was an ardent defender of farmers and a formidable member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. He was a feisty MP, as my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg-Transcona, just told me.

He was particularly interested in issues having to do with the price of wheat, farm marketing boards, price controls and inflation. He served as president of his party's caucus and also served a leader, David Lewis who, like his predecessor, Tommy Douglas,



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was, in his words, and I am again quoting from *United We Stand*, “an outstanding man”.

To a man whose efforts gave meaning to the slogan “Humanity first” of the CCF, the forerunner to the New Democratic Party, to the man who also toiled on behalf of his family, his constituents and his fellow citizens for:

[*English*]

“a more secure and bountiful life for themselves by working together, by sharing the load”,

[*Translation*]

members of the Bloc Québécois pay a final tribute, and to the family and friends of the late Alf Gleave, present their deepest condolences.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great honour that I rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to pay tribute to the New Democratic Party member of parliament who served his constituency of Saskatoon-Biggar with great dignity and professionalism.

I did not realize until today that the member we are paying tribute to, Mr. Gleave, was a seatmate of the member for Regina—Qu’Appelle. I suspect that Mr. Gleave had a great sense of humour. I suspect he had a great deal of endurance. I wish he had more years in the House so that he could have passed on some of his experience to the member for Regina—Qu’Appelle.

Mr. Gleave gave years of his life working for the people of Saskatchewan, whether it was through his involvement with co-operatives, as president of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union or as a member of this House.

I did not know Mr. Gleave personally but I know people like Mr. Gleave, an individual who took farming as a profession, an individual who had pride in what he did by working the land. He was a man who worked for his community, a man who worked for his neighbours and a man who worked for his profession, that of being a farmer. I know people, as do members of the opposition and the government, just like Mr. Gleave.

Mr. Gleave died this past summer at the age of 88. His words of advice during his tenure as member of parliament still ring true today. As was mentioned by the member of the Reform Party, and which is important to repeat, Mr. Gleave talked about how each generation must fight for what they want because good things do not just happen. Good things come to people through hard work, endurance and perseverance. I would have loved to have had the opportunity to work and to sit in the House with Mr. Gleave because what I read and hear of him is more of those traits that I wish more individuals in the House and certainly in this society would have.

• (1520)

I extend my condolences on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to the surviving members of the Gleave family. I would personally like to thank Mr. Gleave for all the years of his public service.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will say a few short words and add to what has already been said in terms of paying tribute to Alf Gleave.

I remember him very well as a friend and, to a certain extent, as a mentor. He was president of the National Farmers Union and worked in the House as a member of parliament. His interest was certainly the farm and he adopted the motto that people are important.

As a young individual in the farm movement in the early seventies, there were several people who inspired me to become involved in public life. Alf was one of those people to me.

I had many sessions with Alf over the years, but after coming here in 1993 as a member on the government side and as a member of the standing committee on agriculture, it was not unusual at all to see Alf in his older years sitting in the agricultural committee room listening to the hearings. He was interested in what all sides were saying. He gave some us on the government side a lot of criticism at times for some of the things we were doing, but his belief showed through in terms of how important it was that programs and benefits be applied to the farm sector.

I join with all others here today who have recognized Alf Gleave for his life’s work. I also extend my condolences to his family.

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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’s response to six petitions.

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### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both

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official languages, the report on the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from July 26 to July 31, 1999.

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the selection of votable items for Private Members' Business in accordance with Standing Order 92.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT**

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-298, an act to amend the National Defence Act (Snowbirds).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the hon. member for Red Deer for supporting my bill.

Canada's air demonstration team, the Snowbirds, are a national symbol to all Canadians. Its mission is to demonstrate the skill, professionalism and teamwork of the Canadian forces to the public. The Snowbirds are without equal around the world and are great ambassadors of Canada.

Today I am pleased to introduce my private member's bill which amends the National Defence Act so that the Snowbirds will remain forever a part of Canada's armed forces and Canada's military heritage.

● (1525)

On behalf of all Canadians, I ask all members of the House to support the bill to protect the future of our Snowbirds.

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

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**FAMILY FARM COST OF PRODUCTION PROTECTION ACT**

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-299, an act to provide cost of production protection for the family farm.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a very appropriate bill introduced on a day when we just paid tribute to Alf Gleave, who was the former agriculture critic of our party and the National Farmers Union president.

The bill provides a formula where farmers would be guaranteed their cost production, not just on crops that are produced in this country, but also livestock that are produced in this country. In other words, it would be a long range farm program where there would be stability for the farmers based on a formula that reflects their actual input costs.

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

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**CANADA ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION ACT**

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-300, an act respecting the protection of wildlife species in Canada from extirpation or extinction.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the committee on the status of endangered wildlife reports that in Canada 339 species are at risk of extinction and habitat loss is the number one cause. Yet there is no federal law protecting the habitat of Canada's endangered wildlife.

The bill aims at: first, protecting all endangered species and their habitat; second, identifying species at risk and the factors that threaten them and their habitat; third, making it an offence to harm, disturb or kill endangered species or their habitat; fourth, setting the stage for federal-provincial mirror legislation.

The bill serves as a benchmark for the government legislation soon to be introduced. Seven years ago, Canada signed in Rio the convention on biological diversity. In view of Canada's commitment to the world community and the fact that a recent poll found that eight Canadians out of ten are in favour of strong endangered species legislation, I urge the government to act without delay.

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

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**HOMEOWNERS' FREEDOM FROM DOUBLE TAXATION ACT**

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-301, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of property taxes paid in respect of a principal residence).

He said: Mr. Speaker, when homeowners pay their property tax they pay it with money on which they have paid income tax. For example, if they have a \$2,400 property tax bill, they have to earn \$4,000 in order to pay it.

We are opposed to double taxation and so I am introducing this private member's bill which would do away with that anomaly. It is based on the principle that Canadian taxpayers should not have to pay taxes on money that they earn for the sole purpose of paying taxes.

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

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### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-302, an act to amend the Criminal Code (conditional sentencing).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for Wild Rose for seconding my bill.

Conditional sentencing was introduced in the 35th parliament in the former Bill C-41. Since that time, tens of thousands of conditional sentences have been handed down. Most of these sentences are for petty crimes. However many have been handed down for crimes as serious as sexual assault, manslaughter, drunk driving and drug trafficking.

• (1530)

In 1997 the B.C. Court of Appeal stated in a decision regarding conditional sentencing that “if parliament had intended to exclude certain offences from consideration it should have done so in clear language”.

My bill does precisely that. It lists the offences to be excluded from any possibility of receiving a conditional sentence. The justice minister wants Canadians to wait for the supreme court to decide whether or not conditional sentences are appropriate. I believe these decisions are to be made in parliament with direction from Canadians, not the courts.

A recent national poll states that 84% of Canadians are in favour of this bill. I encourage all members of parliament to support the bill and the overwhelming view of the majority of Canadians.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I commend the hon. member for the speed with which he moved through his remarks, but I remind all hon. members that the purpose of their speech on introduction is to give a brief explanation of the purpose of the bill, not to make a speech.

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

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### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-303, an act to amend the criminal code and the Young Offenders Act (capital punishment).

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River, on a succinct explanation.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I was trying to be as succinct as the hon. member for Davenport earlier.

Again I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Wild Rose for seconding the bill. I believe that Canada should hold a binding

### Routine Proceedings

referendum on capital punishment so Canadian people, and not political parties, can decide whether or not it should be reinstated.

A Reform government has pledged to do this. However the Liberals do not believe in allowing Canadians to exercise that much power. Today I am reintroducing my bill to reinstate the death penalty for adults convicted of first degree murder. In addition, the bill also imposes a range of stiff sentences for youths convicted of murder.

Not all murderers deserve the death penalty, but in most heinous cases such as Clifford Olson, Paul Bernardo and a Karla Homolka the punishment must fit the crime.

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

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among House leaders and I think you would find unanimous consent for the adoption of the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Prince Edward Island, Halifax, Moncton and the Gaspé during the week of November 21 to 27, 1999 for the purpose of its study on the implications of the September 17 supreme court decision on R. v Marshall on the management of the fisheries in the Atlantic region and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee and that sufficient funds be allotted for the travel.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot said in the House recently about the ineffectiveness of the AIDA program, the farm crisis, and the questions and non-answers from the minister.

I have the pleasure to present two petitions today totalling 181 pages of signatories from Manitoba and Saskatchewan who say that the AIDA program does not truly reflect the true needs and requirements of western Canadian farmers.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners are asking for the immediate removal of the AIDA program and to have it replaced with an acreage payment that would be implemented immediately so farmers could have some support and assistance over the next number of months.

I would like to put the petition forward to the House.

## TELEPHONE SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in the House before about the lack of telephones in a part of Peterborough county.

• (1535)

I now present a petition on behalf of scores of people in the county who say that whereas Canada is the most connected country in the world and whereas Canadians pioneered telephones and telephone service, it is extraordinary that there are homes in southern Ontario, specifically on Peterborough County Road 40, that do not have telephone service. A short drive from the city of Peterborough there are families with children without telephones. They have telephone polls at their gates and there are homes with phones a couple of kilometres away.

Therefore the petitioners call upon parliament to intervene on behalf of these people through relevant federal departments, the CRTC and Bell Canada.

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from rural mail carriers and people concerned about them. They point out that rural mail carriers often earn less than minimum wage. They have working conditions reminiscent of another era.

Therefore the petitioners call upon parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

## CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present another petition on behalf of many scores of citizens in the Peterborough area. This brings the total to many thousands who are concerned about cruelty to pets.

As members know a dog was horrifically dragged in Peterborough county this summer and severely injured. The petitioners point out that in the criminal code these animals are simply regarded as property and offences against them are little more than property offences.

Therefore they call upon parliament to work toward swift and effective action that works 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.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions to present today. The first one adds 32 more names to

those families who choose to raise their children at home with one of the parents staying home with them. They are calling for an end to the discriminatory tax practices with regard to that choice.

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition adds 279 names to the approximate 3,500 received from my riding and the over 300,000 names tabled in the House on the issue of child pornography.

They plead with the government to take whatever measures are necessary to reinstate immediately the criminal code provision which makes the possession of child pornography illegal.

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to present a petition on behalf of over 10,000 people not only of Saanich—Gulf Islands but also of Victoria, Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and all other ridings of British Columbia.

The petitioners are calling upon parliament to enact changes to our immigration law so that people arriving on our shores, in our airports or coming across our borders who are not bona fide refugees can be sent home immediately without delay.

The petitioners advocate that legislation be enacted requiring refugee claimants to demonstrate through identification, documentation or any other means that they are genuinely fleeing persecution. If they are unable to do so they should face deportation immediately without delay.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we had intended to try to deal with item P-1 today. Under the circumstances I would ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*The Address***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session.

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks, as we are responding to the Speech from the Throne that opened this session of parliament, I would once again like to thank the people of my riding of Ottawa South for their continuing support. I believe it is a great privilege to serve as a member of the House of Commons and I am proud to serve my constituents, as well as the people of Canada, in my capacity as Minister of Industry.

- (1540)

I am also very proud to have the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne which I believe lays out a balanced agenda and establishes a solid foundation for the government to move forward into the 21st century.

It is among the chief responsibilities of the Minister of Industry to try to prepare the nation for the challenges of the future, knowing that what the world we will face in a decade will probably differ from the nineties even more than this decade has differed from the eighties. This is the reason I have dedicated myself over the past six years to helping foster innovation, science, research and development, and connectedness.

*[Translation]*

Year by year, our government has endeavoured to help Canadians build a new economy through policies and programs whose sights have been set on the 21st century.

For example, we invested a billion dollars in the Canada Foundation for Innovation to help build the research infrastructure in Canada.

We created the Canada millennium scholarship fund. This January, we will begin generating over 100,000 scholarships each year to low- and middle-income post-secondary students.

We launched an Information Highway agenda—Connecting Canadians—to make Canada the most connected country in the world by the year 2000. Let us look at some of the results.

*[English]*

In Rankin Inlet in the High Arctic people have made the transition from an isolated and remote community to the global

exchange of ideas and commerce. The Internet gives them a window on the world and opens an opportunity for them to express themselves to the world.

In Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Gordon Curries, working out of his home office, beat out the competition from the big international publishing houses to win the contract to produce the official coffee table book on the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

In York, Prince Edward Island, Vesey's Seeds has used electronic commerce to increase sales equivalent to opening a brand new store with none of the overhead costs that would have been the case otherwise.

Lanark County in Ontario, not far from Ottawa, has its model on its website that speaks of the ability of the net to make distance irrelevant. "Ten seconds to Tokyo, ten minutes to the cottage, what a life" is its slogan.

*[Translation]*

Our policies, our priorities, and our investments have made an impact on the lives of Canadians. But the government can make investments in tomorrow because it has restored sanity to the nation's finances today.

Canadians enabled us to achieve a balanced budget because they were prepared to endure sacrifices, allowing us to consider how to allocate surpluses rather than how to reduce deficits.

The Speech from the Throne continues to build on these investments. It continues the same balanced approach that has succeeded so well over the past six years. At the same time, it commits this government to keeping the ratio of debt to GDP on a permanent downward track, and it promises a multi-year plan for tax reduction.

*[English]*

I would like to speak about an important objective of the throne speech, creating a dynamic economy for the 21st century. Our goal is as simple as branding Canada as one of the most forward looking and innovative nations in the world.

When future generations look back at the turbulent years on the cusp of the new millennium, they will see that some nations thrived in the midst of change. They rallied to the new demands of creating knowledge and applying it to new products and processes. When those future generations look back at who thrived in the transition to the new millennium, they will conclude that Canada was the place to be.

The 1999 Speech from the Throne reinforces the government's commitment to its long term strategy for building a more innovative economy. By deepening its action in five priority areas of its microeconomic agenda: connectedness, innovation, marketplace

*The Address*

frameworks, trade and investment, the government continues its drive to ensure that Canada is a winner in the globalized knowledge based economy. It will make major investments in productivity enhancing actions, productivity that will continue to sustain one of the highest standards of living in the world and improve the quality of life of all Canadians.

• (1545)

*[Translation]*

With the Chairs in Research Excellence program, the government has committed to work with the universities to create 1,200 new 21st century chairs in research excellence over the next three years. We have set a goal of 2,000 of these new chairs in research excellence. The chairs will enable Canadian universities to continue to attract the best graduate and post-doctoral students that can create real excitement around research in Canadian universities.

Research will be collaborative. In the 21st century, research will not be a solitary pursuit, conducted in the isolation of separate ivory towers. It will involve team-building and co-operation, domestically and internationally, so that innovation moves through the continuum from pure research to new products and processes. We will foster international collaboration and networking by Canadian researchers in universities and institutes, including the federal research facilities. In the area of technological development, we will encourage the development of technologies in every phase of the innovation continuum. This includes research collaboration in genomics, climate change and advanced engineering, trade promotion for biotechnology, information technology, and environmental technologies.

*[English]*

On market development, we will help to find new markets for the products of Canadian innovation and ingenuity. We will help to ensure that new innovations developed by researchers in our universities and government laboratories translate into new products in the marketplace.

Foreign investment is investment that brings with it technological innovation and improved access to the markets of our trading partners. It is investment that helps make Canadian industry more forward looking and more outward looking. We will replicate the highly successful team Canada model of trade initiatives and with our partners in business and the provincial governments will create investment team Canada.

In the Speech from the Throne we stated our commitment to make the investment community more aware of the unique opportunities for investment and growth in Canada. We said: "We will modernize legislation to make it easier for global corporations to locate their headquarters in Canada". Consistent with this commitment, we will put forward amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act to ensure that it provides an operating environment that can attract and retain the world's best firms.

*[Translation]*

In particular we will propose to reduce the current residency requirement for the board of directors of companies incorporated under the Canada Business Corporations Act from a majority to 25%.

This requirement will not apply to corporations where there are ownership restrictions. We recognize that a modern framework legislation must provide globally-oriented Canadian companies with the flexibility to build their global markets, investments and partnerships for the benefit of Canadians and jobs in Canada.

I am very pleased that many initiatives in the Speech from the Throne advance an agenda that has been a personal priority for me in my six years as industry minister. I refer to the Connecting Canadians initiative.

• (1550)

We have already gone a long way to making Canada the most connected nation in the world. Last March, Industry Canada's SchoolNet program linked a three-student school in Pictou Island, Nova Scotia, to the Internet.

*[English]*

With that, Canada achieved a visionary goal. Every Canadian public school, first nations school and public library wanting to be connected by the SchoolNet partnership has been brought on line. Canada has won a race where speed was of the essence. It is a race where the countries of the world that can train their populations with Internet skills will enjoy the benefits of a knowledge based economy. We are the first country in the world to build such an extensive education network, a network that connects these schools and their communities to the world.

In this session of parliament, we will push forward on the next phase of our SchoolNet program. We will increase classroom access to high speed Internet service. We will stimulate the production of Canadian multimedia content and applications.

We will recruit up to 10,000 young people to help Canadians to become better users of the Internet. These young people will train those in their communities who want to learn how to go on line and how to use the wealth of information that is available to them in that medium. They will help small businesses set up websites and use e-commerce. They will ensure the community access sites have the expertise needed for the delivery of government services over the net.

*[Translation]*

A fundamental goal of our Connectedness Agenda has been to make government a model user of the information highway—to become known around the world as the government most connected to its citizens. We aim to achieve this by 2004.

*The Address*

We will do this, in part, through an Internet site that will serve as a personal gateway for Canadians wanting government information and community content. The Internet site will also lead the world to Canadian businesses.

Finally, I do not want to leave the topic of our Connectedness Agenda without emphasizing our commitment to finishing the work we started in the last session to make Canada a centre of excellence in e-commerce.

By the end of the year 2000, we intend to have the most attractive policy environment for electronic commerce in the world. We are building a policy framework that deals with: encryption technology, public key infrastructure, consumer protection, electronic signatures, equitable tax treatment of virtual transactions, and standards to ensure the interoperability of networks and applications.

[*English*]

These are the cornerstones of electronic commerce. The government has reintroduced and the House has adopted the personal information protection and electronic documents act. It will protect personal and business information in the digital world and recognize electronic signatures. It is part of our vision to connect Canadians, to promote innovation in Canada and to brand Canada as a world leader in the knowledge based economy.

The Prime Minister has challenged Canadian businesses, especially small businesses, to take advantage of the opportunities for electronic commerce. He has challenged all sectors of Canada's economy to capture 5% of the world share of e-commerce by 2003. That would equate to \$200 billion in business every year.

The government has looked at the opportunities of the future as well as the challenges. We have identified the gaps that remain in our ability to meet those demands. Through a comprehensive agenda of policies and programs, we will fill those gaps. We will fill them with targeted programs and at the same time continue the prudent, balanced approach to making the best possible use of taxpayers' money. In this way we make Canada the place to be for all those who want to be part of a dynamic, forward looking, knowledge based economy.

• (1555)

I want especially to commend the vision shown by the Prime Minister in promoting an agenda that looks forward to how Canadians will prosper in the next century. His vision has ensured that the government's agenda is built on programs that will promote science and technology, research and development, and skills and knowledge. He has promoted an agenda for innovation. With this vision, Canada will be the best place to live in the next century.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has given us a long argument on behalf of the positive role

the new technologies will play in the life of tomorrow. That is very true.

Regardless of where we live, whether Latulipe, Sainte-Germaine, Montreal, Toronto, or anywhere else, access to technologies like the Internet brings us all closer together. We have access to a great deal of information. In theory, this gives many people an equal opportunity.

In reality, however, a problem is becoming more and more obvious. I would like to ask the minister's opinion on it. Among other things, with telephone deregulation, which is not without its drawbacks, we are beginning to realize that, within a few years, the basic rate for service in areas serviced by certain telephone companies will be close to \$40, while it will be half that in other areas.

Since access to the Internet requires a line and connection, is the minister not concerned that people in some areas will have to pay twice what others are paying to be hooked up to this technology?

Municipalities and schools will be connected, certainly, but more and more people want access at home as well. Some of them will have access via their phone line, while others will have an Internet line as part of their basic service. According to the latest CRTC decision, Internet service will have to be part of the basic service.

Is the minister concerned by the fact that the charges for basic telephone services will be twice as high in some areas as in others, depending on the company providing service? In my region, basic service has risen to over \$30, while it is around the \$20 mark in other regions. In two years, it will be \$40 for us, and \$20 for them.

Is the minister not concerned about this trend? Does the Minister of Industry intend to intervene, and not just to rely on CRTC decisions in this area?

**Hon. John Manley:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is a good one.

First off, I will say that introducing competition into the telecommunications sector has produced significant benefits. There have been reductions in price, especially for long distance calls. Our rates are now lower than those of the United States, where there is a flurry of rate reductions.

Competition is so strong here in Canada that the rates for most Canadians, and this has been the case for a long time as well in Europe, are lower than in the United States. This is a factor of competition between Canada and the United States that is so favourable to us that we can look for investment.

Problems remain. In more rural or remote regions, the cost of services is higher. There are differences in prices because competition has lowered them for long distance calls. We are in a price

*The Address*

adjustment period. We continue to have the greatest access to telephones in the world, with an access rate of some 99%.

• (1600)

So almost everyone has access to the telephone system. As mentioned, the CRTC has decided to include in the definition of basic service, access to the Intranet through a local line. That means as well, digital service and single service. These changes will come.

In situations like the one mentioned in Question Period, where significant differences exist in a very small region, I advise him to raise the matter with the CRTC. It has the power to investigate and solve problems when it is satisfied that there is an affordability problem or there are unjustified situations.

That is a short term response. In the long term, we have to be the most connected country in the world, and I totally agree that we will have to concern ourselves with providing access for everyone, not only at home but also, and immediately, in community access centres, schools and libraries.

[English]

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the Internet is the future not only for this country but for the world. Along with it comes a lot of problems in people getting access.

I understand one of the biggest problems is the infrastructure development for the Internet as well as for cable television. Municipalities are encountering that right now with the private sector at times having perhaps perceived or non-perceived direction from CRTC to basically trespass or take access from municipalities without actual municipal permission.

How does the minister see that problem and how could it be resolved?

**Hon. John Manley:** Mr. Speaker, situations do arise occasionally. Fortunately it is not that often when we consider how much development is occurring at the present time in essentially rewiring our urban areas with fibre optic facilities, in many cases replacing the cables that were already there or providing additional cable services, or, and this has sometimes been even more problematic, providing the cells for wireless service in prominent locations in enough places in a locality. The policy that has been followed is one that tries to co-operate as fully as possible with the municipalities, both in terms of obtaining access and corresponding with local concerns with respect to zoning and other considerations.

I think at the end of the day the necessity that every citizen has to the availability of telecommunications services is one that takes a high level of precedence. Where it is not possible to reconcile, sometimes it is necessary that access be determined by other means.

In a municipality if there is the need to put in significant upgrades to services, I think it would be a very short period of time before citizens became sufficiently demanding of those services. Municipal governments as well would be anxious to find ways to satisfy that.

It is also important to remember that the cost of those services needs to be taken into account in our competitive position. Probably every municipality in Canada is always looking for new ways to earn some revenue, but it is important that we not build on to the cost of telecommunications services too many additional charges which then render our costs higher than those elsewhere, not just between municipalities but between Canada and the U.S. where that cost advantage is so important to attracting investment.

• (1605)

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this whole interconnectedness the Minister of Industry talks about seems to be a deregulation allowing corporations to allow Canadians to be interconnected. What is the purpose of it? We can have a nice highway system, a nice telephone system and nice computers, but if we are still unemployed, if we are still without the basic necessities for our families, what is the whole purpose of this interconnectedness?

In light of deregulation, I would like to pose another question. If I were a fisherman in northern Saskatchewan wanting to sell pickerel somewhere, I could easily find some buyer through e-commerce, but the freshwater fish industry is regulated under freshwater fish marketing rules. I could not go to interprovincial or international trade because of the fish. Maybe that is something the minister would like to comment on, the fishing industry, interconnectedness and the purpose of this whole exercise we are going through in Canada.

**Hon. John Manley:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know about freshwater fish marketing, but I do know about fishermen in Nova Scotia who went to the local community access site when there were no fish for them to chase in the seas. They were able to complete their high school education by having access by computer in those situations to that learning, and doing it in such a way that was more respectful of their self-esteem than asking them to go into classrooms where perhaps they have children.

I have been able to see the situations in small communities across Canada where all kinds of electronic commerce opportunities are being pursued. I mention Gordon Currie from Dawson Creek, British Columbia whose clients are not necessarily in British Columbia. One is the Atlanta Olympic Committee. Others are in Hong Kong, Europe and around the world.

This is all about the jobs of the future. We all share a concern for the people who are challenged in finding jobs in the current economy, who have perhaps worked in an industry that has closed down. This is all about where the jobs are going to be in the next 10



years and how we can create them. It is about how we can give our people the skills and access to the technology they will need to fill those jobs that are certainly going to be created in a world economy. We hope to see them created in Canada first and foremost.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

I am pleased to take part in today's debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. As the Bloc Québécois environment critic, I will primarily focus on the promises made by the federal government in that area and on the initiatives that it should be taking to ensure sustainable development and preserve nature for the benefit of future generations.

I want to preface my remarks with quotes from a document published this year by the federal government, entitled "Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians".

This survey, which involved 86,000 Canadians aged 15 or over, confirms the importance of natural resources, fauna and flora for a vast majority of people. Indeed, it shows that, during the 1996 reference year, 29 million Canadians and Quebecers, or 85% of the population, took part in nature-related activities, for a total of 1.5 billion days. These nature-related activities generated 191 million trips and expenses totalling \$11 billion.

All these figures are telling me two important things. First, Canadians and Quebecers are keen participants in nature-related activities. This is why we must preserve our fauna, forests and protected areas, so that we can all continue to fully enjoy them.

• (1610)

Second, these activities have a significant economic impact, whether we are talking about outdoor activities, sports or the tourism industry. Regardless of what those who believe ecology is not compatible with economic development may think, the fact is that our environment is a profitable asset that must be preserved and developed.

Unfortunately, since it took office in 1993, the Liberal government did very little to protect the environment. Its rare initiatives were primarily designed to encroach on provincial jurisdictions and strengthen the federal government's control over natural resources rather than truly protect the environment.

The only good news is that the Liberal government seems to have woken up, probably having realized that it should not head

### *The Address*

into the next election empty-handed. But yes, let us take a quick look at a few of the measures proposed in the throne speech.

The government promises to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While the Liberals initially promised in their red book to reduce emissions by 20% by 2005—that is right, 20% by the year 2005—we recently learned that greenhouse gases have instead gone up by 20% since 1990.

That is why Bloc Québécois members will continue to make every possible effort to hold this government—because this is essential—to the commitments it made in Kyoto, to set itself specific goals and to take firm action to achieve them.

The government also intends to protect endangered species. We will continue to denounce interference in provincial jurisdictions and the lack of resources to monitor and protect endangered species. Instead of setting national standards, the federal government should provide funding—that is what it should be doing—for preserving the habitats of these endangered species.

The most sensible proposal in the throne speech was the one to clean up contaminated federal sites. Finally, a ray of hope. The government has been promising to do this for years. Finally, it seems prepared to go ahead. I am giving it the benefit of the doubt, but I intend to keep a close eye on developments.

This should be the priority of the federal government: to clean up its own backyard before telling the provinces what to do with theirs. This clean-up should also include sites contaminated by the Canadian army, such as those in my riding of Jonquière.

As I see time is passing, I will deal with a very important matter left out of the throne speech, that of genetically modified organisms. The Canadian position on the matter of the negotiation of the protocol on biodiversity is unacceptable. Over 100 countries are prepared to sign an agreement to regulate the labelling, import and export of genetically modified organisms, primarily plants, and a liability clause for companies regarding damage to the environment caused by their products.

Unfortunately, Canada is part of a small group, with the United States and four other countries, that is blocking these negotiations because they are bent on putting exports ahead of the health of Canadians and the security of their environment.

I will close my remarks with a look at the decision by Jean Chrétien to permit the import into Canada of a fuel containing plutonium, also known as MOX.

I held a press conference this morning to oppose the import of this product from the United States and Russia, without public consultation on the principle. I pointed out as well the unresolved

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problems of storing radioactive waste once the MOX has been used as a fuel in nuclear plants.

• (1615)

I can only deplore the attitude of the Minister of the Environment in this matter. While he should be concerned about clean sources of energy and sustainable development, the minister has presented nuclear energy as an attractive solution that would reduce greenhouse gases. The minister has even advocated exporting Canadian nuclear technology abroad.

When I questioned him on the subject of his government's proposal to import some one hundred tonnes of plutonium from Russian and American nuclear arms, the minister had nothing to say.

I hope he will quickly change his course in this matter, as in others, and attend to his mandate as Minister of the Environment. For this and a number of other reasons, I must tell the government it is time to act on the environment. It must do so to give future generations a safe environment.

[*English*]

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's comments on safeguarding the environment.

We know that the old bill, Bill C-48, currently called Bill C-8, the act respecting marine conservation areas, will be coming back to the House at report stage hopefully by the end of this month. I see that the Bloc has tabled many amendments to delete all the clauses in that bill.

Reform believes in a very balanced approach to protecting our environment. We believe in sustainability when areas are to be designated for conservation or protection.

I have a question for the Bloc member. What is the Bloc policy on sustainable development regarding the environment?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Reform member for his question.

For those of us in the Bloc Québécois, everything related to the environment is very important as far as sustainable development is concerned, because it is important to pass a healthy environment on to future generations.

Since 1993, this Liberal government has made huge cuts in funding to the Department of the Environment. One need only think of Bill C-32, which was passed during the last parliament. We will recall the general opposition there was to that bill. The government pushed it through with a gag order.

We submit that it is important for everyone, the general public and all parliamentarians, to be involved in everything that affects the environment. These are the priorities I defend, and shall always defend, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** It is always a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to take the floor when you are in the chair.

I would like to express our great disappointment with this throne speech. I believe it can be characterized quite simply as a throne speech offering little in the way of concrete solutions to people's concerns. It is the mark of a government that is coming to the end of its time.

I invite the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to reflect on this, and I trust that he will have some questions to ask me at the end of my speech, because I am always pleased to exchange views with him. I invite him to remember how different things would be in this House if the Bloc Québécois were not here to promote the legitimate interests of Quebec.

If we were not here, the government would be left to its own device, with its rather monolithic view of Quebec. I am taking this opportunity to tell you that we will not let the government interfere in the referendum debate.

I am well aware that, if it were up to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, given his penchant for controversy—and I believe he will allow me to say this—he would want to legislate here, in this parliament, on the referendum question, even though, as we all know, Quebec already has a referendum act. The decision will be made in a democratic fashion.

• (1620)

Guess what percentage of Quebecers took part in the 1995 referendum? Some 93.5%. This compares favourably to the figures obtained where voting is compulsory.

I am asking the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to calm down a little, to control himself, to not add fuel to the fire and to accept that this issue will be dealt with by the National Assembly and by Quebecers, who will have to make a choice.

Incidentally—and this will be of interest to my friend, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs—this past weekend I attended a congress with the rank and file in my riding of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. Whenever my constituents were given the opportunity to vote for sovereignty, they did so in very interesting numbers.

I am not an illegitimate son of sovereignty. I am a natural son of sovereignty, considering that every time the people in my riding of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve had an opportunity to vote for sover-

eignty, they did so. In fact, the minister know who the first Parti Québécois member elected at the National Assembly was. We will recall fondly that it was Robert Burns, who now sits on the bench.

I want to tell the House about a victory for democracy that took place in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. I put the following idea, which will interest the minister, to those attending the congress. In the coming days, I would like to campaign to have the Commission des institutions convene a constituent assembly with a four-fold mandate.

First, I would like Quebecers to be consulted about the wording of the next referendum question. Naturally, it would still be up to the National Assembly to decide whether or not to adopt it, but it would be interesting for Quebecers to be consulted. This would prevent the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and all the other ministers in this cabinet from saying that the question is not legitimate, because it would be based on what people wanted.

Second, I would like a constituent assembly to look into what could be called “new democratic practices”. In a sovereign Quebec—it should not be long now—what kind of ballot do we want? How can we ensure that decision-making is a truer reflection of representation? These are questions that could be raised in the context of a constituent assembly.

Third—and I know that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs will be interested in this as well—we must give some thought to a question facing modern nations. This is not something limited to Quebec or Canada. It is a question that I would say all modern nations must consider. How are we to define “citizen” as a concept? In Quebec, the view which I think is most widely held right now is that, in a sovereign Quebec, citizenship will be defined in relation to participation in a shared public culture.

This shared public culture has a number of components. First, of course, it must be rooted in French. The language of democratic participation in a sovereign Quebec will of course be French. Naturally, we hope that there will be wide participation in democratic life and in institutions. We also hope to benefit from the contribution of other communities in a context of genuine collaboration and mutual dialogue.

A constituent assembly could therefore make proposals for the wording of the referendum question, examine the issue of new democratic practices, and consider the concept of citizenship by consulting people about participation in institutions. I myself spent a few days in the United States and was trained by former congressman Kennedy, who has since left political life—but I confess I had nothing to do with it—and he explained very clearly to me the benefits of a law that, in the end, permits American legislators to measure the involvement of banks in poor communities.

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I must say, to my great satisfaction, that this proposal was greeted with barely contained enthusiasm. It will now make its way through the regional bodies to the Bloc Québécois Year 2000 congress. I would very much like the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to agree to exchange views with me on these matters.

Now, returning to the Speech from the Throne, although I do not believe I have ever strayed away from it totally, finally, as far as the government’s constitutional strategy is concerned, we can see an imprecise outline of the underlying agenda of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

• (1625)

I would once again caution him against the desire to legislate here, in this parliament, on a matter that does not concern him in the least. Moreover, I am told that the minister—a likeable man, as is common knowledge—is a man becoming increasingly the only one on side with his strategy. I trust that we will have the opportunity to discuss this together, he and I.

I would have liked to have seen some concrete measures contained in this throne speech, lacklustre as it is, with no bite, no relief, a total lack of imagination. What would prevent the government from including in the Human Rights Act—not in the Charter, since this would require an amending formula, as we know—social condition as a forbidden grounds for discrimination?

Seven provinces already have such a thing in their legislation or in their human rights codes, and it would be a formidable weapon in the battle against poverty. We are very well aware that social condition refers to people’s degree of wealth, their position in society, their place in the means of production. What would have prevented the government from passing legislation, as the United States did in 1977, on community reinvestment by the banks?

The Americans have what they call the Community Reinvestment Act. I myself spent a few days in the U.S. and was instructed by former congressman Kennedy who, since then, has left politics—and I had nothing to do with that—and who explained to me in very practical terms the benefits from this Act, which basically allows American lawmakers to measure the banks’ involvement in disadvantaged communities.

I will now focus on another issue, namely tainted blood. This is a stigma, a matter of shame for all parliamentarians. So long as the government does not correct the situation, there will be a pall over all of the House of Commons. The government ought to correct the situation, and I am referring, naturally, to the Krever commission.

This is a scandal, a real catastrophe. In the early 1990s, Canadian blood supplies were contaminated for all sorts of reasons. It is nevertheless true that, in its report—a report not prepared by the Bloc Québécois, a report by a royal commission of inquiry that cost

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taxpayers millions of dollars and needed to be called—the Krever commission called for a no fault compensation system. That means that everyone contaminated either through a transfusion or through the use of blood products would be compensated.

I would like everyone to stay, but acknowledge that is impossible. I know that those who must leave always do so out of necessity. I would have liked a debate with the minister, but that is not possible. We will have it in other forums. I think he may be a bit afraid of a confrontation with me, but that is part of parliamentary life.

I close by saying that I wished the Krever commission had been heard and that we were establishing a compensation plan without regard to the fault of those contaminated before 1986 as for those contaminated before 1990. It is a matter of humanitarian consideration. Quebec and Ontario have already compensated these categories. The government is turning a deaf ear, and I think it is shameful it is taking such an attitude.

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for his fiery speech. Even the minister he called upon was listening carefully.

• (1630)

Usually, we cannot tell. The minister appears not to be listening. This time, however, he paid great attention to the message delivered by my colleague.

I would like to ask a question to my colleague, a very thoughtful man who is very sensitive to the plight of the poorest of the poor in our society. I too work with the disadvantaged and the poor in my riding of Matapédia—Matane. Since my riding is in a remote region, communications are not so good. Major companies and multinationals are reluctant to come to my riding, if only because the airport is located in Mont-Joli and it takes close to one hour to get to the airport from my home. Given the transportation services available, this is already a problem.

I clearly recall the case of a local plant. The owners said “We are leaving the plant in Quebec City, because if we move it further east, it will mean an additional half-hour drive, because there is no air service, and half an hour is a long time for business people”.

The hon. member talked about a sovereign Quebec, and I know that he has given a great deal of thought to this issue. How could we be a little more sensitive to the plight of the poor and remote areas? How could we treat them better, just as the people in Montreal, Quebec City or the Abitibi region are treated?

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, the question makes a lot of sense and deals with sensitivity, as members will have realized.

My colleague began with a reference to our friend the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who is plagued by constitutional matters. If he took the trouble to listen more closely to the opposition parties, I think he would see a certain light that is sadly lacking in his caucus. That having been said, on the issue of poverty, I think that it involves all parliamentarians.

Why do we want to become sovereign? Because we are a nation, but we are also a nation that believes strongly in social justice. Right now, even the best governments that have sat in the National Assembly have been unable to implement a genuine policy of resource distribution and full employment.

They have been unable to do so because monetary policy is decided in Ottawa. The major levers for regulating the labour market are in the hands of the Minister of Finance, and the Government of Quebec has tools that are very secondary but that make dialogue between the parties impossible.

Members are well aware that the countries—I am thinking of Sweden and Norway—that have come close to achieving full employment have been successful in getting employers, union representatives, representatives of community groups, educators and, of course, economic decision makers to sit down together, to agree on a certain number of objectives, and to implement them. In a federal system such as ours, this is not possible.

I will give an example. It is well known that the federal government has turned around and deprived the provinces of close to \$11 billion in transfer payments. Do members think that this began with a dialogue and that the provinces were involved in these macroeconomic decisions? Of course not. This was authority speaking. It shows that federalism is incompatible with the full employment policies that Quebec will implement when it gains control of all these levers as a sovereign state.

[English]

**Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Peterborough.

In a sense my remarks directly relate to what was just said.

[Translation]

My speech will deal mainly with early childhood, and the challenge of finding the means to work along with the provinces. I believe we can make considerable progress together.

[English]

How can we as governments, federal, provincial and territorial, work together with communities to support children and their families, particularly very young children, so that the development

of those children can be as good as we can collectively make it? That is my subject.

• (1635)

The reason I have chosen that subject, in the context of the Speech from the Throne, is something which the Prime Minister said in his response to the Speech from the Throne. He said “Together with the provinces we have begun to put in place the national children’s agenda to improve supports for families and children. I believe this work has to be accelerated. So do provincial premiers. We must move as quickly as possible from talk to action. Today I challenge all governments to have in place by December 2000 a federal-provincial agreement consistent with the social union framework to strengthen supports for early childhood development, an agreement on principles and objectives on measuring outcomes and reporting to Canadians and an agreement on a five year timetable for increased federal and provincial funding to achieve our shared objectives”.

The challenge is how we can do such a deal. How can we work with the other governments in the country to do the right deal and not just any deal for children? How can we do it in about 14 months? How can we do it by December 2000?

I think the only way we can conceive of a deal is to think of it as sort of a national project for all of our children.

We have a number of elements of success in place already. The first is perhaps the whole question of knowledge. What do we know about optimum developmental paths for all children, particularly those in the zero to six population? As the finance minister said yesterday in his annual economic update, quoting Dr. Fraser Mustard, “There is powerful new evidence from neuroscience that the early years of development, from conception to age six, particularly for the first three years, set the base for competence and coping skills that will affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life”.

The science also tells us that an additional factor for success is what we do at the community level. It is not simply a question of socioeconomic status, it is what happens at the level where we all live and breath, the level of the neighbourhood. Social cohesion is a positive factor which goes beyond income in explaining why some kids do better than others. There was a recent article in the *Globe and Mail* on Port Colborne, Ontario which talked about “wovenness” as being the magic, the secret which takes us beyond income into good results for kids.

The first asset that we can bring to the table is the knowledge base which is growing exponentially in this area. The second is that the provinces are increasingly on side. It was extraordinary to hear the recent Speech from the Throne from Ontario in which the lieutenant governor said these words on behalf of her government:

### *The Address*

Your government believes that, to realize their full potential, children must get off to the best possible start in life. The most important period of development is the three years immediately following birth. That is why it is so important to nurture and support children’s development from the moment they are born.

Building on the pioneering work of world renowned expert Dr. Fraser Mustard and child advocate the Hon. Margaret McCain, the government is committed to a bold new initiative that ultimately will extend early development opportunities to every child and parent in Ontario. Recently announced demonstration projects are merely the beginning. Your government is determined to remain the national leader in early child development.

That is the Government of Ontario. It is surprising perhaps to some, considering its other social policies, but that is a great one.

We know that in British Columbia the Hon. Moe Sihota recently announced a major new initiative in the area of child care and invited federal participation once again.

[*Translation*]

We are very familiar with the case of Quebec, which made a societal promise to its children, particularly its very young ones, with its \$5-a-day child care centres. They are a kind of gold standard for the rest of the country. They are the summit we are all striving to reach, to use the vocabulary of social union.

[*English*]

We can find allies among the provinces across the country. In a meeting held in Kananaskis with the social services ministers as recently as October 26, ministers said the following:

Ministers also reviewed joint work currently under way in both social services and health sectors on early childhood development, including possible areas where governments can work together. Ministers agreed that this work should form the basis for responding to the federal government’s invitation in the Speech from the Throne to work together in this area. They committed to working with federal, provincial, and territorial ministers of health to move forward as quickly as possible on early childhood development.

• (1640)

The next day their counterparts, the ministers who constitute the provincial-territorial council on social policy renewal, made the same point:

Ministers stressed the urgent need for action on children’s issues, building on the leadership taken by provinces and territories and the co-operative work with the federal government. Ministers emphasized the need to move forward on the national children’s agenda.

Now seems to be the time for us all to go forward, as we have the provinces enthusiastically responding to the Speech from the Throne.

Of all the assets we can bring to the table, including our own efforts, the knowledge base and the provinces, the greatest assets surely are the communities themselves. Communities are where we live and breathe. Communities are where our children develop

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through schools, through play contacts, through all of the things which make life worth living in our private lives.

I find this the most exciting part. This morning I was at a breakfast meeting in Ottawa-Carleton with the Success by Six group, an extraordinary alliance spearheaded by the Ottawa-Carleton Board of Education and the United Way, bringing together 85 different entities, agencies, the voluntary sector and government departments, to work together to improve outcomes for the zero to six population. The spirit of enterprise and excitement in the room of working together to produce a kind of seamless web of services so that all children and their parents will be given optimum support was tremendous. It was heartening. We have in the nation's capital a demonstration project, one chosen by the Ontario government as well.

Last week I was in Toronto with a similar group, called the Early Years Action Group, from North York. It is happening across the country. In Vancouver we can find Opportunities for Youth. In Montreal we have Un Deux Trois Go. In other words, we have a huge resource base.

We have allies like the United Way of Canada, which we are aware of this month as its flags are fluttering across Canada to remind us of the annual campaign. This network covers 87% of Canada. There is a huge sector of civil society that wants to participate in the national children's agenda.

What do we need to do? We need a deal which is something like the Canada Health Act. The Prime Minister talks of objectives and principles. We also need a deal which deals with outcomes. The Prime Minister talks of outcomes and accountability in public reporting. We need a deal which has money. The money has to come in the form of an early childhood development services fund, with resources coming from the provinces and the federal government, accessed by communities after they have determined what they need to do the right job for kids from birth to six, so that those children will be ready to learn and ready for life by the time they enter the school system.

That is what we need to do. It means that we have to sign on a group of provinces. It means that we have to see working examples in the next 12 months of how communities can work together, such as they are doing in Ottawa-Carleton and in Ontario in general.

We need a plan which focuses on all children and, as Minister Marland of Ontario said the other day, a plan which is affordable, available and accessible to all children.

We have a huge task to complete this part of the promise of the Speech from the Throne. It will involve all of us in all of our communities doing our best to work with the provincial governments, the federal government, communities and the voluntary sector to make this dream of a national project of making all of

Canada's children as ready to learn as they possibly can be by the time they enter school a reality.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the remarks of the member for Don Valley West. I know of his personal commitment to this area.

• (1645)

I would like to recognize the member's share in the development of the points in the Speech from the Throne which we now think of as the children's agenda. We just heard that he has a fundamental understanding of the area, as well as an understanding as a member of parliament on what needs to be done to push things of this sort through.

I thought it would be interesting if the member could give us some sense of the work and the proposals of the subcommittee dealing with the children's agenda and youth at risk which he chaired in the previous parliament. Could he give some sense of that? Also, could he give us his thoughts on how that subcommittee might proceed, or is it going to proceed? What is it likely to do between now and the budget when we hope that many of the things in the Speech from the Throne will become engraved in stone?

**Mr. John Godfrey:** Mr. Speaker, the subcommittee to which the member referred is a subcommittee of the HRD committee. It is the subcommittee on children and youth at risk. So far we have only been able to produce an interim report.

First it is important to say that we are an all-party committee populated by real supporters of children. It has gone beyond partisanship. We are really working together on a common purpose.

What we have tried to do is to understand both risk factors for children, but also what are the best developmental pathways; what can we know from the science base about what works and how we can make sure that that knowledge gets across the country. The task for us between now and the budget, should our committee be reconstituted by the all seeing wisdom of the chairman of the human resources development committee, is to focus on the unfinished business.

We must determine what it is that we can do by way of encouragement and demonstration to show how communities are already doing this and that this is not an abstract reality. There is a huge amount of enthusiasm across Canada for this. The committee can highlight the successes and give us heart so that we may make national what we have been doing so successfully in communities across Canada.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I am very proud to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people

*The Address*

of the Peterborough riding and the city as well as our country. It is a great honour. Each time this occurs it makes me proud. I work hard so that my constituents will be equally proud of me.

The Speech from the Throne is being described as one which sets out the government's children's agenda. We assume that we are now moving toward a budget based on the Speech from the Throne which is going to be focused on children.

I would like to take a different approach from that of my colleague from Don Valley West who just spoke.

It is true that there was a huge emphasis on children in the Speech from the Throne. It is also true that this was not sudden. It was not something that was pulled out of a hat. It is something that has been developing. We heard one aspect on the work of the subcommittee of human resources development. It is something that has been going on since the Liberal government was elected in 1993.

I was particularly impressed by something when we began those three years of cuts, those horrific years when all Canadians paid the price of the staggering \$42 billion deficit that we inherited from previous governments. One of the things I remember in that first year of the cuts was that in my riding, when money was being taken out of the system in great quantities, new money appeared for prenatal and postnatal care. There was new money to support centres in which parents could learn to nurture their children in the best possible way. Even in those dark years the foundations for this Speech from the Throne and for what I hope will appear in the budget were already being laid.

• (1650)

I have a document which summarizes the Speech from the Throne. I will try to give some of the context for the so-called children's agenda. The context includes the fact that we have to consider parents and families before children are conceived and born. I have mentioned prenatal care and some of those aspects which we have been doing. It is mentioned again in the Speech from the Throne.

Then we have to think of the children themselves, which my colleague was just talking about. My colleague said in great detail that we have to work with the provinces and there are signs that the provinces are going to work with us.

We are going to make a third investment in the national child benefit. There are now billions of dollars in the national child benefit. These funds go directly to children and their families.

My only regret is that in Ontario the provincial government chose to take an equivalent amount away from those families on social assistance. For whatever reason, I do not know. It appears to

think there is some stigma for families on social assistance. I do not know how children carry stigma so I regret that.

The national child benefit is helping children and families directly. The government says that there will be further tax relief for children and families.

On the matter of parental leave, there is a great increase in leave for parents, a doubling of it, which I strongly support. This will help parents, and by that I mean quite literally mothers and fathers, to nurture their children. Parental leave is not for the parents, it is for the children.

It is my hope that as that provision is brought in there will be very real help, support and advice for smaller businesses that have to adjust to this new regime. I support it strongly but I recognize that tiny businesses have difficulty adjusting to changes of this type. I hope when the time comes to deal with that, there will be help for those small businesses. There are other things as well, such as making the federal government a workplace that is more family friendly.

Those are all for children. We have to think of children before they are born, after they are born and in their very early years as we were discussing. However, we cannot leave it at that. The Speech from the Throne also considers children as they become young adults, youth, teenagers and so on.

In this agenda there is a program to hire youth to staff the community Internet access sites across the country. There is the launch of exchanges Canada. Every year over 100,000 young Canadians will have a chance to move around the country. Many of us remember Katimavik with great fondness. It is great to think of the children mentioned in this agenda growing up and having this opportunity.

A very interesting program gives younger Canadians from the age of 13 an opportunity to produce their first works using traditional and new technologies in the arts, cultural, digital and similar industries. What a wonderful thing. Then there is a plan to give tens of thousands of young Canadian volunteers the opportunity to work in literacy programs.

There are prenatal children, infants and then youth. Now we go to when children are a little older. The government has already committed to the Canadian education savings grants. They are like RRSPs. Families can buy RESPs. This puts tax-free money aside to support the education of their young people. When they put that money aside, in addition they get a 20% grant up to a value of \$2,000. That is already there for children as they are growing up. Families that are looking after their infants can be preparing for their children to go to college or university later on.

*The Address*

• (1655)

There are a number of other programs of that type, particularly the Canadian millennium scholarship fund. This is a scholarship fund for well qualified but needy students, if that is the right expression, students who need the support. They will be academically good students who need financial support.

We usually say 100,000 students a year but we tend to forget that the foundation is set up in such a way that it will be 100,000 students a year for 10 years. One million Canadian students. These students are infants now and they will be cared for even better through the children's agenda. One million students will have an opportunity to receive those scholarships to help them get an education so they can lead creative and productive lives.

We want to go even further than students in college and university. We started with children at the prenatal stage.

The government in the Speech from the Throne has committed to increasing the funding for the granting councils. Those are the councils which fund social science research, natural science research, medical research. They are the councils which support the arts and so on. Those are the ones which allow our most creative people to fulfil themselves so they can make Canada a much better place. When today's infants grow up, they will be in a much richer society.

I mentioned the Medical Research Council. In the same vein, the Speech from the Throne said that we will table legislation to fund the Canadian institutes for health research. This is going to be an extraordinary development for the Medical Research Council which supports medical research now. It will link the Medical Research Council to research institutes and institutions, to practising hospitals all across the country, to local cancer societies like the one in Peterborough, to community colleges like Sir Sandford Fleming College in Peterborough which have programs to look after the elderly and conduct research. The new Canadian institutes for health research will help every Canadian in the whole country to become healthier.

It has been a great pleasure for me to speak in this throne speech debate. I look forward to the budget which as we all know is necessary to put these wonderful policies into effect.

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague as he discussed the throne speech. In particular, I found interesting the issue of the Canadian institutes for health research. It is a new idea to me. Can the hon. member explain what exactly these institutes will be doing and how that ties in with a children's agenda?

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I would have to say that had I been giving a different

speech, this is one of the most significant developments not only in research, but in the application of research results in Canada in recent years.

This is a confederation. The strength of a confederation is that all the different parts of it have a chance to be creative. If one lives in Nova Scotia, one can be creative within the Nova Scotian context. If one lives in Alberta, one can be creative within the Alberta context. In addition, because it is a confederation, one can be creative at the national level. One can take an idea in Nova Scotia or an idea in Quebec and bring it up to the national level and then to the international level.

• (1700)

The danger of confederation as far as research is concerned is that if we are not careful we will have lots and lots of people all doing their own thing, all reinventing the wheel and so on, without this co-ordination.

The Canadian institutes for health research will be linked centres all the way across the country that will draw on the expertise of their regions and feed it in to the national scene so that when there is a good idea somewhere it will not be lost. By the way, it will not simply be lost in the morass of information that exists in our world. Nor will it be lost by someone going to the United States or some other jurisdiction. It will capture that idea and bring it forward to the benefit of all Canadians.

The federal government has always been the main engine of medical research, but there has always been other research. All sorts of hospitals, institutes and organizations are doing research of some sort. The purpose of this new system of Canadian institutes for health is to capture all that creativity to the benefit of all Canadians and, I do not think it is immodest, to the benefit of the health of everyone on the globe. I thank my colleague for her question.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend from Peterborough about a very important growing problem in the country, the issue of homelessness.

The throne speech talked about a general vision of the country but there is no reference to homelessness. Even more important, yesterday I was in London, Ontario, for the financial statement and fiscal update of the minister of finance. When I looked through that statement I did not see any reference whatsoever to homelessness. I am wondering whether or not this worries the hon. member.

Just the other night I was walking toward the Congress Centre and there were some 1,400 Liberals at a fundraiser. I think it cost \$350 a plate. As I was walking with a certain friend who shall be unidentified, a couple of homeless guys were standing outside asking for money. It just struck me as rather ironic that this friend



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of mine, a very distinguished member of the House, would be stopped by these two homeless people. They knew who was the Prime Minister. They called out my name and things of that sort. I did not have the heart to tell them that the Prime Minister was having a fundraiser at the Congress Centre, because it cost \$350 each to get in.

It struck me as strange, when we have a \$10 billion surplus for this coming fiscal year and around \$100 billion accumulating over the next five years, that in the 45 minute speech yesterday by the Minister of Finance there was not even a reference to homelessness.

I am wondering whether the member across the way shares my concern that the Minister of Finance is forgetting about a very important growing social problem, not only in my province but in his as well.

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I share the concern of my colleague from the NDP about this matter, but I do not share his concern about the interest of the government in it.

I can give a couple of examples from my own riding. In Peterborough the federal government funded the forum on homelessness attended by one of my friend's colleagues. That forum and the study associated with it identified the nature of homelessness very seriously in a rural small town environment as distinct from some of the larger urban communities.

Having identified those problems moneys have started to flow to solve them. For example, there is in Peterborough now a housing resource centre which helps people, young people, older people, and very old people in some cases, search more effectively for a home. The federal government was able to work with the county and the city to deal with that.

Even more recently we had a meeting with representatives of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, one of the federal government's main arms in this regard. Like my colleague I would urge the government to give Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation more resources in the social housing area. Nevertheless, in my riding two weeks ago CMHC was able to fund a substantial project, a refuge for homeless women.

• (1705 )

I agree that homelessness is a serious problem. It is my sense, and I hope it proceeds very quickly, that the federal government is beginning to tackle these problems. I thank my colleague for his question.

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my comments on the throne speech delivered on October 12 in my first language.

*[Editor's Note: Member spoke Cree]*

*[English]*

The throne speech is entitled "Building a Higher Quality of Life for All Canadians". My understanding is that we are trying to provide a better quality of life in the future for our children. A large part of the throne speech is directed to children and the agenda of the government to improve the quality of life of children to ensure they have a good foothold in the new millennium, to ensure they have an economic future, an educational future and are wealthy, healthy Canadians.

I challenge the government not to care only about certain sectors of the population. It should truly live up to its promise that all Canadians will have the same opportunity regardless of where they live.

We can look at the interconnectedness which the Minister of Industry highlighted. Internet connection will be a major part of Canadian development in a very short time. However, small communities in my riding cannot necessarily make a career or a livelihood by bringing Internet into their homes. We live in the middle of the forest. We live in the middle of abundant resources. This is the direction we should be working toward. We should be training our people to be engineers so that they can make master plans of the resources in those regions.

When Canadians were told to wait a month until the House of Commons returned to listen to a throne speech in October we thought of a grand vision. I am trying to make the best of the throne speech. I understand that our children and their journey are a major part of it.

*[Editor's Note: Member spoke Cree]*

*[English]*

We must afford our children the wisdom of our elders so that they have the strength of their families and are connected with their communities. Then children can stand with pride knowing who they are and where they are going. They can figure out what is right and what is wrong in life and can go forward with that knowledge.

In the throne speech a promise was given to a certain group of elders that should be truly recognized, our veterans. As we are close to Remembrance Day I wanted to raise this issue. We talk about merchant marines, the mariners who supplied our troops abroad with many provisions in times of war. These people were not truly recognized in an honourable way and have been asking to be treated equally.

The other veterans I would like to speak about at this time are aboriginal veterans. Aboriginal veterans in some cases disenfranchised themselves from their treaty status to fight for peace in the world. Upon returning home other veterans were afforded economic development opportunities and land grants, but these grants and opportunities were not given to aboriginal veterans. They were not

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treated equally. I ask my colleagues in the House on the government side to look at treating aboriginal veterans fairly and equally.

• (1710)

As a child grows education is crucial in this day and age. There are young pages in the House of Commons who are seeking knowledge and gaining life experiences just by being here. That is what I challenge other youth to do as well. They should leave the schools, move around Canada and experience life elsewhere.

The throne speech challenges all of us to experience the beauty of Canadian geography, history and people. I challenge people in Quebec to go to Saskatchewan and to the north. I challenge people in British Columbia and the prairies to go to downtown Toronto to see what life is like in a big metropolitan centre. I challenge the Blue Jays to play rubberball with children in La Loche. I challenge the Edmonton Oilers to play street hockey with homeless people in downtown Winnipeg.

We should enjoy each other's lives and the gifts that we have. Let us not put ourselves on a higher pedestal. We are all Canadians. We all live on the same beautiful land. Just because some people have a different paycheque than others, it does not afford them a different status.

I learned about the economy in grade 12 economics. Money can circulate as many times as it can in one region and afford a certain amount of value. If the Canadian dollar is to retain its value in world markets, we have to circulate the Canadian dollar as many times as we can in Canada before it leaves the country. I also extend this advice to certain regions.

I look at my region and the people of Churchill River. We have very few supermarkets. We have very few butcher shops. We do not have an abundance of hardware stores. All our shopping and our economy are bound to the southern urban centres of Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford and Meadow Lake. That is the sad place we are reaching in rural Canada. Farm communities are evaporating as we speak. Credit unions, schools and hospitals have been dismantled because the community no longer functions. That is the sad fact in rural and regional Canada.

The urban centres cannot demand all the economy and strength of the country. We have to share from coast to coast to coast. We cannot all be Torontonians, Montrealers, or people of Regina and Vancouver. It is not the dream of all Canadians to live in a huge city in suburban Canada. I ask members to imagine living in the north, living in the wilderness. Maybe with a satellite dish they could make billion dollar deals right there with e-commerce, as the industry minister said. One does not have to be in a city to do this. It could be done from one's home in Pierceland, La Ronge or Cold Lake.

I challenge Canadians to treat each other with respect. I have seen an abundance of ill feelings among certain sectors and

peoples in the country which just does not flow with the Canadian vision. We have founded a nation where people from all over the world have found a home. I say a home because that is basically what we are talking about. The House of Commons is a home for Canada.

We must not forget that for generations aboriginal people have held this country and land together, living in harmony with its nature and its unique gifts and challenges in a respectful way. That is the challenge I extend to everyone. Let us live in that essence into the new millennium. Let us live together. Let us welcome people who find refuge here perhaps because of hard times in other parts of the world. We have a lot to offer. Let us not point them to the urban slums of our country. Let us share the beauty of our villages, hamlets and little settlements of 15 people that are so proud.

In my riding there is a community that built its own school out of logs. One could not see a prouder student attending a school than those whose school was built by their aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers.

Now we have the vision that a technologically innovative future is a school that is interconnected. Could one of our grandparents connect a computer? No. It is our 12 and 15 year olds that connect the Apples and IBMs together, but we still have to put the two generations together. They cannot travel on different journeys. We have to envision them living in harmony together.

• (1715)

This opportunity to speak gives me the opportunity to thank the people I represent. As I mentioned, this seat belongs to the people of Churchill River. They are the ones who empower me to say these words. That is the story I wish to tell.

I come from a region that is called a boreal forest. It is basically in the middle of the bush.

*[Editor's Note: Member spoke Cree]*

*[English]*

These are the people of the woods.

All the highways in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba go north and south. The infrastructure is not the same in the north. The north is basically a colony to the south. Canadians have to stop treating the north like a food supply, a wood supply and a mineral supply. We have also at one time provided Britain with all the furs they needed. All the beavers which came from the north were sent over there. We cannot do that anymore. We must be given due respect. We make our living in the north and envision our people and our children growing up in the north and sharing with the rest of the world. It cannot be done without us.

*The Address*

There is no master plan for infrastructure in northern development. We see logging roads and mining roads but when are the communities going to be connected? When are the dots going to be connected to the northern villages? We used to travel along the river east and west, but our highways are all north and south. These roads do not connect our communities at all.

For many years we have had major discussions on national parks. I have one in my riding. I believe six future parks are being committed for ecological integrity, national identity and for preservation and conservation. These parks are targeted for the boreal forest. However, we have to talk with the community members, the people who make their living off the land. These people cannot be relocated.

CMHC has brought in housing programs to urbanize northerners. Northern trappers and hunters have never been agrarian people. We have never lived in a commune for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We were hunters and gatherers who went 30, 40 or 100 miles to get the goods and bring them back to our families. These people moved around. The expanse is huge. It is not like an agrarian centre where the farmers stayed in one central area. The hunter-gatherer society was a totally different concept. We cannot impose an agrarian principle on a hunter-gatherer. Going into the bush is like going into a new world. Welcome it because it is a beautiful place.

We see the head offices of industrial and corporate developments in Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver but they have no presence in the north. They have to leave legacies. I challenge institutions such as universities, research centres and hospitals. I challenge anyone in the House to identify anything that the Hudson's Bay Company has left in our northern villages. Not one swing, not one slide and not one hospital bed has been left by the Hudson's Bay Company in any of our northern communities. That is a shame. That is not what corporate consciousness should be like here in Canada or in the world.

I challenge the federal government to take leadership in northern development. We have a department called Indian Affairs and Northern Development that has been comfortable with identifying north of 60 as the north. The north is not north of 60. It is further south than that. The 55th parallel or even the 53rd or 52nd parallel in some of our provinces is truly defined as the northern half of our provinces.

I want to touch on the agricultural crisis that is growing and offer my perspective on this whole process. The throne speech was very remiss in not identifying the farm income crisis. The whole industrialization of the agricultural industry has taken its toll on the independent farmer. It is beyond many of the factors that have come into play. There are multinational interests.

There are four or five multinational companies that control the food and drug industry in the world. They are not in this debate.

We have farm aid, which I just recently acknowledged. Country music is near and dear to many people in the country. Willie Nelson throws a major farm aid benefit in the U.S. The non-profit farm aid corporation identifies its concerns with the multinational interests in farming. They say that no matter how much money or how much aid the farmers get, unless the corporations ease up on the input and output costs of the farm, it is the same corporations controlling both ends. They basically have the farmers in the middle, in the crunch.

• (1720)

The whole issue of floods, droughts and the extreme conditions we are getting from climate change will have an impact on the agricultural industry for years to come. It is not only a short term problem, it will be a very long term issue.

In one of my local papers I was bold enough to raise the idea that maybe a royal commission should be commissioned to report on the family farm in order to protect it. Let us document 1999 and the year 2000. Let us show our children in documented form how the evolution of the farm came to be in Canada, where it should be going, what the factors are and who had their hands in the farm industry and economy.

Farmers only get mere cents. I understand that because in my riding there wild rice farmers, ranchers and trappers. I come from a generation of trappers and hunters. When the fur industry fell down nobody helped us. We had to look at ourselves and where we were going. The fur industry is still there.

The people just love living off the land. There is pride living off the land and being able to provide one's family with the food and shelter they need. A lot of our urbanized people who had lost touch with the land have regained a whole new connection with respect to the beauty of it.

My father still goes out on the land, as did my grandparents before that. That is the connectedness that we have to give our children for the future, as well. Let us not remove them and put them all in an urban centre.

The throne speech contains grand promises for children, health and the environment. We have the economy, diversity, technological change and all these exchanges being promised in the throne speech. The challenge now for Canadians is to push the government to make good on its promises. We have to make sure that the surpluses are spent right, that they are not going only into political strongholds or pockets. We have to make sure that all Canadians benefit.

I am here to bring a message, on behalf of the people in the constituency I represent, that we are in northern Canada. The people in Churchill River consider themselves as northerners. We cannot be brushed off as "those people from the west". We are living in western Canada but we live in the northern region, in the northern climate of the country. It is a whole new and different

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economy with a new and different social community. When mining and timber industries make plans for one's backyard, it does have an effect on the north but does not affect the social or economic well-being in the country.

On behalf of our people, I beg for a change in the freshwater fish marketing industry that I spoke about earlier. The government is deregulating airlines, railroads, power utilities, telephone utilities and everything else.

We have a freshwater fish marketing that does not even allow our people to sell across the border. The people in the community of Pierceland, just a stone's throw away from the Alberta border, cannot even sell their pickerel to Cold Lake which is just across the border. They have to sell it all the way down in Winnipeg which is one big fishing plant. By then the fish is not fresh anymore. It is old, frozen fish by the time it leaves that plant.

Anyone wanting to buy fresh fish should come to the northern lakes and buy it right off our docks. We will fillet it, dry it, even smoke it and ship it. Maybe we can use e-commerce to make us economically viable as world traders. The deregulation of the freshwater fish industry has to happen. It is a far cry today from what it actually intended to be 30 years ago. I think a lot of northern fishers were blindsided by the promises of the federal government.

I congratulate the government for making bold promises, but we, as Canadians, are here to say that we have to go through with our promises, especially when we are dealing with the future of children. If it is a children's agenda, let us not sway from the promises being made. We will hold the government true to that.

• (1725 )

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will ask one straightforward question and then I will follow up with a second question.

I am interested in knowing what language the member started his speech off with because I was fascinated by it.

I commend the member on his speech. It is seldom that we see people get up in the House and speak from their hearts as this man obviously did. When we speak from the heart we put all our political stripes aside. We have to admire a person for being able to do that when we know that he truly means it and that it is not some canned speech that has been written for him by some other group. I appreciate that.

Let us get back to the throne speech and the title, "A Better Quality of Life". The member may know that I spent some time in the Indian affairs department as one of the critics. My mission was going across the country and visiting as many reserves as I

possibly could, which ended up being several hundred, and visiting with grassroots people. I did not visit with the elite. I did not visit with chiefs and council. I talked to people face to face and tried to see the problems from their point of view.

I will give the member one example of the reserve in my riding. It is in the most beautiful spot one could ever ask for in Alberta. It borders the grand Banff National Park. It is a huge reserve with a tremendous amount of agricultural land and many hills and trees. It has a river running through it and a huge lake where a lot of people gather for skiing, boating and things of that nature. Highway 1, a major interprovincial highway, runs through the reserve. Approximately 10 million people drive through this reserve on an annual basis as they head for Banff National Park.

However, on this reserve the unemployment rate is 90%. The debt load is huge. Approximately 16% of children who start their education complete it by grade 12. Most of them are in schools outside of the reserve. Poverty is at its greatest. In the member's view, what kind of quality of life does the throne speech promise for the people who are suffering on many of these reserves?

**Mr. Rick Laliberte:** Mr. Speaker, my first language is Cree. I was raised speaking Cree and I had to go to school to learn English. I am a very fortunate person to have that language. It is a gift from the Creator. In order to speak from the heart, as I did in my speech today, I had to open with my language. That is how I opened the door to share that with the House.

The member highlighted one reserve in his question and wanted to know what the throne speech had to offer. The throne speech aside, the relationship between aboriginal communities, mine included, and the rest of Canada is a major challenge that started 500 years ago. The challenge is whether we can live with each other's laws.

I say each other because we have grown accustomed to and have lived under the British North America Act and the laws that came through Britain and this House for all of Canada. However, can Canadians who came to this continent live with the aboriginal laws and policies? That is where the empowerment is.

Aboriginal people could see that giving up a way of life and allowing other people to live on their land was a major investment. However, if those people can build their houses, build their roads, teach their children, preserve their language and make their people healthy, then they will feel a sense of pride that will take them and ignite them and keep the cycle of life going.

• (1730 )

It is not a linear journey; it is a cycle. We only serve one cycle. So when aboriginal people are given an opportunity to prove to their community that they can achieve something in a respectful

way, that is the investment that will take us into the next generations.

With respect to the throne speech, I said that I would not get political in my speech, so I cannot slam anybody for not having anything in there. What we have to do in the relationships we have in the new millennium, among our communities, is to live with each other and respect each other's laws and ways of life. That will take us forever.

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, like my Reform colleague, I would like to thank the member for Churchill River for opening the door to the discussion of the diversity of this country, which is the strength of our country.

Unfortunately the Liberal government tends to govern from the point of view of urban Canada. That creates a lot of problems. One of the existing rural problems is the farm crisis in western Canada. It is very difficult to convince the people who live in urban surroundings that the problem is real. It is much like the situation faced by constituents of Churchill River, who live in the northern part of Saskatchewan, which is different from the southern, rural, agricultural based economy. We can see why there are so many difficulties encountered, certainly in the House, in getting the message through to the government.

It is much like the problems of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board, which exists in my constituency. Not only is my riding agricultural, but because we have freshwater lakes we also have fishermen. The problems of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board in determining where fish can be sold can be compared to the farmers who face restrictions and penalties under the Canadian Wheat Board.

We have a lot of problems. If we are really going to look at a new way of governing the people of this country we have to look at new vehicles and measures.

Does the member have any ideas on how we can get rid of institutions like the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board and the Canadian Wheat Board, or at least make them more flexible so they meet the needs of the people they are supposed to serve?

**Mr. Rick Laliberte:** Madam Speaker, I had an opportunity to travel through the city of Dauphin. It was the first time I realized that it was in the interlake area.

I dare not compare the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board to the Canadian Wheat Board. Freshwater fish have to be fresh. We cannot wait for fish to go to market. Wheat and other grains can wait. We see silos and holding elevators all over the prairie provinces. These containers can hold their grains for months on end, but we cannot hold fish. It has to be fresh.

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The most delicate fish is pickerel. It is the best fish to be eaten, right out of the lake, into the frying pan. If we buy it in markets it is drowned fish. My uncle, who is a professional fisherman, tells us that.

Fresh fish is not governed by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board. That is frozen fish. It is like McCain's fish and chips in the store. That is not the nutritional fish that comes from our lakes.

We cannot compare the Canadian Wheat Board to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board. That is all I can say. There is no comparison. The federal control that the hon. member was referring to is a whole different thing. When we talk about freshwater fish, let us keep it fresh. Let us sell it as directly as we can to the markets. Let us bring the processing plants back to those little communities. The processing jobs, the jobs of the people who fileted the fish, who gutted the fish in our little plants, all went to Transcona. It is a sad fact. There could have been one or two jobs in Williston Lake, which has a community of 200 people.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is truly an honour for me to speak today on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Before I begin, however, I would like to give a bit of an explanation of the context of the aspect of the speech on which I am going to concentrate: the chairs of excellence.

[*English*]

In my riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine there is a university. It is the Loyola Campus of Concordia University. On the Island of Montreal we have four major universities.

[*Translation*]

There is the Université de Montréal, McGill, the two campuses of Concordia, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. I have had the honour and the privilege of studying at three of these: Concordia, McGill and UQAM.

So, when the representatives of the universities came to see me after the 1997 election to tell me of their need for more money for the research councils, funding for innovation, for infrastructure, and for the researchers themselves, I was very pleased to be able to support their approaches to the government for this funding.

[*English*]

As we all know, in previous budgets the Canadian government announced the creation of the Canadian Foundation for Innovation with a \$1 billion endowment fund. The foundation was to create the physical infrastructure which the universities, institutes of re-

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search and the councils require. However, we need the people. We need the researchers.

We have been hearing a lot about the brain drain. One thing is clear. There has been a certain amount of brain drain in terms of our qualified researchers and our young graduates who, because of the lack of opportunities here, have been lured away to universities in the United States and elsewhere to undertake important research activities.

It was a great pleasure for me to learn that our government, through its throne speech, took on the challenge. By doing so it has started a bold venture that will be one of the cornerstones of our effort as a government to ensure that Canada is the place to be, the place to live, the place that people want to come to and the place where people want to stay in the third millennium to take full advantage of the knowledge based society and economy of the 21st century.

What is that bold venture? That bold venture is the creation of the 21st century chairs for research excellence. The government announced in its throne speech that through the research granting councils, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Medical Research Council and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, it will be funding the creation of 1,200 new 21st century chairs for research excellence in Canadian universities over the next three years.

That is a major investment. We can be assured that our Canadian universities have received the information on this new project with great joy and happiness.

We will be investing in the first year \$60 million, in the second year \$120 million and in the third year and every subsequent year \$180 million.

• (1740)

One of the objectives is not simply to rest on our laurels with 1,200 chairs, it is ultimately to bring that number up to 2,000 chairs of research excellence in the third millennium.

What are these chairs of excellence going to do? They are going to be two tiered. One will be to attract our established star researchers who already have a proven record in their field of conducting leading research endeavours. The second tier will be to attract our rising stars. We have been losing on both fronts over the last years. Everyone knows that the government in its fight to eliminate the deficit had to reduce funding to the research councils. That obviously had a boomerang effect. It meant that there was less money for researchers. Therefore, researchers who wanted to continue conducting their work in some cases had to look elsewhere.

By creating these 1,200 chairs of research excellence, and hopefully bringing them up to 2,000, we will be able to keep our

proven star researchers and attract the rising stars. All Canadian universities will be able to participate.

To receive funding the universities will submit proposals to a competitive peer review process which will be administered by the three granting councils.

This program sends a strong message, a strong signal that Canada is the place to be for research and development in the third millennium, that Canada is serious about fostering and nurturing a healthy research environment in Canada and that we are serious about nurturing and fostering a strong economy through knowledge and innovation.

This is what we call added value. The Canadian Foundation for Innovation, the expansion of the networks of centres of excellence and the development of the Canadian institutes of health research that the hon. member for Peterborough spoke about at great length are the cornerstones that will ensure that Canada will be the place to be for research and innovation in the third millennium. Our renewed and increased funding to the granting councils is the added value, along with the 21st century chairs of research excellence.

I am not an innovative person, so I have a difficult time imagining what else we can do. However, I am sure that with all of the bright minds in the House we will get many suggestions on what we can do to ensure that we are the place to be.

By creating these 1,200 chairs of research excellence we will have the best people doing research in Canada, which will create our next generation of the world's best. The world's best will be here in Canada. Our young researchers will seek out the top opportunities for work and they will choose Canada, both our young researchers in Canada as well as those from elsewhere. Graduate students will be looking for leaders, proven stars in research, to assist them in their research projects. Because there will be the first tier for the star researchers with a proven track record, they will want to come to our Canadian universities to complete their graduate and post-graduate studies.

• (1745)

The program for the 21st century chairs for research excellence builds on the comprehensive strategy to boost innovation that this Liberal government has been implementing over the last three years. As I mentioned, that includes a \$1 billion endowment for the Canada foundation for innovation, the expansion of the networks of centres of excellence, the Canadian institutes for health research with \$500 million over three years and the renewal of funding to our granting councils.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. member and some of her government colleagues have finally recognized the brain drain phenomenon. The number of people for instance going to the U.S. from Canada has grown from 17,000 to about 86,000 in I believe the last 12

years. It is very, very important. The fact is that Nortel is losing 300 to 400 software engineers per year to the U.S. This is very, very important.

The hon. member seems to believe with some level of 1970s Liberal economic naivete that all this can be solved with government intervention. This is despite the fact that most of the companies that are affected are pointing to the tax system as having a significant and deleterious impact on our ability to keep people here.

There are three areas that are raised most frequently by the high tech sector. The capital gains tax system is effectively twice as oppressive in Canada than in the U.S. That affects those in the high tech sector because of stock options. Also, our top marginal tax rate kicks in at \$60,000 in Canada. The equivalent top marginal tax threshold in the U.S. does not occur until \$420,000 Canadian.

I would suggest that some of those stars we are trying to keep are probably in that over \$60,000 tax level, so it is very important that we address those issues. I look forward to the hon. member's comments.

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings:** Madam Speaker, I recognize that there has been some brain drain. I also recognize the problem in Canada that there are people who have skills and training, but because of the lack of a standardized recognition of licences and diplomas from province to province, Canadians have a hard time being mobile from province to province.

I will not dispute the figures the hon. member just mentioned. I have not looked at those figures so I cannot state whether or not they are accurate. Given that your party has recently suffered—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I must interrupt the hon. member and ask her to address her remarks through the Chair, please.

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings:** Madam Speaker, you are quite correct.

Given that the hon. member's party has recently suffered from its own brain drain with a member moving from the Progressive Conservative Party over to the Liberal Party of Canada, I will take that as an example of the hon. member having more personal experience about brain drain than I have.

The hon. member talks about the issue of higher taxes here in Canada as compared to the United States. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that our personal income taxes are higher, approximately 10% I believe it is. He may correct me on that. However, it is also known that our payroll taxes are much lower

### *The Address*

than those of most of the countries in the G-7, including the United States if I am not mistaken. I may be corrected if I am mistaken.

It has already been announced. The Minister of Finance already discussed the economic outlook for the next couple of years. I believe it is clear there will be a lessening of the personal income tax burden. There already has been.

● (1750)

Over the last couple of years \$16 billion has been cut from personal income taxes. That is where the 10% comes in. It has come out to approximately 10% lower income taxes paid by the average Canadian. There has been a steady decrease in personal income taxes.

In the last budget we removed the 3% surtax which the Progressive Conservative Party established when it formed the government. That in itself is a major impact. We will be reducing taxes. However, we will not do anything which will put into peril the health of our economy and put us back into a deficit position.

**Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise in the House today to participate in the throne speech debate.

First I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Her Excellency our new Governor General on her historic appointment. I wish her nothing but the very best of luck in the years ahead with her new and important responsibilities.

The government's throne speech is a blueprint which lays the foundation for the government's plans in the years to come. As we approach the new millennium, there is an unprecedented optimism in Canada's future which is captured in the eloquence of the throne speech. What an unbelievable change from just a few short years ago.

In 1993, the last year of the Conservative government, Canada's fiscal house was crumbling on its very foundation. The previous Conservative government let the debt skyrocket out of control for years and was operating with a \$42 billion deficit. The country was literally teetering on the brink of financial disaster. Liberals understood that if Canada was to be a global force to be reckoned with in the new millennium, we absolutely had to get this country back on track. Canada needed bold leadership, sound fiscal policy and unparalleled political courage to restore our national future.

Six years later, we have delivered. Canada has moved from red ink to black ink, from pessimism to pride. In four short years we eliminated the deficit and recorded a budgetary surplus of \$3.5 billion in 1998, the first surplus in 28 years. We have regained the capacity to make choices of how we build the future. We are now positioned to be a leader in the new and ever changing global arena.

*The Address*

This throne speech for the millennium builds upon our original and balanced and comprehensive plan. We are committed to staying the course in an effort to improve the lives of each and every Canadian. Our plan includes developing our children and youth, leaders for the 21st century; enhancing our dynamic economy; strengthening the quality of our health care; ensuring the quality of the environment; building stronger communities; and advancing Canada's place in the world.

In the new global economy, knowledge and technological innovation are the cornerstones of a higher standard of living and a better quality of life. This government is committed to Canada's role as a global leader in high technology. This is very good news, especially for my constituency.

My riding of Nepean—Carleton is situated in the hub of Canada's fastest growing region of high technology firms, Silicon Valley North, as it has become known. This region is responsible for 75% of Canada's telecommunications research and development. It boasts almost 1,000 advanced technology companies that employ more than 48,000 people.

From rather humble beginnings with agencies like the National Research Council and the Communications Research Establishment to companies like Bell Northern and Computing Devices, small companies have grown into large companies. These companies in turn have spawned other companies featuring new products and new technology. This cycle continues to create jobs and prosperity and export dollars for Canada.

It is vital that the government remains committed to promoting Canada's role as a leader in new technologies. Month by month the government's policies aimed at growth in this sector of the economy continue to bear fruit.

Yesterday, Nortel Networks announced that it plans to invest \$330 million in Canada to enhance its booming optical networking business, tripling overall production capacity by next year. Montreal and Ottawa are the greatest beneficiaries of this major capital infusion. New high tech facilities will be constructed in both cities with approximately 2,300 new jobs shared between the two. In total, Nortel expects to invest \$210 million in Ottawa and an additional \$120 million in Montreal.

• (1755)

Just last July, JDS Uniphase, which employs close to 2,400 workers in my riding, unveiled its new 500,000 square foot research facility in Nepean.

Both announcements and the scores of others we hear on a regular basis from this industry are indicative of the high level of confidence in Canada's high technology future and the future of the Ottawa area as Silicon Valley North. This is a clear sign that globally renowned companies on the cutting edge of the new

information technologies recognize that Canada is indeed the place to be in the 21st century.

I will say a few words about the finance minister's fiscal update which he delivered yesterday. It is clearly a fundamental and integral component of the government's plans for the years ahead as expressed in the throne speech.

Profound congratulations are in order for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday he delivered an economic statement that can only be described as extraordinary. He has done an absolutely superb job. Together, the throne speech and the economic and fiscal update are a one-two punch for Canada that moves us into a class by ourselves. Together these two documents show tremendous leadership and vision by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance's economic statement is consistent with what the government has said all along, that the Canadian economy is very strong and our finances are very sound. Unemployment is at a decade-long low. Interest rates and inflation are both under control. The forecast of unprecedented budget surpluses over the next five years is staggering.

I applaud the finance minister's pledge to keep an open and transparent budget planning process. The more Canadians know about and have input into our economic situation, the better the government can work to the benefit of all Canadians.

I wish to express my unqualified support for the fact that the government is refusing to be complacent about fiscal responsibility. The openness and care with which the contingency reserve funds are to be handled and the commitment to never fund tax relief with borrowed dollars are vitally important. I am sure this is a great comfort to Canadians.

Let me talk about our future prosperity, the foundation for which has been laid by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the government.

First and most crucial, yesterday's economic and fiscal update made it abundantly clear that skills, knowledge and building a more innovative economy remain the critical investment priorities of this government. Beginning at the earliest stages of development right through to post-secondary education and beyond, the government's plan for the future displays a lifetime commitment to our children for their lifetime.

I speak of the extension of parental EI benefits, of the \$7 billion national child benefit system, of the \$1.2 billion Canadian opportunities strategy, and of the Canada education savings grant, as merely the beginning of the initiatives which the government will take on.

The investment in Canadian prosperity does not stop there. It is well acknowledged that the societies which will thrive over the



*The Address*

next decade not just economically but in all aspects are those societies which excel at innovation. We must foster an economic environment which will make our brightest minds want to stay and innovate in Canada.

The proposed multi-year program for sustained and broad based tax relief is a fundamental component of our economic and fiscal plans. The underlying philosophy of the government's approach to tax cuts were conveyed in yesterday's economic statement.

I quote the Minister of Finance directly: "There are many reasons for reducing taxes. However, there is one I would like to mention because it is too frequently overlooked. It is quite simply that Canadians are entitled to keep more of the money they earn. After all, they worked for it. It is theirs". Those are the words of our finance minister, a true tax cutter.

The reduction of employment insurance premiums for the sixth consecutive year will also put a further \$1.2 billion into the pockets of Canadians. The determination of the government to make our business tax system internationally competitive will keep jobs, and of equal importance, brain power, innovation and excellence in Canada where they belong.

Let me take this opportunity to say a few words concerning how the throne speech relates to Canada's place in the world. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that Canadians want their government to play an active, independent and internationalist role in the world.

What are our responsibilities as one of the most peaceful and prosperous countries on the face of the planet? There is an old saying that to whom much has been given much is expected. The world has the right to expect a lot from Canada through our involvement in the global community and we must not let it down.

• (1800)

We have made and continue to make significant contributions to peacekeeping and international development. With Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor, just to mention some of the more significant deployments, we have the largest contingent of Canadians abroad since the Korean war. With the recent announcements of more funds for international development assistance, combined with our peacekeeping, Canada is doing its share, but there is still much to do.

Our foreign minister's human security agenda which seeks to enhance the safety of civilians in armed conflicts is in my view one of the most important foreign policy initiatives to come out of this country in decades. While we have made progress on the land mines issue and the International Court of Justice, the challenges ahead are immense.

To sum up, this is a throne speech that exudes confidence in Canada, our economic and social future, as well as our privileged place in the family of nations. It is a throne speech that speaks to

our achievements and looks ahead to the challenges and great opportunities that Canada faces in the 21st century.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, once again I heard about the quality of life. The hon. member knows that Canada was chosen by the United Nations as being the best country in which to live. He also knows that if Indian reserves are factored in then that moves us to 35th. That is a quote from the United Nations. It is then far worse than some countries, even Mexico and Jamaica, with the life on the reserves factored in, with the poverty, the turmoil and the difficulties that exist there.

I do not want to be told that we need to put more money into the department because the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is the only department that has had an increase in its budget every year since the government came into power. It is not more money that is needed.

What is the member suggesting that the government should do about the quality of life of the people who are ranked 35th in the world? There are third world conditions in Canada.

**Mr. David Pratt:** Madam Speaker, I feel that the hon. member opposite has misinterpreted or misunderstood the human development index.

I took the opportunity just shortly after the index was released and the announcement made to go to the United Nations website and print out a huge document covering all aspects of the human development index. The place that Canada occupies in the human development index is based on a wide range of factors which takes into account things like life expectancy, education and quality of health care. There are an enormous number of criteria contained in that index. As a result of taking into account all the criteria, Canada ranks number one in the world. It is extraordinary that we have been in that place for the last six years.

That is not to say that in certain areas we cannot do better. Clearly, as it relates to our aboriginal population, we must do better. Some initiatives the government has taken, and I am thinking specifically with respect to the Nisga'a treaty, lay the foundation for prosperity for our aboriginal peoples. It points the way in terms of the self-government process which the government has adopted of allowing native Canadians to run their own affairs and to have some control over their future. As bad as things may be for our native population according to the hon. member, things have to be kept in perspective with respect to how other parts of the world live.

I know the Reform Party has never been very keen on international development, but I had the opportunity to represent this country as a special envoy to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is ranked last of 174 nations under the human development index. Having seen the conditions in which the people in that country live, I wish in some respects that many Canadians would have the opportunity to go to places like that so they could see how the poorest of the

*The Address*

poor live. I am sure they would probably feel as I did. They would want to come back to this country and kiss the very ground we walk on.

• (1805)

We are blessed in this country. We are prosperous. Our country is peaceful compared to many other places in the world. We have an obligation not just to help native Canadians and aboriginal Canadians but to help other people in the world through our international development assistance programs.

We have a responsibility to assist others who are in need. The government takes that responsibility very seriously. I am absolutely delighted that our government has taken the opportunity of the throne speech to announce more funds for international development because I think Canada does have a responsibility. We are doing a great deal but we can always do more.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Madam Speaker, I will share my time with the member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac.

On behalf of my constituents in the riding of Compton—Stanstead, I am pleased to speak to the Speech from the Throne. I congratulate the new Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, on her new challenge, which, I am sure, she will meet with dignity and wisdom.

I would like to say a few words on several matters not included in the throne speech, inadvertently no doubt. I realize that, in the throne speech, no one expects all the details, but it should at least contain an outline of all the areas of government responsibility.

[*English*]

I have to mention two items that were not addressed in the throne speech. The first was national defence. There was one line at the end of the speech which basically said nothing. I will quote it:

The Government will also continue to ensure that Canadian Forces have the capacity to support Canada's role in building a more secure world and will further develop the capacity of Canadians to help ensure peace and security in foreign land.

The first line is interesting. I think we all know a lot better than that. We have a national defence system that is dying of equipment rust out. Yes, we do have a few pieces of state of the art equipment but we are lacking in 90% of our equipment.

Governments around the world all know and say that national defence planning is long term. In 1994 we put forth a white paper with a long term affordable plan. This plan has now been put by the wayside. If the standing committee had not concentrated on the

quality of life of our soldiers, they would still be living below the poverty line. Imagine working poor in our military.

I congratulate the Minister of National Defence for supporting the SCONDVA in the quality of life report to date. I hope he will continue to do so. There will be reports coming to the House giving us the heads up on quality of life issues, but I only wish the minister would follow through on the 1994 white paper.

The 1994 white paper is this government's document. I would understand if it were from a previous government that it would not honour such a paper. We do see this a lot. This is a plan to which all parties agreed. It is not a grandiose plan. It is a plan to get our military back on its feet and to give our soldiers a better working chance to do their job with safe and modern equipment. Our military is stretched to its limit in both manpower and equipment. We cannot even work under our own flag when we take up peacekeeping duties throughout the world.

Let us look at all the peacekeeping locations in which we are working under another country. Small groups all over the world cost far more than having one brigade group under our own flag with proper rotation so that all our soldiers can get proper rest and family time. This is a high stress job. Many of the problems we see in our military are caused from this stress. Regular rotation and rest would reduce many of the physical and mental problems. I could go on with many more details but there is a lack of time.

I would also like to discuss another subject which I did not see addressed in the throne speech, immigration. I do not think anyone would argue against the fact that our immigration system is broken. This was evident this summer with the west coast migrant problem. This is but the tip of the iceberg. The 600 refugee claimants on the west coast represent only 2% of our annual total.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

The former minister had promised a new bill on immigration for October 1999. Today is November 3, and from what I can see, this new bill is not on the agenda of the House or the standing committee.

The problem of illegal refugees is very easy to understand. It is a lot easier and quicker to enter Canada this way even if the practice is illegal and very dangerous for those who choose it.

The Canadian Trucking Association urgently needs 5,000 employees that it cannot recruit in Canada. However, our immigration system is slow to react. Two-year delays are unreasonable and unacceptable, particularly when there is a lack of knowledge about the qualifications required. For instance, seeing a doctor or an

*The Address*

accountant delivering pizza or driving a taxi, seems ridiculous to me.

I want to describe a typical case seen by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, another department that stands out, unfortunately, for its inefficiency.

In June 1998, one of my constituents applied to the embassy in the Republic of Ghana for permanent residence for his wife, who was seven months pregnant. The same month, approval was received from the provincial and federal governments. It seems very, very simple. Several months passed and the only information the woman received about her application was that she would be called to an interview at some point in time. She would then be asked to undergo a medical examination.

On February 8, 1999, in other words several months later, her husband came to my riding office to ask me to try to find out what I could about his file.

The woman gave birth on January 8, 1999. An initial e-mail was immediately sent to the embassy, requesting that I be told where the file was at. There was no reply. On February 16, 1999, the man got in touch with his wife, who said that the interview was to take place in March 1999 or as soon as an officer went to Bamako. Depending on how the interview went, a medical examination would follow.

On April 1, 1999, another e-mail went out from my riding office to the embassy. Once again, there was no reply. On April 6, 1999, my office send a new e-mail, and again on April 13.

Finally, on April 15, I receive a reply which reads as follows: "The following is in response to your message of April 13, 1999. The woman will have to be interviewed before a decision can be made. We were unable to reach her on time during our last trip to Bamako, in March. We therefore put her name back on the waiting list for our next trip, the date of which has yet to be determined". "However, if she can make the trip to Abidjan, she could be interviewed quickly, that is within a week's notice. If the applicant and the assisting relative choose that option, let me know so that arrangements can be made accordingly".

I therefore informed my constituent and I gave notice of the option chosen by this woman, who will travel to Abidjan. On April 27, 1999, the woman showed up for her interview in Abidjan. On May 19, she underwent her medical examination. She was declared healthy and now simply had to wait for her visa. On July 5, 1999, my constituent came to see me again and told me that he has not heard anything about his wife's visa since May.

• (1815)

That same day, an e-mail was sent to the embassy, asking for information about the wife's visa. On July 6, the embassy replied that the husband's divorce certificate was required.

Is it not odd that a whole year had passed before the immigration adviser realized this document was missing from the file? Yet at the interview the wife was never informed of the obligation to provide this document.

On July 9, the husband's divorce certificate was faxed to the embassy and my constituent has proof that it was sent. On July 16, 1999, I again e-mailed the embassy, asking for confirmation that the certificate had been received. On August 2, I sent another e-mail to the embassy. I have still not received an answer.

On August 17, I still had heard nothing from the embassy. I sent another e-mail on August 27. What is going on? Canada's embassies are understaffed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am sorry, but the hon. member's time is up.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's account. This is clearly a very difficult circumstance for the people actually involved.

We deal with 210 or 212 countries on a regular basis in terms of immigration. It is an extraordinary thing.

I, for example, live in a riding which does not consider itself particularly "ethnic" and yet I represent between 60 and 70 first generation nationalities. I know there are colleagues on this side from the great cities of Canada who also represent 200 different first generation Canadians. I mention that to the member, not as an excuse, but as a fact. It is very complex out there and our embassies struggle with a variety of people.

By the way, when I say 210 to 212, if we are dealing with a country like India they may well be dealing with not just five or six official languages but with hundreds of other languages. There are difficulties and I know my colleague is aware of them.

I, like the member, work as hard as I can on immigration cases. Does he, as a member of parliament, ever consider dealing with people in the department here in Canada? I know e-mail is a wonderful thing, but when it gets complicated and has gone on for 12 months, does he ever pick up the phone and deal directly with the embassies? He is clearly fluent in both of our official languages and can do that.

I have one last question to ask the member. What is the relevance of this to the Speech from the Throne?

**Mr. David Price:** Madam Speaker, I will go through this very quickly and I will do it in English.

*The Address*

To answer part of the hon. member's question, yes, I did do a lot of this myself and I did try phoning several times. As I mentioned at the outset, this is just one of many cases. I live in an area with a very low ethnic population but I deal with cases like this on a very regular basis. I think the biggest problem is a lack of people in our embassies to do the work. We also know there has been a huge cut in the number of people.

In reference to what this has to do with the Speech from the Throne, I mentioned of course the armed forces which was very lightly gone over in the Speech from the Throne, but immigration was not mentioned at all.

• (1820)

The Speech from the Throne is supposed to set out the priorities of the government in general terms. I said at the outset that we were not expecting to see details. We are looking at the generalities. Everything should be covered in the Speech from the Throne. There was nothing about immigration, in particular since immigration has been one of the top problems today.

The case I brought forward is not a refugee problem. It is the problem of getting a family back together, something that is supposed to have a very high priority. At the end of the file the lady finally received her visa a couple of weeks ago after a year and a half. She was pregnant when she applied. In that time period she had the baby. Her husband has had the opportunity to go there but it is very expensive to run back and forth. It seems so unfair when we are trying to get families together that we are not doing it.

There should have been a reference in the Speech from the Throne stating that we should be doing something about immigration. The minister promised to bring forward a bill in October. It is now November. When we look at the agenda there is nothing there. There is nothing happening in committee. The bill is not coming forward. That is what I am talking about.

**Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, PC):** Madam Speaker, today I am talking about what was not in the throne speech. That is what we have to look at. There were a lot of areas not covered and what was in the speech was vague, anyway.

There was no vision in the throne speech for the unemployed who are dependent on social assistance. There was no vision for our youth. The throne speech made absolutely no reference to an increase in transfer payments to the provinces that administer those programs.

There was mention of children. However the day after the throne speech there were as many hungry children as the day before. I am not sure that there was a lot in the speech for children.

Transfer payments have been slashed by billions of dollars since the arrival of the Liberal government, actually \$11 billion.

[*Translation*]

That is a lot of money. If they think that problems can be solved by cutting back programs, they are mistaken. If they continue to take money from the provinces administering these programs, our children will keep on going to school hungry, and they will keep on saying "I cannot afford to stay in school past Grade 12". This is not acceptable, especially in a rich country like Canada.

[*English*]

What have these cuts caused in our communities? Since 1993 we have 500,000 more poor children in this very rich country. This means more children are going to school hungry.

I must take this opportunity to commend Premier Bernard Lord for initiating and putting in place a breakfast program in our schools, a program very much needed since the arrival of the Liberal government in 1993.

In New Brunswick during the Liberal regime of the McKenna and Thériault governments they slashed over 600 hospital worker jobs during their 10 year reign in New Brunswick. With only three months in power Premier Lord announced 300 new jobs in our health care system. Again I commend him. It shows that if we want to we can. Premier Lord is dealing with the same amount of money that Camille Thériault and Frank McKenna were dealing with, but what they were doing was slashing. It seems to be a habit of theirs as it is in Ottawa.

For our young men and women wanting to further their education after high school there was certainly no vision in the throne speech. To be \$50,000 in debt after four to six years of university is certainly unacceptable. The children of our rich country should be given a real chance to be prepared and ready to lead our country in the future. A \$50,000 debt is an obstacle that must be addressed. It can be addressed by the Liberal government increasing transfer payments to the provinces.

[*Translation*]

We have to look at the reality of things. I often hear young people say "I will not be going on after grade 12. It is too expensive and there are no jobs. I have to move here, I have to move there, I have to go to the U.S.".

• (1825)

Our young people do not have a vision of the future. They must be shown that they can find work in their province and that they can have post-secondary education. Our young people can contribute to their community, but they will not do so by leaving the regions.

*The Address*

Clearly the decisions made here in Ottawa targeted the Atlantic region. We have seen what that meant in federal elections: the number of Liberal members dropped from 31 to 11 here in Ottawa. Clearly, the decisions made targeted the Atlantic regions.

Another reason for the greater number of poor in our country is the cuts to the employment insurance program. No one here can say otherwise. It is clear that there is more poverty.

In the throne speech there is no mention of the negative impact felt by seasonal workers in this country. Seasonal workers are everywhere in this country. They are not only in the Atlantic regions. They exist throughout the country. They depend on the seasons and not on employment insurance.

[*English*]

That is very important. People have to realize that seasonal workers are not dependent on the employment insurance program. They are dependent on the seasons. If we could have summer for eight months of the year in New Brunswick, believe me, we would take it. People would work during that season. If it were a tourist season of eight months, be assured that people would be working.

We have to stop attacking the seasonal workers. They are a very important group. Every day we use or eat something that a seasonal worker worked at.

[*Translation*]

Obviously, the deficit was paid down on the backs of high unemployment regions, as the fund's surplus is \$26 billion. However, people who are not eligible for employment insurance benefits go for weeks and months without any income.

[*English*]

It is clear, with a \$26 billion surplus in the fund that we did not get that money where the EI was not being used. That money came from the regions where there was very high unemployment and people either did not qualify or went for two to three months with

no income or got a \$32 per week cheque. That is how we got that money.

[*Translation*]

Let us not forget that, for every poor child, there are poor parents. In a country as rich as ours, this is unacceptable.

[*English*]

We also have to talk about health care, a program so important to all Canadians. I have done surveys and we can talk to any group. Our health care program is very important. We want to keep our health care program. Without increasing transfer payments to the provinces, health care services will continue to deteriorate. Our hospitals need more doctors, nurses and other health care workers. Canadians need this now. Lives are depending on the government's actions.

There was also no mention of our fishery crisis. It is a crisis. Our caucus was given a presentation by Mr. Christmas this morning. I was very shocked to hear that the first nations are negotiating to obtain actually between 30% and 50% of the Atlantic fishery. I wonder where the government is on this. This afternoon I made phone calls to different fishermen. I asked if they were aware that the aboriginal people had put on the table that they want 30% to 50% of the Atlantic fishery.

I hope that finally the government will take some leadership and that it will talk to both groups. A lot of families are depending on that. I hope the government is going to do something because to do nothing is not an option at this point.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** It being 6.30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)



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