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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, October 1, 2002
(Part A)**

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 1, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

INUIT COMMUNITY OF NUNAVIK

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition signed by residents from Puvirnituk, in Nunavik, and several other communities. The petitioners are asking Parliament to set up a public inquiry to shed light on the policy of sled dog killings in New Quebec.

During the fifties and the sixties, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Government of Canada killed all sled dogs in Nunavik, and the Inuit from Nunavik are asking for an inquiry into the matter.

• (1005)

[*English*]

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have six petitions, each calling on the government to protect our children and take all necessary steps to ensure that all material which promotes or glorifies pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed. This petition has about 1,000 signatures in total.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition which calls on parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research rather than embryonic stem cell research.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present to the House a petition which contains 600 signatures from concerned constituents in my riding of Cambridge.

My constituents wish to bring to the attention of the House that a clear majority of Canadians condemn the creation and use of child

pornography. They are disappointed and frustrated by a recent court decision related to child pornography. The petitioners call on parliament to take all necessary steps to protect our children by outlawing all materials that promote or glorify child pornography.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: If there are any, they will stand. I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from September 30 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to begin debate on the Speech from the Throne, my first such occasion to do so.

[*Translation*]

As tradition has it, it is the responsibility of the leader of the official opposition to launch the debate in reply to the Speech from the Throne, just as it is the Governor General's duty to deliver it. This is a traditional duty I am honoured to fulfil.

[*English*]

For this honour I owe it once again to express my gratitude to members of the Canadian Reform-Conservative alliance from coast to coast as well as to the constituents of Calgary Southwest. My gratitude in these matters is tempered only by the understanding that Laureen and I have. So many who have given so much to send us here, both in our political lives and in our personal lives, are people we will now find ourselves too often removed from. For my family and me these have been times of tremendous change, but of course we are only a small part of the story.

The Address

Only a couple of years ago the western world was still discussing the peace dividend. How things have changed. Since September 11, 2001, we have become preoccupied with military conflict and rumours of war. Boundless speculation in the stock market and boundless optimism in the economy have been replaced by the bearish retreat and deep concern about future trends. Predictions of huge surpluses by the government have been overtaken by warnings about limited room to manoeuvre. Apparent satisfaction with the status quo politically and apparent stagnation in the Canadian political landscape have turned into some rapidly shifting ground.

What has been the Liberal response to all of these developments? It has been twofold: it has been the throne speech but it has also been the emergence of a Liberal leadership race. Let me comment on that first.

The appetite for political change we are seeing has been translated into a taste for leadership change within the Liberal Party as it has been within all parties. However with the Liberals it has been different. With the Liberals we were told that we would have no ordinary leadership debate, no ordinary leadership race, but we would have an answer to the so-called democratic deficit itself.

What has that answer been so far? To start with, when we left here we were told the Liberal Party would have a leadership review. What we have seen is the cancellation of that leadership review vote because party memberships could not be sold. The fix was in.

What we heard next were rumours of the probable cancellation of the leadership race itself so we could have for the first time in our political history a true coronation of the next Prime Minister of Canada. This office, in which power is so concentrated, could be decided without a vote by the people or even without a vote by the governing party.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some excited people over there. They want to have a debate within their own party.

The pattern of behaviour that we have seen in this instance is repeated throughout the Speech from the Throne itself. We heard grandiose rhetoric delivering little or even the opposite of what it promises. We heard communication strategies that talked around real issues, ignored previous failures, gave no details, no plans and no price tags. Why? The most obvious explanation is that yesterday's throne speech was not really about anything except two men: one desperate to leave a legacy and the other whose legacy will simply be leading, if only for a short period of time.

What is a legacy? The word is bandied about a lot here. Why does the government not have a legacy after nine years? Creating a real legacy was the reason my party was founded. It was not the lure of power nor the attraction of the spotlight. It was not to pad our resumes, reward our friends or settle the family score. It was to create something that will last, something that will offer tangible and enduring benefits to all Canadians. It was something that will leave our descendants better off and inspire them to attain greater success. That is what a legacy is. It is something that will last. To build one, one must borrow from the experience of the past, deal with the

realities and real problems of today and focus on what we will leave to our children and grandchildren.

Those who are serious about building real legacies are not surprised by the so-called new realities that we face. We are prepared for the fact that the world is dangerous and that peace is always precarious. We know that we must spend on our priorities and that we cannot have everything we want. We are not fooled by empty slogans that mask naked ambition, and yes I do put the words democratic deficit in that category.

● (1010)

Real legacies are founded on values that work, values that have survived the rigorous tests of time, values that have been handed down from generation to generation, not values invented by communication strategists for the supertime news. In other words, it is values that work, not values that just sound good.

What are our values? We say that taxes belong to the people from whom they were raised and that they are held in trust for the benefit of ordinary Canadians, not to build personal monuments for politicians.

We believe in creating real jobs by expanding the economy, rather than by enlarging the government. We believe that this is accomplished by selling products to customers, not by giving subsidies to contributors. We believe in helping the young, the old, the poor and the sick, not out of any superior moral insight, but because we may all be those things in our own time.

We believe in family and relationships. We know that those can never be replaced satisfactorily by institutions and programs. We believe in accountability and know that power should never be exercised without it.

Those are the values of our party. They do not appeal to the chattering classes or the empire builders. They are the values of the ordinary citizens who have joined us and built this party: workers, farmers, business people, public servants and students. From these ranks come the team that I am honoured to lead in this House today: long-standing members of Parliament with a reputation for moving our policies forward, sometimes even getting these fellows in the government to adopt a few things, such as eliminating the deficit and dealing with Quebec separatism to actually have a little bit of a legacy; former provincial cabinet ministers with a reputation and impressive records of accomplishment; and, of course, a vibrant core of the youngest, brightest and most energetic members of Parliament in the House of Commons.

The Liberal version of a legacy is reflected in this throne speech and all those that have preceded it. So-called Liberal values generally mean more money, more gigantic government programs and more grandiose schemes that will never, ever be achieved.

The Address

The Liberal modus operandi has become all too predictable. First, identify a cause that trumps all else. Second, demonize anyone who questions the truth of this instant moral insight. Third, proclaim a scheme that would produce a great leap forward. Fourth, and most important, spend heaps of public money as a measure of concern. Finally, forget about looking at the results and move on to more great ventures.

These uncontrollable Liberal tendencies have become even more pronounced in the last few months as the Prime Minister and his chief rival have tried to up one another. The problems are being identified fast and furious. Concern is being expressed with great passion and poetry. The sky is dark with expensive quoted remedies, the environment, innovation, child poverty, municipalities infrastructure, international aid and aboriginal issues. We have heard it all before.

We really have heard it all before in throne speech after throne speech, budget after budget. My office made a tally of 145 previous throne speech promises, of which 79 have been broken, unfulfilled or forgotten. A success rate of 46% would be inept in any institution I have ever attended.

In this throne speech we have 58 new promises, no less than 29 of them recycled from previous throne speeches or previous government announcements.

Let me take a look at some of the great promises that have fallen by the wayside. We all will remember scrapping the GST in 1994 and replacing it in 1996. Today, if there is any talk at all, it is of increasing the rates. Infrastructure programs were addressed in 1994, 1999 and 2001.

In every single throne speech the government is preparing leading edge innovation strategies.

There have been repeated promises to defend Canadian trade. In 1996 the government would take on trade disputes. Today the trade disputes in agriculture and forestry are worse than ever.

In 1994 the government was going to end foreign overfishing. Those of us who travel to the east coast know that it is worst today than it has ever been. The government promised to revitalize fisheries on both coasts in 1996.

Enhanced law enforcement tools to fight terrorism was mentioned in the last throne speech.

•(1015)

One of my favourites is that the gun registry would cost less than \$100 million and would end gun crimes. The ineffectiveness of the registry compares only to the inaccuracy of that particular cost estimate.

Regulatory reform was promised in 1994 and 1996. This year Industry Canada has launched a review to be finished in the year 2010, in other words, 16 years after the original promise was made.

In this particular throne speech we have a multitude of initiatives on aboriginal affairs. Let us not forget that we have had repeated promises in throne speech after throne speech, in fact it is the Prime Minister's career dating back to his early days as a cabinet minister, to deal with aboriginal problems, poverty and governance. The

typical solution is to spend billions of dollars even though the billions we are already spending has too little accountability.

However what we lack, which is still the case on many reserves, is that we have no common standards of democratic accountability and the Office of the Auditor General does not apply. We have no common standards of financial or electoral accountability. We do not have the chief electoral officer supervising elections and, of course, aboriginal people continue to lack, by and large, property rights and are unable to have things like basic ownership of housing and the accumulation of wealth.

The difference between what we offer and what the Liberals stand for is clear and unmistakable: on the one hand, inflated Liberal rhetoric coupled with grandiose big government solutions versus our Canadian Alliance approach, which will be responsible, achievable plans based on practical values to deal with critical priorities.

•(1020)

[*Translation*]

This difference in approach is clearly illustrated in the throne speech delivered in this Parliament yesterday. I would like to briefly go over the various issues raised in the Speech from the Throne: Kyoto and the environment, the health care system, the policy on children and families, international affairs and defence, democratic reform, and financial and economic policy. We see the same thing happening in every one of these areas: pompous rhetoric, past failures, new programs, more money and grandiose plans that will never become reality.

By contrast, we will set out the priorities of the Canadian Alliance so that concrete measures can be taken regarding major priorities, along with a plan for economic growth.

[*English*]

Let me begin with the Kyoto energy accord. This is, if anything, the great shining example of what I am talking about, if not the centrepiece of the throne speech. This purports to be nothing less than a grandiose scheme to save the planet itself, but in the end the throne speech tells us more about the government's political strategy on Kyoto than anything about how it intends to implement it and the real cost to Canadians. After all, it is easier to demonize a single province than to explain to Canadians what the Kyoto accord is, how it will work or what it will cost.

Let me just address those matters quickly. What is the Kyoto accord? We understood it was to be about global warming but we do not even say that in the throne speech. We say instead that it is about something much vaguer called climate change. It deals with, not as most Canadians believe, air pollution or controlling smog, but with so-called greenhouse gases, in particular with emissions of CO₂, carbon dioxide, the breath of life, the gas used in respiration of plants and animals.

I hear the member for Fundy—Royal yammering away back there. Maybe he should straighten out with his own leader what his position is on that accord. This party is opposed to that accord.

The Address

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I know there is a lot of enthusiasm for the debate but we do have to be able to hear the person who has the floor and it happens to be the Leader of the Opposition at the moment. I would ask for a little order so that we can hear what he has to say.

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, I am amused to see how an attack on the Tories is taken so hard by the Liberals. I guess they really are the same party after all.

By the time the Kyoto accord is fully implemented Canada will be required to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30%. Eighty per cent of the cost of that will be borne by consumers, not producers. How? The government will not tell us. Apparently, according to press reports, it will not even tell its own senior cabinet ministers.

We do have some estimates. Canadian manufacturers and exporters estimate that the cost of gasoline may have to rise by up to 80%, going as high as \$1.10 a litre. We are looking at 50% increases in the cost of heating and electricity in a typical Ontario home.

Will these kinds of sacrifices at least have some global environmental impact? The answer is no or, in all likelihood, no. Nations exempt from Kyoto's provisions or not ratifying it produce 80% of the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Furthermore, the agreement sets up an international emission trading scheme that ensures that countries like Canada, which are required to cut emissions, actually subsidize emissions in countries with far worse environmental records. Therefore jobs and production will almost certainly move to those kinds of jurisdictions as global emissions increase.

What is the record of the government on all this? It is funny that the government, with all the yammering we are getting today about its commitment to Kyoto, which it promised before and was party to the negotiations that signed on to Kyoto in 1997, still has not ratified it. Ratification has been promised only now in this throne speech and still there is no implementation plan and no clear idea in the throne speech on how or when the implementation plan will come about.

However, it is more than just not having an implementation plan, it is not actually taking any measures to deal with the problem. Unlike the European countries that have ratified Kyoto, or the United States and Australia which have not, the federal government has taken virtually no initiative to deal with reductions in greenhouse gases.

What would we do as a political party? First, we believe that we must take the environment and these environmental problems seriously. Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the science, some of the concerns are real. God has given us stewardship of this planet as our sole resource. We must be concerned when large scale human activity results in large scale atmospheric change.

What we need to do is develop and proceed with a realistic plan to control some of these emissions and to further understand what the problems may be in the future. However we must control, not just greenhouse gases like CO₂. We also must have a plan to reduce emissions of critical gases that contribute to pollution, smog and acid

rain. We also must continue to develop and monitor the science of all this to understand what may or may not be happening in terms of global warming or in terms of other environmental problems.

Second, all these things must be done in a way that is consistent with the economic needs of ordinary people. That requires us to be consistent with the plans being developed by our provinces and our trading partners.

Let us take some areas where beyond merely controlling emissions, where the government should be dealing with the intersection of environmental and economic matters and is not. There are industries in the country, like farming with its drought problem this summer, and the fisheries problem that has been going on for years, where we have serious environmental difficulties and periodic disasters. The government should have practical plans to respond to these practical difficulties of real people.

As for the Kyoto accord, we will stand alone in the House, not just opposing ratification but urging blockage by the provinces and anyone else who is able to of implementing the accord and we will repeal the accord at the very first opportunity. In this I will be assisted by the members of Parliament for Red Deer and Athabasca, veteran members with a wealth of experience in these areas.

● (1025)

Let me turn to health care. What was proposed that we do about health care in the throne speech? Three things: nothing, nothing and nothing; just rhetoric. We have heard it all before. Appoint a commission and wait for it to report.

In 1997 we were promised better access to medically necessary drugs. In 1994 the government appointed the National Forum on Health to deal with the emerging crisis on health care. It reported in 1997 and no action was taken. We have the Kirby committee appointed by the government in the Senate. Now we have the Romanow commission and we are told we must wait for the Romanow commission to act.

While we are waiting month after month, year after year for these various commissions to report, we get endless speeches from the federal government about its role as the protector of health care and health care values. In the meantime, there is no plan. There is a long history of lack of cooperation and open periodic confrontation with the provinces and, of course, the elimination of the deficit in which the cutting of health care transfers was a major priority. In fact, instead of reducing the \$16 billion the government spends on grants and contributions, the Prime Minister and the former minister of finance have slashed \$6 billion annually from health care transfers to the provinces as part of the deficit reduction strategy.

The Address

Not surprisingly, these actions and 10 years of excessive rhetoric have resulted in the continual deterioration of our health care system. Today, according to data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Canada ranks 18th in terms of access to MRIs, 17th in terms of access to CT scanners and 8th in terms of access to radiation machines. In terms of risk of death by breast cancer, for example, Canada ranks 6th among OECD countries.

According to the Fraser Institute, across Canada "The total waiting time is high, both historically and internationally. Compared to 1993, the waiting time in 2001-02 is 77% higher in this country". The waiting time has increased in all but one of the past eight years. Canadians deserve better health care than that, much better.

There is all this talk going on and that is typical. As soon as I point out their deficiencies in health care, the Liberals attack the provinces. The provinces are the ones that are trying to run the system and increase spending on health care. There is no responsibility, no honesty and grandiose rhetoric.

Let me talk about our approach to health care and our values on health care because it is very important that when we talk about health care that our values are clear. In this political party, we represent ordinary people. The people we represent depend on this system. They have real concerns and these deficiencies are not a big federal-provincial game. They have real impacts.

My wife, Lauren, and I ran our own small businesses. We had to pay our own health care premiums. We had to purchase our own supplemental health care coverage, like most people in the country. We cannot afford to fly to clinics in the United States to get health care when things go wrong and we certainly cannot afford to get on Challenger jets to do it.

We do not need lectures from these guys about preserving the health care system. We understand the key value of this system. It is not the Canada Health Act. It is not the federal status in health care. The key is that necessary health care must be available to every Canadian regardless of ability to pay. This cannot be accomplished by delaying critical treatment by rationing and we cannot saddle ordinary people with enormous bills for catastrophic health problems.

To achieve these things, the federal government must work with the provinces and it must begin to act now. I would suggest that it begin by reversing the damage the government did to the health care debate and to the evolution of dealing with health care problems during the 2000 election campaign.

In that campaign the Liberals opposed provincial efforts to broaden health care delivery within publicly paid health systems by not just fighting plans for private facilities in various provinces but by demonizing the provinces pursuing these reforms. This was wrong.

• (1030)

A government monopoly is not the only way to deliver health care to Canadians. Monopolies in the public sector are just as objectionable as monopolies in the private sector. It should not matter who delivers health care, whether it is private, for profit, not for profit or public institutions, as long as Canadians have access to it regardless of their financial means.

We must become innovative in how we deliver care while holding fast to the principle of universal care regardless of ability to pay. The federal government must be absolutely clear on this point. It must remove any barriers, any chill to increase private capital investment plans that the provinces have for our health care system.

This is only a start in this caucus. Our member of Parliament from Yellowhead, a brand new member of Parliament with a long background in health care governance and in his local regional health authority, will have more to say about this in the next few weeks.

I will now turn to the children's agenda. The children's agenda is another typical set of throne speech promises, a bunch of recycled promises from throne speeches in 1996, 1997 and 1999.

In a way this whole approach, the values behind this approach, is only the kind of agenda that the Liberals could advocate; institutions and programs with no focus at all on what children need most, and that is strong families.

The Canadian Alliance policy begins by recognizing that the family is the essential building block of a healthy society and that government legislation and programs must first of all nurture and respect its role. As Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain once said, "A strong country cannot be morally neutral about the family".

One practical thing we can do to begin strengthening the family starts with tax reduction and tax reform, lowering the cost burdens that put so many pressures on the lives of ordinary people and to do this in an equitable manner.

First, we will continue to advocate in this party a universal child deduction for all families with children, a child deduction that does not discriminate between types of families or the choices families make for the care of their children. These choices need to be made by families themselves without implied financial penalties.

Second, we will continue to push for the concept of shared parenting when there is parental breakdown. This was proposed in the December 1998 report of the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access. It is still gathering dust contrary to the best interests of both parents and children.

Third, we will continue to advocate strongly concrete measures to protect children from the violent and the vile, which the government has not done. The age of consent for sexual activity should be raised and we must take stronger steps to fight child prostitution, child pornography and pedophilia.

In this regard of course the throne speech is vague. It does not deal with what specific measures the government may take. It instead hints, in our judgment, at excessive general control over child rearing.

For children and for all citizens, we will also continue to advocate a general philosophy of crime control and the punishment of crime; another area in which we have continued promises and little action or change.

The Address

In all of these matters we will have many people in the caucus who will contribute but we will be led I believe first and foremost by the member of Parliament for Provencher, an accomplished former provincial attorney general from the province of Manitoba.

I will turn now to international affairs and defence. What are the proposals in the throne speech? Absolutely nothing, except more study on defence needs and very little to say about the current Iraq conflict other than the government positions itself very carefully on both sides of the issue. On foreign aid the government is promising a doubling of foreign aid by 2010 with the focus on Africa.

What is the government's record on these things? The original Liberal red book 1993, followed by the government's 1994 defence white paper, promised to ensure an effective Canadian Forces and pledged to maintain an increased combat capability. More reforms were promised and more money was promised in throne speeches in 1997, 1999 and 2001.

• (1035)

The record is well documented. It is one of chronic underfunding and an increasing inability of our armed forces to protect territory or mount serious missions abroad. Instead the government is covering this by stretching multiple activities thinner and thinner around various places in the world. Of course, foreign aid in this period has also fallen relative to even what the last government did.

The neglect of our armed forces in particular has meant an increasing loss of relevance to our allies in Europe and the United States, but most of all the loss of Canada's ability to protect its sovereignty. Canadians see the irony of it, even if the Prime Minister does not, in blaming the United States and the west for world terrorism while at the same time starving our forces to such an extent that we have effectively turned over Canada's defence to our allies and to the Americans in particular.

All of this does reflect the values of the Liberal Party, not just a weak defence but a moral neutralism in international affairs, a tendency to see moral equivalency between the strong actions of our allies and those who would attack us. Our values are very different. They are values of strength and of a strong country. We will not just advocate a strong defence. We will pursue defence and foreign policies that give Canadians hard power, capabilities that allow us to support our friends and to aggressively advance our values in the world.

On foreign aid we will advocate that we follow the lead of other donor nations to reward developing countries that reform their institutions and market with increased assistance. Canada continues to underwrite too many countries that resist reform and have high levels of corruption. We will have, as I have said in many other areas, capable veteran MPs who will handle these portfolios for defence, such as our member of Parliament for Lakeland, a three-term veteran of this House, and in foreign affairs the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla, with a wide range of experience in a number of provincial government portfolios.

Let me turn to ethics and democratic reform. What are the proposals in this throne speech? We have two paragraphs on ethics and democratic reform, even less than the pathetic proposals that were tabled earlier in the spring. The record here is clear. On

parliamentary reform the government promised more power to MPs and improved procedures in the House repeatedly in 1994, 1996 and 2001, but today it promises none whatsoever.

On ethics in the 1993 red book, we will never forget the Liberal Party promise for an independent ethics commissioner who would report to Parliament. Obviously in 1994 it broke that Parliament. The appointee we have today apparently spends his time writing question period responses for the Prime Minister to the numerous times his ethical behaviour comes into question.

We reached a low point in 2001 when the government, not just the Prime Minister but the member for LaSalle—Émard, the author of the red book, voted against the motion to adopt an ethics counsellor, a motion that was, word for word, taken straight from the 1993 red book.

In 1997 we had an ethics committee of this Parliament struck to report on a code of conduct. It did so. No action was taken. We remain one of the few developed democracies that have no clear rules of conflict for ministers and MPs and we are also the last jurisdiction in Canada to have them.

There is more to the government's record on this than those failures. The government has used closure and time allocation more frequently than any previous government. On campaign finance reform that it raised in the throne speech, it actually did bring in some measures in 2000 but not to control the relationships between politicians and their donors. Instead they were measures to control the free speech of private citizens and private organizations through the media.

We even have to look at the rules the Liberals have set out for this leadership race, this constant smoke and mirrors, a constant claim to be reforming, a constant claim to have disclosure. What do we actually have? In this Liberal leadership race one has to disclose everything except if one, like the current Minister of Finance, runs it through the riding association or decides to take the donations in pledges instead of cash. Now we have the setting up of a blind trust.

This is an interesting twist of a turn: putting donations into a blind trust. The purpose of a blind trust is to manage money after it has been received. A blind trust in no way prevents politicians from finding out who contributed to their campaigns in the first place.

• (1040)

Once again, it is grandiose plans and empty rhetoric.

The Address

How would we handle campaign finance reform? We would handle it the way we generally run this party and the way I ran my leadership campaign. We would try to finance our campaigns from modest contributions from a broad range of voters, not a few contributions from people who receive government contracts. I would personally prefer to see contributions come only from individual voters. I would like to end union and corporate contributions and let union members, corporate directors and shareholders make their own decisions as to which political parties they contribute to.

It is perfectly appropriate to have limits in the amount of money politicians receive from private citizens and to end the loopholes that allow contributions to be funnelled through non-individuals. To the extent that the government would demand public funding, as there is already plenty of public funding for our political activities this funding should be tied to things like support to contributions, not simply blanket grants from the government or grants in response to our spending.

These rules need to be fair to new small parties and independents. Every time there are Canada Elections Act changes, we make it more difficult for people to organize new political activities. Importantly, because the government keeps shouting about this, the kind of reforms we propose would limit politicians in political parties. They would not limit private citizens. They would respect free speech. It is very different to control the contributions given to politicians than it is to control the ability of the citizenry to express their views through a free media in a free society. When those guys opposite are serious about democratic reform, they will actually understand the difference between the two things.

We also continue to favour broader democratic reform. In the House of Commons there should be more free votes beginning with free votes and votes on every item in private members' business. That will be a priority for us in this session.

The Senate should be selected from people who have been picked in free elections, beginning in the province of Alberta with Bert Brown, who received more votes in his Senate election than the Prime Minister received in his riding. We should have fixed election dates. We should have a system of direct democracy. That system of direct democracy should be put into effect so that the citizens of Canada can express their judgment on how to reform our outdated electoral system so we end the unrepresentative results that elections produce and end phenomena such as vote splitting.

Democratic reform has been a core of this political party for 15 years. Unlike the party opposite, we did not develop a temporary itch for democratic reform when we were seeking approval of backbenchers, or in a leadership struggle, or when we go to the voters every so often. It has been a constant theme of this party since 1987. Just recently our party reissued our "Building Trust" document. Reissued by our current House leader, the member of Parliament for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, "Building Trust II" goes over our proposals for parliamentary and democratic reform in a wide range of areas.

I will just take a minute to acknowledge not only the contribution that the member will be making to this debate over the next few months, but to indicate how much we here, all of us on both sides,

miss the MP for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast. I know he is watching in the hospital and we all wish him very well.

Let me turn at long last to the area where perhaps we are most different, finance and economic policies.

•(1045)

[*Translation*]

There is, however, probably no area in which the differences between the Liberal Party and the Canadian Alliance are more obvious than that of financial and economic policy. That is where the throne speech attains the peak of its grandiosity.

The government is passing itself off as one that is fiscally prudent and that plays a lead role as far as economic growth, productivity and innovation are concerned. These themes have been repeated regularly in all this government's throne speeches and all of its budgets since 1993. The reality is different, and disquieting.

For instance, over the past three years, under the direction of the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, program expenditures have risen close to ten billion dollars annually, comparable to the worst excesses of the Trudeau government in the 1970s. The same thing is happening this year. The measures set out in the throne speech, in all areas, will mean billions of dollars of additional expenditures, although of course the price tag is not shown.

Finally, the budget process is so disorganized that there will be no budget for this entire year. There will be a full two years between budgets. This government's rhetoric has even redefined the word annual. It is not just a matter of budgets. I also want to talk about the economy in general.

Looking at the economy as a whole and not just the finances of this government, it will be seen that our productivity and our position continue to decline under this government, along with our dollar. We have, in fact, maintained our declining competitiveness only because of our declining currency. The government has turned us into a cut rate wholesaler, one of those businesses that keeps on slashing prices in order to stay in business, thus devaluing everything that Canadians have built up.

The government speaks of its intention of making strategic investments in the economy, but its politicized infrastructure, its funding to businesses and the corruption scandals are indications of its inability to make the distinction between investing in a project of public interest and spending money on a private donor.

At any rate, it is on the wrong track. The most important thing the government can do for the economy is to create a neutral environment at the lowest possible cost to business. The government's priority should be, as it should have been in the past, reducing the tax burden, not raising the level of general expenditures.

The Canadian Alliance will reject any major spending initiative in all areas, with the exception of a few key areas such as national defence and health.

The Address

•(1050)

[English]

We will insist that our priority should not be to ramp up federal spending in federal programs and federal commitments across the board or to micromanage economic development. It should be to lower rates of personal and business taxation across the board. In fact we believe that our national goal should be to make Canada the number one jurisdiction in North America in taxes, ahead of the United States. As unrealistic as I admit this may sound, in the context of the Liberal government, it is achievable given that in the United States there are much higher expenditures per capita on major obligations such as defence, advanced education, infrastructure and yes, even public health care.

As late as the 1960s our standard of living was equal to or even above that of the Americans, at about the time the Prime Minister entered Parliament. Today it is more than one-third lower and falling. This is inexcusable.

We cannot be the biggest country on this continent, but there is no reason we cannot be the wealthiest. As we pursue this, we will be led in these matters of finance by our veteran member of Parliament for Peace River, our finance critic, and also by the member for Edmonton Southwest, our industry critic, one of the most promising newcomers we have in the House of Commons.

There seems to be a bit of a debate going on about whether or not we are larger than the United States. We have a larger land mass and we are all aware of that; we travel the country. However I will let the minister of heritage know that the United States economy is just a little bigger than ours. Her budget may be bigger than the minister of culture's in the United States. That is possible.

Let me conclude by noting that the next couple of years will be months of contrasting agendas and contrasting approaches for the future of the country. We welcome the debate.

Mr. Speaker, the Alliance team that I am honoured to lead stands before you and before the country, for united we are strong and most important, we are here to stay. The Liberals, whoever may lead them, are old and tired. More important, we will argue for two fundamentally different ways of creating a legacy for this country. The Liberals will try to build a legacy on shifting sands. Our party will try to build a real legacy on rock solid values.

When the government proposes multiple missions with big government solutions, we will propose practical priorities and small government solutions.

When the government proposes raising spending, we will propose cutting taxes.

When the government proposes to damage the economy to implement the Kyoto accord, we will propose to strengthen the environment and save Canadian jobs.

When the government undermines the family, we will propose strengthening the family.

When the government uses governmental power to reward its friends, we will propose democratic reform to reward initiative.

When the government engages in the soft-powered talk of a neutral fence sitter, we will demand real capabilities that support our allies.

When the government proposes to buy votes in other words, we will propose to earn votes.

In short, when the Liberals act for the Liberals, we will act for Canadians. Therefore, I move that the motion be amended to add the following:

And this House regrets to inform Your Excellency that, once again, your advisors have recycled an empty vision, have resorted to grandiose rhetoric and intend to implement expensive programs at a time when Canadians are looking for practical solutions to the challenges we face, including lower taxes and debt, reducing government waste, promoting economic growth and jobs, reforming health care, protecting our sovereignty and strengthening the family.

•(1055)

The Speaker: The question is on the amendment.

[Translation]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin with my comments on the Speech from the Throne, I would like to pay tribute to the memory of our former colleague, Ron Duhamel, who died last night.

Ron was more than a colleague to me. He was a long time friend, and he was liked by everyone in the House of Commons. He had an extraordinary personality. He had an exceptional career in government as a public servant in Manitoba. He then decided to come here, to the House of Commons, where he represented the people of the riding of Saint-Boniface with great dignity and competence.

One of the great pleasures of my career was travelling abroad with him when he was the minister responsible for the Francophonie. He was a man, with his personality and his exceptional command of the French language—having been born and having lived in Manitoba—who represented the best of Canada with elegance and dignity, and the best of the French speaking population outside of Quebec.

I offer my condolences, and those of my wife, to his wife and children. They should be very proud of this great Canadian.

•(1100)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, my first words are to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Both members delivered thoughtful speeches on issues of the day and both are a credit to this House.

I also want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for his first major speech in the House in his new function. He clearly has all the makings of a good Leader of the Opposition for many, many years to come. I do not want to have a ninth one in the next 16 months. I want him to stay there.

A Speech from the Throne is an opportunity for the government to step back and take stock of where it is and set out the priorities for where it wants to go.

The Address

It is an opportunity for parliamentarians to discuss and debate the role and direction of the government. I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. I am very happy that we had a Speech from the Throne because I wanted to give all of the members of Parliament, from all of the different parties, an opportunity to have a general debate where they can talk about the orientation of the policies and the direction of the country. That is why we have a Speech from the Throne once in a while, to give that opportunity to members of Parliament.

Time does not permit me to address everything that is in the throne speech. Indeed, the words of the speech and the actions for which we as a government are committed speak for themselves. Today, I want to highlight some of them and give a further explanation of our approach.

I have spent many, many years in this House, and a great many years both as a minister and as Prime Minister. I have never been concerned about a legacy. The legacy will be 41 years of hard work and doing my best. I have always been concerned about getting the job done, the job I was elected to do. The coming months will be no different. This is not about a legacy. This is about good government.

The throne speech is about implementing the platform that every member on this side of the House ran on in November 2000. Each and every one of us has an obligation to the people of Canada to implement our program. We have an obligation to govern and to govern well, and to govern every day we are in office. That is what we are elected for: this caucus, this government and this Prime Minister.

The agenda set out in the throne speech builds on what we have accomplished as a government since 1993: to create and share opportunities, to enhance the quality of life in our communities, and to promote our interests and values in the world. The priorities we have set out are indeed the enduring priorities of Canadians: the health of our people, the health of our environment, the health of our communities, the health of our economy, and the hopes of our children.

This has been a government committed not to the big bang or the big show, but to continuous and enduring improvements, minimizing divisiveness and maximizing results, focused on the problems and priorities of Canadians, focused on the future, and focused on the world. This continues to be our path.

● (1105)

Some of the opposition and many of the right wing commentators wrongly claim that we are simply big spenders; that I am a big spender. Well, I am such a big spender that I have led a government that has turned 30 years of continuous deficits into five balanced budgets in a row. We are on track for number six this year. It is the largest, uninterrupted string of balanced budgets in our history.

We are such big spenders that not so long ago more than 35¢ of every dollar went to service the debt. Today it is about 20¢ and dropping. We are such big spenders that we have paid down about \$45 billion of debt. To the chagrin of the opposition we will continue to pay down the debt. We are such big spenders that our debt load has fallen from 72% of GDP to under 50% and it is continuing to fall.

We are such tax and spend Liberals that we have reduced personal and corporate income tax and employment insurance premiums by about \$20 billion a year. These are the facts. It is a record we are proud of and that I am proud of. It is not a record that I intend to put in jeopardy.

[*Translation*]

But I am also proud of the fact that on this side of the House, we believe as much in a balanced approach as we do in a balanced budget. We believe that governments have a very important role to play in society. We believe in the need for collective investments in society. We believe not only in the need to eliminate fiscal deficits, but also in the need to fight against social deficits, environmental deficits and deficits in infrastructure. We can fight against these deficits, and that is what we are going to do.

I am proud of the responsible manner in which we have lowered taxes. In a manner that has allowed us to proceed with collective investment, while continuing to balance the budget at the same time. We now have a taxation system that is very competitive. Corporate income tax has dropped significantly. And we managed to do so without jeopardizing a balanced budget.

For example, the Americans no longer have a surplus. They are running a considerable deficit right now. They were forecasting a \$300 billion surplus this year, and they will end up with a \$200 billion deficit. We will not run up another deficit. Our approach will remain cautious and we will continue to invest in citizens.

As I have just said, we believe in a balanced approach. We do not believe in the simplistic approach of the Alliance Party and some business press when it comes to taxation. We on this side of the House agree that, like it or not, taxes are the price one pays to live in a civilized society.

Taxation revenues are what enable us as a society to share risk, to invest in health care, to provide for families in poverty, to improve the environment we share, to support education and learning, to promote rural development, to build a modern system of highways and urban infrastructure, and to help those in developing countries.

None of this can be done by the private sector alone. All of this requires government action. And we will act on these areas in the coming months. We have taken the approach of investing in priorities as, and only as, the fiscal situation permitted.

● (1110)

[*English*]

In general, we establish budget projections over a two- or three-year time zone and this is what we will continue to do. In some cases, however, where predictability is essential, we have legislated longer-term commitments.

The Address

For example, in past budgets we provided five years of predictable, stable CHST funding for health to allow the provinces time for proper planning. We provided a five-year legislated tax reduction plan to allow individuals and businesses to plan ahead. We also provided increases to the national child benefit over a five-year period to allow provinces to adjust their social programs accordingly. Going forward, this will remain our approach. We will maintain balanced budgets and fiscal prudence. In our next budget, we will again provide long-term funding for increases to the national child benefit.

Reform of health care following the Romanow commission will again require multi-year, predictable federal investment, and even the opposition said a minute ago that we should do that. Otherwise we will simply not get reform of the system. Ever since we balanced the budget we have increased our investment in health care. In September 2000 we agreed to put more money into the CHST and agreed on principles and directions for reform. We put in place strong mechanisms for accountability and reporting to Canadians. That plan was agreed to by the provinces and it is working.

I then appointed Roy Romanow to head a royal commission to make recommendations about long-term reform to our public health system. We expect his report next month. I will hold a first ministers meeting early next year to discuss Mr. Romanow's recommendations and to agree on a long-term plan to modernize medicare. Federal investment to support reform will be set out in the next budget and funded for a long enough period of time so there will be the required financial certainty to allow reforms to go ahead.

Good health is priceless, but good health care does have a price. New technologies, new drugs and new treatments have created much better health but also higher costs as the aging population increases demand and therefore costs. We will have to spend more and we will have to do it in a very responsible way.

The costs of health care are not rising because we have a public system. In the United States, the cost of private insurance premiums for employer-sponsored plans rose by 11% in 2001 and is projected to rise by another 13% this year. There, the sick and the poor often have to pay the highest premiums.

The issue is not whether we will pay more as a society for health. We will. It is about the type of society we want. I respect the view of the Leader of the Opposition but I disagree with him completely. Either we have a society where individuals assume risk without regard to their ability to pay, as in the United States, or we have a society where, through government, we spread risk and spend collectively because health is a fundamental human right.

•(1115)

Here on this side of the House we prefer the Canadian way, where costs are shared by the entire population through a public health care system. If our costs go up we will have to pay for them. I know that Canadians will be prepared to pay that cost, but we will do so collectively as a society.

[*Translation*]

There is one other area where investments by government must be planned for the longer term: that is infrastructure. A modern infrastructure is key to our economic and environmental objectives.

It is simply impossible, for example, to build a road or transit system in the period of time for which governments normally budget. Every provincial premier has urged me to make our infrastructure spending a long term program so they can plan their capital spending, so they can work with mayors on their urban planning, and so we can all do our environmental planning.

Our caucus has been extremely forceful on this issue. They have convinced cabinet and they have convinced me.

A comprehensive urban strategy for the 21st century requires everything from roads and transit, to affordable housing, to the information highway.

We will establish a long term, strategic infrastructure plan in time for the next budget. This will help us meet our social, economic and environmental objectives and help us address the challenge of climate change.

We must put Canada's families and children first. I referred earlier to the National Child Benefit. Even in tough fiscal times, this government worked with our provincial partners and the voluntary sector to put in place a new architecture for helping Canadian families and children; to lift children out of poverty and get families off welfare.

We have made progress. The National Child Benefit is probably the most significant new social program since medicare.

We have to build on it and increase it because too many children still live in poverty. We will begin immediate consultations with our partners so as to be ready in the next budget to put in place a long term investment plan to enable Canada to turn the corner on child poverty and break the cycle of poverty and dependency for Canadian families.

We will also implement targeted measures for families caring for children with severe disabilities. We will reform our family and criminal laws to ensure that the interests of children are paramount and that children are protected from exploitation and abuse. We will ensure that no Canadian is forced to give up their job or income to care for a family member that is gravely ill or dying.

The Address

Early in our mandate, I asked my Cabinet to find new and better ways to close the gap in life chances between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians and to turn the corner in this partnership. We will take important new steps in this direction with an ambitious legislative agenda to create new institutions and investments to build individual and community capacity: investments in children, education and health care; investments in social, cultural and economic development.

We have learned that partnership must start at home and that all departments must work as one if we are to be successful. We have also learned that there is no single recipe. No one size that fits all. Our approach will be unified and tailored to the diverse needs and aspirations of aboriginal people, and it will be in partnership.

We have also set out an ambitious environment agenda. Canadians understand that our health, our economy and the future of our children depend on the quality of our environment. We will intensify our work toward safe water and clean air. We will deliver on our commitments to protect Canada's wilderness areas, creating new national parks and marine conservation areas. We will clean up contaminated sites. We will implement the new Agricultural Policy Framework, with its important stewardship initiatives that are so vital, not only to rural Canada but to all Canadians.

Of course, the current preoccupation throughout the world is climate change. Scientists have sounded the warning. People around the world have responded. Governments in Canada's North have been among the world's leaders in building the consensus for action. We have no choice but to act. It is our moral responsibility and it is in our enduring interest.

We are working hard with Canadian provinces and industries to develop an approach that will work for everyone. We will call for a fair contribution from every sector of society. We will have to reward innovators, invest in new technologies and be more efficient and productive. We can reduce the costs and maximize the opportunities. Citizens and consumers are ready to adjust their behaviour.

Obviously, it will not be easy. We are grappling with very difficult issues but I have no doubt that, working together, we will do it. We will have a strategy in place that allows us to meet our obligations by 2012 and by the end of this year, we will bring forward a resolution to Parliament on the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

•(1125)

[English]

Clearly, all our objectives require a strong economy. Let me repeat what I have said so often. We will maintain our unwavering commitment to balanced budgets, disciplined spending, debt reduction and declining ratio of debt to GDP, and fair and competitive taxes. We will continue our commitment to reallocate spending from low priorities, from what works less well to what works best. This has been our approach and this will be our approach.

We will continue to amend our regulatory policies and practices to serve the public good and to promote innovation and a more favourable climate for investment and growth. We will continue to reduce the administrative burden on businesses. We will work with the private sector to bolster investor confidence. We will continue to

work with small and medium size industries that are such an important source of job creation.

We will continue to build on our investment in research and development and in skills and learning. We will re-orient our labour market programs so that Canadians are ready for the future. We will support graduate studies and the indirect cost of university research. I will be participating in November in the National Summit on Innovation and Learning so that we can work, sector by sector, to help make Canada a magnet for talent and investment.

I want to emphasize the importance of integrity in public life. When I look around the House, on all sides, I know that none of us is perfect. We all make mistakes but our mistakes are made in good faith, not in bad faith. No one is here to enrich themselves, but we must all recognize the importance of perception.

To meet the very legitimate concerns of Canadians, the government will introduce, this month, legislation on lobbyists, on a code of conduct for parliamentarians and on the role and responsibilities of the ethics counsellor. Next month we will introduce comprehensive election and political party finance reform. I hope all members will work in a non-partisan way to quickly pass the best possible bills. Canadians will settle for nothing less.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition a minute ago talking about his own conception of that. I think everyone who advertises politically should tell us who is paying for it, including the National Citizens' Coalition.

I do not need the publicity that they are giving to me these days. I travel in Ottawa and elsewhere and there are big billboards of me. They do not have to tell the people I am there. I am not running anymore. They should not waste their money.

What we want to know is the role of the National Rifle Association from the United States. We do not know. We have to know because the Leader of the Opposition did not want to reveal anything in the House of Commons on his campaign. In our party everything is revealed and will be revealed because that is the way we operate. I want to know what the Leader of the Opposition will tell us about who paid for his campaign to replace a better man that was the former leader. We want to know who paid for that.

I hope all members will work in a non-partisan way to quickly pass the best possible bills. Canadians will settle for nothing less.

The Address

●(1130)

In these unsettled times, Canadians share the global concern about terrorism, about weapons of mass destruction and about war in any part of the world. We have a special role to play because of the nature of our country, a country that has welcomed immigrants from everywhere, a country that is being steadily enriched by aboriginal people, the first nations, the Inuits and the Metis, a country that has proven that pluralism works. And so we will continue to promote the values of democracy, peace and freedom, human rights and the rule of law.

I am a great believer in a multilateral approach to dealing with international issues. The United Nations can be a great force for good in the world. It is in all our interests to use the power of international institutions in this complex world. Collective action, whenever possible, produces greater long term results than unilateral action. It is the best way to deal with states that support terrorism or that attempt to develop weapons of mass destruction. And deal with them we must. We must deal collectively and directly with those who threaten our peace and security.

To that end, before the end of our mandate, the government will be setting out a long term direction on international and defence policies to reflect our values and interests and to ensure that our military is able to meet the demands that we place upon it.

We must also work collectively and aggressively to close the gap between the rich and poor nations. I am proud of Canada's leadership in helping to build a consensus to support the new partnership for African development to help Africans lift themselves out of poverty into a brighter future. This is a long road and our partnership must be enduring. That is why we are committed to doubling our international assistance by 2010 and allocate half of it to Africa.

Trade and investment have been keys to the prosperity we enjoy. We are working very hard to prepare for the next round of multilateral trade negotiations. We are also working to resolve issues such as softwood lumber.

However we must also make trade and investment work for the developing world. That is why we are opening our markets to the least developed countries. That is one of the reasons we will continue to press rich countries to eliminate their agricultural subsidies. It is completely unacceptable that we, the rich countries, give \$50 billion American in foreign aid and yet spend \$350 billion on subsidies to farmers to eliminate competition. I know Canadian farmers are good, productive and not afraid of competition, but how can they compete with the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Americans and the Europeans are giving to their farmers?

I have said that to everybody on every occasion I have had. We are about to win it. I feel at this moment that there is a break coming in Europe. If it does happen it will open up markets for the poor nations that would like to develop, such as Africa which has regressed over the last 10 years. If we give Africans access to their agricultural products they will progress again and they will buy goods and services from us. It is a win-win situation and our farmers will be able to compete.

●(1135)

I have been enormously privileged to serve this country and this House for as long as I have. During my time in this place, one of the most important pieces of legislation was the Official Languages Act. I am pleased to announce that our government will lay out an action plan to re-energize our official languages policy.

In the coming months I intend to spend a lot of time with young Canadians. When I travel across Canada I will talk to a new generation about the importance of public life. I will discuss with them the role of public service and how they can participate and lead in the future. I will talk about the nature of Canada. I will reflect on the importance of having two official languages and an obligation to promote them, and I will reflect on the benefits of a multicultural society and of how we created harmony in diversity. I will have the opportunity to reflect on lessons learned but always on how to make this an even better country.

We are a confident people and a proud nation. We can shape our own destiny. We can choose the Canada we want, knowing who we are and knowing where we are going together.

We have a lot of work to do. Let us roll up our sleeves and get on with it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by extending condolences on behalf of all my colleagues to the family of Ronald Duhamel.

I knew him for some years, and he was known to me and to all of us as a man of convictions, always respectful of his political adversaries. That is, I believe, what posterity will remember this parliamentarian from Manitoba for, this man who always ably represented his fellow citizens.

In 1963, when the Prime Minister was first elected as the member for Shawinigan, he said the following: "I entered this election campaign driven by duty, because it is the duty of a serious man to analyze the situation and examine the points of a political program to remedy what is not working right in Canada... It is a matter of drawing up the constitution anew, not among ten provinces, but between two nations". Those were the words spoken at that time by a young lawyer from Shawinigan setting out on a long career in politics.

Some hon. members: There has been a big change since then.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe: Politics is the path all of us in this House have chosen to make a difference, to improve the conditions of our fellow citizens. We all want to contribute to making a change for the better. The young lawyer from Shawinigan the Prime Minister was at that time was no different from the rest of us.

Since he was first elected in 1963, the Prime Minister has had a very full political life. He has served in several ministerial portfolios and has held the most senior position in the Canadian government for almost nine years. He has had the time to work towards attaining his goal but we see today that he has fallen very short of it and that he has, in fact, renounced it.

The Address

The Prime Minister has announced that he will be leaving politics in February 2004. There is no doubt that yesterday's Speech from the Throne is the closest thing there is to a political legacy, even though he will not admit it.

For Quebec, the Prime Minister's throne speech is very disappointing. It mentions none of the major challenges facing Quebec. The drop in the birth rate, Quebec's regions, the international presence of Quebec and, above all, the fiscal imbalance were completely passed over. One might have thought that the Prime Minister would have wished to change the very strong image he intends to leave Quebecers. For a great many people, he is the Prime Minister who has most contributed to weakening Quebec's powers and who is the furthest from Quebecers' legitimate aspirations.

In his political legacy, the Prime Minister proposes choices which are necessary to build the Canada of tomorrow. But rather than showing open-mindedness towards Quebec, the Prime Minister holds to the vision of a centralizing and homogeneous Canada. He has obviously forgotten to include Quebec in his legacy.

Canada is building itself as a nation and that is as should be, but Quebec is also building itself as a nation and it is doing so in a different way, which must be recognized. It is clear from the throne speech that the federal government has completely ignored the situation in Quebec. It is busily building Canada and Quebec does not figure in its plans. I will give some examples.

In the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister proposes measures whose impact on Quebec is dangerous, either because Quebec has already addressed the problem in its own way and the government is duplicating services or creating confusion, or because the government is preparing to interfere in areas outside its jurisdiction.

● (1140)

For example, the Prime Minister announced a comprehensive plan to reform health services, a plan including the long term federal investments that will be required following the Romanow commission. The federal government wants to tell the provinces how to act in a area in which it has no expertise. Quebec did not take part in the Romanow commission, because it does not recognize that the commission has any right to get involved in this area, health being under Quebec's jurisdiction.

Transfer payments must be restored to the levels they were at in 1993, when this government took office. This is what we have been asking for, but we have still not got an answer. It is always the same old song, namely that "Ottawa knows best". These people want to tell those who deliver the services directly to the public how to do it, when they have no expertise in this area.

The federal government also announced its intention to work to improve access to initiatives relating to young children's development and access to quality day care services, particularly for poor families and single parents. However, Quebec, which already has a day care system that is effective and popular—in fact its only problem may be that it is too popular—is concerned about the standards that the federal government want to impose on it.

These are areas where Quebec is doing a good job, where its effectiveness is clearly demonstrated, and the federal government should never interfere with these jurisdictions.

The federal government wants to be involved in the areas of research, literacy and education, as well as in the building of competitive cities and healthy communities. These are all jurisdictions that belong to Quebec and the provinces. Once again, the federal government is getting involved in jurisdictions that are none of its concern.

The federal government proposes to focus on minority language and second language education, including the goal of doubling within ten years the number of high school graduates with a working knowledge of both English and French. While this objective is definitely not a bad one, the fact is that secondary education is clearly under Quebec's jurisdiction. Once again, the federal government is interfering in an area that is none of its concern, and this will lead to duplication, confusion and disputes.

The federal government will introduce a new strategy for a safe, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system. This is under Quebec's jurisdiction, since anything done inside cities must be negotiated with Quebec, based on the fact that cities have always been under provincial jurisdiction and that Quebec must control anything that will be part of an infrastructure program. This is not spelled out in the throne speech. We will need more details in this regard.

The federal government will also increase the national child benefit for poor families. Quebec already has a right to opt out of this program with compensation, and would like a proportional increase in its funding, without having national standards imposed, as was the case for parental leave, that do not correspond with the reality that exists in Quebec, a reality that is understood better in Quebec than in Ottawa.

The federal government is proposing helping secondary students and new immigrants learn both languages. Quebec supports learning languages. We would hope that young people would not limit themselves to only two languages, but that they will learn three, even four. This is the way of the future. However, it is not up to Ottawa to manage this. Quebec wants to ensure that its jurisdiction in education and that its language laws are respected. Once again, there is no specific mention of this in the Speech from the Throne.

The federal government announced renewed investment in the Youth Employment Strategy, but Quebec has always called for the transfer of manpower training, specifically youth training. This, despite the fact that prior to the 1997 election, the federal government announced that it would be withdrawing from manpower training. Now, the government is using training to once again get involved in something that is none of its concern, in another government's jurisdiction. We had thought that the matter had been settled since 1997.

The government has again announced its intention to interfere in securities. This is clearly an area of provincial responsibility. Since 1994, time and again we have seen the government's intention to interfere in the area of securities. This runs counter to what all political parties in Quebec want.

The Address

•(1145)

The federal government wants to speed up the work undertaken by the provinces to improve national water quality guidelines. It will enforce them in those areas coming under its jurisdiction. Quebec already has strict drinking water standards and water management comes under Quebec's jurisdiction. Once again, there is nothing specific in the Speech from the Throne.

It is clear from the throne speech that the problems the federal government intends to tackle are in fact problems which Canada may be facing but which Quebec, in those cases I have mentioned, has already largely solved.

Quebec has certainly not found solutions to all the problems mentioned, but it definitely does not need the federal government presenting it with its Canadian solutions to problems which ignore the reality in Quebec. Need we mention the Young Offenders Act, which, in the opinion of everyone in Quebec, sabotaged almost all Quebec's efforts in this area?

In fact, it would be more accurate to say that the federal plan presented yesterday in the Speech from the Throne does not meet the needs of Quebec. Between 1991 and 2000, Quebec's collective wealth increased, but its population growth was low. The Parti Québécois, the Quebec Liberal Party and the Action démocratique are united on this important issue. One of the solutions that has been identified is to strike a better balance between work and family, and for Quebec to offer a program of accessible and generous parental leave. Ottawa will not even discuss it.

To qualify for Ottawa's parental leave, one must be eligible for EI, and eligibility has been limited to the maximum. Ottawa has not noticed that there are more and more self-employed workers who do not qualify for parental leave. Furthermore, associating parental leave with unemployment is a peculiar form of brain dysfunction all too common in Ottawa.

Quebec is also one of the places in North America where the wealth is the best distributed, as Statistics Canada has reminded us. People cannot therefore reach the prejudicial conclusion that such a statement comes from our sovereignist tendencies. The challenge for Quebec is to avoid having too wide a socio-economic gap between the major metropolitan areas of Quebec and the regions. All political parties in Quebec agree that they do not want to see a reproduction in Quebec of the Canadian model, where Alberta is twice as wealthy as Newfoundland. Decisions made in Ottawa have headed us in that direction. Employment insurance reform is most certainly one indication of this, and cuts to transfer payments are another. Fisheries management has been a disaster; under air deregulation, it costs more to get to Saguenay than to Paris. And there is nothing about the softwood lumber fiasco, not a mention of it in the throne speech.

Quebec is also absent from international negotiating tables, yet the decisions reached there directly affect the everyday lives of Quebecers, and increasingly so. This goes against democracy, as decisions reached in Quebec are not made known these important forums.

Yet Quebec is calling for—the Liberals, the Action démocratique, the PQ, indeed all political parties, are calling for—a presence at the international tables, when subjects and areas that come under the

jurisdiction of Quebec or the provinces are discussed. The federal government has never shown any interest in doing so; what is more, we have been told that education would never be debated in all those debates on the free trade area of the Americas. Yet only three days ago, a meeting was held among the FTAA countries to discuss education. We were lied to, no more and no less, and once again an area that was not under Ottawa's jurisdiction was addressed.

Another instance: the National Assembly is unanimously in favour of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Quebec wants to do all it can to get on the path toward sustainable development. This began with the choice of hydroelectric power rather than nuclear energy. Its plans for reconstruction in the pulp and paper field were respectful of the environment. Ottawa, however, has always favoured the oil, gas and coal industry, even the nuclear industry: \$66 billion over the past thirty years, compared with \$120 million for clean energies.

•(1150)

Let us keep in mind that the costs of Ontario Hydro's nuclear focus were met by Ottawa. So Quebecers paid for one-quarter of the development of Ontario Hydro, to the tune of billions of dollars. Yet not one cent was invested in hydroelectricity; Hydro-Québec was paid for by us alone.

Now that the time has come to get on to the debate on Kyoto, our reading of the text indicates that it is different from the intentions that have been expressed in past weeks or months.

Is there or is there not going to be a resolution proposing ratification of the Kyoto Protocol? The throne speech is not clear on this. We want clarification.

We would also like clarification on implementation. Will it be territorially based, respecting the efforts made by Quebec, to which I have already referred, or industrially based, denying the efforts made by Quebec?

Will the polluter-pay principle be applied? It is not up to Quebec, which has already paid for the economic development of companies based on oil or nuclear energy, to foot the bill for damages as well. This would be totally insulting and unfair.

There is nothing on the fiscal imbalance. Yet, everyone in Quebec—it was unanimous—all three political parties deplored this fact. It appears as though Ottawa does not understand this type of situation. The opposition parties have recognized it. The premiers from every province have recognized it. All of the political parties in Quebec have recognized it. Ottawa is marching to a different drum all alone, like some soldier who thinks that all the others are out of step.

Canada is being built on the foundation of a patriated constitution, on the Canadian social union, on the clarity act. Yet, this foundation is being criticized by Bernard Landry and the PQ, Jean Charest and the Quebec Liberal Party, and Mario Dumont and the ADQ, all together. Ottawa has managed to build a unanimous consensus among all Quebecers. It is not every day that Ottawa manages such a feat, but here they have done it.

The Address

The Canadian consensus is clear. It is about refusing to acknowledge the existence of the Quebec nation that the current Prime Minister talked about back in 1963. But the Quebec consensus is just as strong within Quebec. Quebecers make up a nation, are aware of this and affirm this. This deep and fundamental disagreement between Quebec and Canada has not been solved and is growing.

So, the Prime Minister missed his last chance by not taking into account, in the throne speech, the consensus achieved in Quebec. We are the spokespersons on this. We are the only ones to affirm this. We are here to remind the government that Quebec is not being built the way Canada is. We do not question the fact that Canada has to be built in a different way. Neither one is better or worse than the other.

Building Canada without providing Quebec with all the tools that it needs to build itself not only hinders Quebec, it also makes it move backwards instead of forward.

Whether he likes it or not, this was the Prime Minister's last throne speech. This is his political last will and testament. He has been true to himself. We can certainly fault him for having forgotten the vision of his youth, and we regret that he did. However, with the throne speech, the Prime Minister showed that his political vision of Canada's future does not leave any room for Quebec's evolution.

This vision does not reflect what Quebecers believe in, and this would be the Prime Minister's true political legacy.

I will conclude by proposing an amendment to the amendment, seconded by the hon. member for Témiscamingue, which reads as follows:

That the amendment be modified by adding between the words "programs" and "at" the following:

"notwithstanding the jurisdictions of Quebec and the other provinces".

• (1155)

The Speaker: The debate is on the amendment to the amendment. [English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I speak to the Speech from the Throne introduced yesterday, I too want to express personally and on behalf of my New Democrat colleagues our deepest condolences to the family of Ron Duhamel, a member who served very ably in this House for 14 years.

I had the opportunity only to serve with him for four years, but I know from my colleagues and previous New Democrat members of Parliament that he was much respected, much loved and I think represented the very best in parliamentarians that we need to see more of in the House. Our deepest condolences go to the family of the former member for Saint Boniface.

At the outset I want to congratulate the Liberal government, and I say that quite sincerely, for confirming with its throne speech that the fundamental principles and the progressive policies of the New Democratic Party are indeed resonating strongly with the Canadian public these days. The pollsters have been telling us that for many months now. We see reflected in yesterday's throne speech that fact.

It is a well-known historical phenomenon, which has had very important results for Canadians, that whenever the NDP shows

momentum in the polls, the Liberal Party is quick to embrace at least in words, if rarely in deeds, a more progressive agenda.

• (1200)

[Translation]

My party, the New Democratic Party of Canada, is pleased to see that the government has chosen to embrace our priorities. I would like the government to know we have plenty more like them.

[English]

Canadians know that when they elect New Democrats to Parliament they get caucus members who are ready, willing and able to fight, and fight ferociously, for the issues that matter to working people and issues that matter particularly to those vulnerable Canadians who are so often ignored or battered by the market forces that the government has so blindly embraced.

Yesterday's throne speech reminds Canadians that Liberals feel the political heat when New Democrats begin to climb in the public opinion polls.

Consider for a moment the words of the Prime Minister about the throne speech that was introduced. He said that this was more likely to please Main Street than Bay Street. When did members last hear those sentiments from the Chrétien-Martin tag team?

To that I say welcome to the real world of Canadians. In the real world people are held to their word. In the real world people are held accountable for their actions.

Setting aside the progressive tone of yesterday's throne speech, let us take a few moments to examine the legacy to date of the government. I know the Prime Minister said in his earlier remarks that the throne speech was not about legacy. The performance of the government over the past nine years is about legacy. One has to wonder whether the throne speech is not more a vanity speech than a legacy speech.

[Translation]

As hon. members are aware, the last decade has been a difficult one for workers. They and their families have had to fend off attacks in the name of globalization, stock prices, rationalization, convergence, and profit margins.

[English]

What Canadians got from the Liberal government over the last nine years was the antithesis of its 1993 red book promises. Essentially that election platform, on the basis of which the Liberal government was elected, was a social democratic platform. It was no accident that the betrayal of that social democratic set of commitments occurred at a time when the New Democratic Party was reduced to a caucus without official party status in the House.

In 1994 I was getting ready to leave active political life. I had been leader of the New Democratic Party in Nova Scotia for some 14 years and I was actively considering in the latter part of 1994 moving to international development work in Africa. I was enthusiastically engaged in looking beyond politics until February 17, 1995.

The Address

I do not need to remind hon. members that that was the day the former finance minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard, brought down the federal Liberal budget that ultimately stripped \$20 billion out of our health care system. That budget introduced cuts just as brutal in education, social housing, social services, public infrastructure and a whole host of other public institutions which matter a great deal to working people in the country.

It was obvious to me that Canadians would be forced to do a great deal of bailing while the government chopped holes in the bottom of the boat. It was also obvious that any success New Democrats in Nova Scotia had achieved under my 14 years as leader would not account for very much at all with the tag team of the Prime Minister and his finance minister bankrupting the provinces, many of which in turn downloaded the burden onto municipalities and in many cases onto the very backs of the most vulnerable citizens of the country. I decided that I could not walk away from that fight and I am glad that I made that decision.

I have to say that I see red, so to speak, every time I hear the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard talking about his shining new vision for Canada. Are we to believe that the former finance minister had no influence on government priorities when he was merely finance minister? Give me a break. There is surely no clearer statement of a government's priorities than its own budget. For close to a decade the former finance minister, with the full support of the Prime Minister, decided who would pay taxes and who would be let off the hook. For close to a decade, the Chrétien-Martin team decided who would get funded and who would get axed.

• (1205)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I know the hon. member is always very respectful of this institution, this wonderful place we share. I think we should maintain the practice of recognizing each other according to our portfolios or ridings, as the case may be.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that indiscretion. I will certainly respect your ruling in that regard.

For close to a decade the Prime Minister and the former finance minister took the side of the corporate elite and hacked away at vital services that were so important to working families. They massively reduced employment insurance for Canada's unemployed and they stole the employment insurance surplus. They cut the Ministry of the Environment by 40% at a time that leadership was desperately needed in shifting on to sustainable practices capable of saving the planet. They slashed education funding to the lowest level in 30 years, doubling average student debt loads along the way. They gutted agricultural support programs.

With every budget they said, "We have no choice; it is this or financial ruin". Every one of those budgets overestimated the deficit and underestimated the surplus to the tune of \$75 billion. That is Arthur Andersen territory. That is the kind of book cooking that gets a person a guest spot on the Martha Stewart show for heaven's sake.

Now that we have had successive surplus budgets for several years in a row, what have the Liberals chosen? Is it an all out effort to end homelessness and inadequate housing? No. Is it full restoration of the money they ripped out of health or education? No. Is it restoration of employment insurance or agricultural support programs? No. Is it the fulfillment of the child care promise in the

1993 Liberal red book, co-authored by the member for LaSalle—Émard? No. Is it plan for implementing the Kyoto protocol, a nationwide training initiative, a reduction in the GST? No, it is none of the above.

Instead, they introduced a massive tax reduction, but not for workers and their families. In fact any tax savings for working people were effectively wiped out by the user fees and the service cuts that are still trickling down from previous budgets. The big tax giveaways went to the big corporations, to the wealthiest of the wealthy, to the banks. All told, \$100 billion was squandered.

When I watch the Prime Minister scrambling for his legacy, I have to say that I almost feel sorry for him because his principal legacy as Prime Minister has already been defined by his former finance minister. That is a legacy of a Liberal Party which turfed its Liberal values for nine straight years.

[*Translation*]

There are, however, some signs of change appearing. I do not mean to imply that we are prepared to storm the barricades and take the Bastille, but the Liberals know that the wind is changing. They are doing as they always do, the least possible, the strict minimum, just enough to look progressive and seem to be close to the common folk.

• (1210)

[*English*]

It is entirely predictable that with momentum behind the NDP, the Liberals would shift to talk about a more progressive agenda.

As I said yesterday, the Liberals have pulled their red book from the blue box to repeat past broken promises dealing with everything from child poverty to urban renewal. The problem with those recycled Liberal promises is that they never seem to last any longer than a flashing media event or long enough for the ink to dry on the throne speech paper.

Let me say today that my New Democrat colleagues and I will be using every means at our disposal to pressure the government to follow through with that progressive agenda outlined yesterday by the Prime Minister, to follow through with the progressive agenda that was in fact promised to Canadians when the Liberals gained power in 1993. We will call the Liberals on their doublespeak whenever it occurs, and we will call the Liberals on their diversionary tactics whenever they dream them up.

Let me take the example of protecting the environment and building a sustainable economy. Within days of standing before the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development and promising without qualification to ratify the Kyoto protocol, the Prime Minister returned home and began arguing once again for Canadian exemptions to the international standards.

The Address

When it comes to fighting for Canadian priorities there is no room for weasel words. Dealing with environmental protection deserves an airing of the facts. It is a fact that in the 1997 red book the Liberals said that they would “redouble our efforts to stabilize emissions of greenhouse gases”. Today those emissions are about 14% above 1990 levels and 20% over our Kyoto target.

[*Translation*]

Four and a half years ago, the Prime Minister was calling Kyoto a golden opportunity to create new jobs. Since then, the government has succeeded in delaying and weakening world consensus.

The government insists on wanting to have clean energy credits where none are to be seen.

The rest of the world is waiting on Canada. The Kyoto protocol needs only ratification by the Russian federation and Canada to take effect.

[*English*]

Kyoto is not the only area in which urgent action is required. There is a dire need for action to protect the pensions and the life savings of Canadians that have been severely eroded and jeopardized in recent years. We desperately need measures to establish corporate accountability. Who has not heard of the horrors of Bre-X, WorldCom, Enron and Westray? What did we get on corporate accountability in the throne speech beyond the voluntary standards that really are no standards at all? A vague commitment for the most part to more talk.

We want to protect investors, workers, pensioners and consumers. Deregulation has been clearly demonstrated not to be the answer. We need a federal watchdog with teeth and we need regulations that have real clout.

Sadly, a culture of corruption has been allowed to develop both inside and outside the government. Why not? When it comes to standing up for the pensions and the investments of working Canadians, the government has consistently stood on the side of its wealthy corporate donors.

It is a fact that the Liberals promised a national securities commission in their 1996 throne speech. Four speeches later there is still no commission but plenty of talk. The CPP funds of every working Canadian are invested today in the open stock market. Even George Bush for heaven's sake has adopted tough new laws to crack down on corporate crime and fraud.

•(1215)

[*Translation*]

Later this week, I shall be presenting the NDP plan to restore Canadians' confidence in their country's economic and financial sector.

[*English*]

Let me now shift to health care, without a doubt the top priority concern of most Canadians. What did the government actually propose in yesterday's throne speech? It proposed that the Prime Minister convene a first ministers meeting early in 2003.

Let me take a moment to review the legacy to date on health care. Sadly the Liberals have let privatization become the answer to their lack of vision and their depleted resources for health care. The Liberal legacy is a rapid increase in private, for profit facilities. The federal government's response has been consistent. I have to give the government points for consistency. Its response to the growing crisis of privatization and the proliferation of for profit health care facilities has been simply that it is monitoring the situation.

Three years ago there were five private MRI clinics in Canada. Today there are 25. We all know that medicare was once funded on the basis of a fifty-fifty federal-provincial formula. Today, unbelievably that federal commitment has fallen to 14% of health care financing.

Another area in which the Liberal legacy is equally paltry and pathetic is that affecting aboriginal Canadians. It is true that the throne speech contained a lengthy to do list, but has the government learned nothing from our history? Surely native people in Canada have had enough of governments doing things to them. Aboriginal Canadians want a government to work with them.

The government's so-called first nations governance act violates that fundamental principle of sitting down in a respectful partnership and looking at what the options are for what first nations people need. That legislation is odious and paternalistic. Today I implore the government to open its ears and begin working respectfully and in good faith with Canada's aboriginal people. That means not reintroducing the government bill but sitting together to explore what the real solutions are.

After nine years of the government's betrayal of the promised progressive agenda, Canadians have a gut feeling that their country is slipping away from them. Where in the throne speech is the bold vision of an independent country of which Canadians can be confident and proud?

The New Democratic Party is here to proclaim today that in defence of a sovereign Canada and in the defence of the social democratic values that generations have struggled to build, we are ready to stand up and be counted. If the government can summon the courage to make budgetary commitments to begin undoing its damaging legacy, then New Democrats will support the government. However if it cannot or will not rise to that occasion, then the throne speech will be nothing more than one more repetition of hollow promises. Canadians deserve better and the NDP is willing to provide the better option to truly build a Canada that the citizens of this great country want, need and deserve.

•(1220)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by the leader of the New Democratic Party.

The Address

I grew up in Saskatchewan, the home of the CCF, which later morphed into the NDP, and the home of medicare, they say. I was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, the first municipality in Saskatchewan to have a municipally funded public health care system, so I have some firsthand experience with it, but I am really distressed at how much health care has deteriorated under the public administration in Saskatchewan, where I still have relatives.

I had an aunt who recently passed away, and we are probably not going to be in a lawsuit because that is not our way, but it was really due to lack of medical care. Imagine having one nurse in charge of 40 people all night. My aunt was ringing and there was no response. She fell out of bed because nobody was there to look after her and help her. This was in the province of publicly funded medicare.

I believe very strongly in the principle that not one person in the country should be denied needed medical health care because of a lack of ability to pay, but the delivery of those services surely should be subject to some serious scrutiny and some consideration for improvement. When I think of what has happened in Saskatchewan, I am really concerned.

In closing I will also point out that a friend of mine went to the doctor because of heart problems. He had pain and checked it out. They found out that one of his arteries is 95% or 100% blocked, another about 80%. The doctor told him not to do anything, that he was in danger and would not live if he overexerted himself. By the way, he also said that the surgery would be four to six months from now. It is not acceptable in Saskatchewan and is not acceptable anywhere in Canada.

What are we going to do in this country to improve, in a timely fashion, the delivery of health care for people who need it?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, the question is, what are we going to do? I will tell the member what the New Democrats are going to do. We are going to fight, with every single breath of our being, to reduce the presence and influence of the Alliance Party in chipping away or carping away against our public, not for profit health care system.

I meant what I said earlier when I said that when the government does the right thing we will be there to stand with it. I want to again give the Prime Minister credit. He understood, although he may have caused the problem together with his finance minister, that embracing those policies, going the route of reducing federal funding and opening the door to private, for profit medicine, was actually causing tremendous damage to the system.

At least the Prime Minister understood that there are problems in Saskatchewan, problems because the federal government has reduced across the country the federal contribution to health care from 50% down to 14%. At least he recognized that the premier of Saskatchewan has a long record of fighting for health care and implementing health care, even under the difficult and adverse conditions caused by this Liberal government.

One of the things we would have liked to have seen in the throne speech was a clear, unequivocal commitment from the federal Liberal government that the recommendations of the Romanow commission will indeed be acted upon, acted upon with a sense of urgency that is desperately needed.

Finally, for the member who chose to bring out an example, and we all have examples of patients who did not fare well in the health care system, let him begin to acknowledge the truth. If we go farther down the road that Reform advocated and the Alliance Party persists in advocating, as recently as yesterday with his own leader once again advocating it, then we will not have a public, not for profit health care system to hand on to Canadians, and that is our first and foremost responsibility in this session of Parliament: to get back on track with a solid commitment to a public health care system that works.

• (1225)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Nova Scotia, the leader of the New Democratic Party, who has consistently stood up for Canadians, not only in her province but nationally, on this very issue.

I want to press her further, though, in terms of what we should and could be doing. I believe that Canadians do not have to wait for the report of the Romanow commission. Certainly there will be great insights in that report, but clearly she has put her finger on the issue itself of funding, stable funding. We have seen, since 1993, drastic cuts to health care under this administration. Any health care provider in any province, in any hospital or providing health care in the communities, can equally identify where those priorities need to be.

My question specifically to the hon. member is, do we have to wait? Do we in fact not need a budget rather than a health care strategy that is laid out in vagaries in the throne speech? Would it not be better for the government to actually pony up with stable health care funding in a budget this fall rather than wait, rather than put this issue off further? Should this not be the focus of the government in this session of Parliament?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, let me say that I very much concur with the words of my hon. colleague. There is no excuse for the government waiting, delaying the action that is needed, until the Romanow commission reports. The government knows full well, and the facts speak for themselves, that it is the gutting of federal funding, the reducing of the federal contribution to health care spending down to an unprecedented low of 14%, that is causing enormous crisis in the system.

Let us be very clear. Money alone will not solve the problems, but the problems cannot be solved without an infusion of money by the federal government.

I am sure that there is no one who understands the problems in the health care system who would not concur with the comment made by my hon. colleague that the government needs to bring in a budget. It needs to bring in a budget that at a minimum restores the level of federal contribution to health care funding to 25%, with a firm, unequivocal resolve that it will move toward the 50% cost share formula as quickly as it is possible to do so.

The Address

Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, child poverty has been an important issue raised in this place and certainly emphasized in the throne speech.

On November 24, 1989, on his very last day as a member of Parliament, the Hon. Ed Broadbent sponsored a motion to seek to achieve the elimination of child poverty by the year 2000.

The member will know that lone parent families in Canada represent about 15% of all families in Canada, but they also account for over 54% of all children living in poverty. If lone parent families account for more than half of the children living in poverty, and since the member is interested in legacies, what would she propose to do to address that half of the children in poverty who are in poverty because of family breakdown?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, I will just get to the nub of the question as to what I and the New Democratic Party would propose to do about the obscene level of child poverty in the country. We ought to be very careful that we do not come to simplistic conclusions about what it is that plunges people into poverty.

Let us go directly to the heart of the matter. We have a government that prides itself and congratulates itself on, and did so again in the throne speech yesterday, the introduction of the child tax credit, yet the government knows that because of its own policies two-thirds of the children living in grinding poverty in this country do not receive one red cent of benefit from the child tax benefit program. That is perverse. It is unbelievable that the government says that we will claw back from the poorest of the poor in this country, literally two-thirds of the families living in poverty, the child tax benefit.

The government has said that it wants to increase it. Let me say very clearly to the questioner who has raised this question of what needs to be done that at the very minimum what this government needs to do, if it is serious about moving toward the 1989 resolution to eliminate child poverty in this country, is double the existing child tax credit. Anything less than that is not going to lift our children out of poverty and is going to be part of a very ugly, shameful legacy indeed.

• (1230)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, may I begin, as others have, by expressing to the family of our late colleague, Ron Duhamel, my most sincere condolences and those of my family and my party. I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Duhamel throughout his career in Parliament. He was in the best and every sense of the word a gentleman, but a man who under pressure was quite prepared to stand up and fight for those people to whom he had responsibilities and for those principles in which he believed. He fought a difficult battle, a wasting battle, and he fought it with the kind of dignity and strength that we would all associate with him. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I want to express condolences to his family.

The Governor General has delivered eloquent and evocative speeches about our country. Yesterday's throne speech was not among them. It was a piece of fluff. It was a public relations ploy designed to divert attention from a government that is divided and drifting. Canada's interests have been put on hold for 18 months while the Liberal Party puts itself ahead of Canada. There was scant

detail in this throne speech, there was no vision, and there is absolute silence on the country's capacity to pay either for the new programs the government intends or the other challenges it knows it cannot ignore.

The throne speech bears a title, "The Canada We Want". It reminds me of "The Land is Strong", that hymn to complacency that carried an earlier Liberal government to defeat. But the title is accurate: It talks about what the government wants, not about what the government will do.

I think it is appropriate that this throne speech was published at about the same time as the Sears Christmas wish book. I will not wave the Sears book around because that would violate parliamentary traditions and I leave that to the other side. I make the point that the Sears book, which I will not wave around, is much thicker and it is much more specific. I can quote from it, it being a book. It lists a military command post—

The Deputy Speaker: I know the right hon. member is well experienced and has used many methods to make his point of view known, but I would ask him to stay within the confines of the spirit of the rules of the House, as he normally does.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I will not lift the book again, but let me quote from it. It does list a military command post for \$99.99. That is more than the Prime Minister's wish book yesterday gave the Canadian military.

The Sears book also comes with a no lower price guarantee, not the sort of thing we got from Alfonso Gagliano.

Sears has the added advantage of spelling out the price, while no one has any idea of what the Prime Minister's wish list will cost.

But what is most serious about the Prime Minister's promises is that we know they will not be kept.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, in his Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister served us up a rehash, a list of promises which we have heard before and which will never be kept.

[*English*]

Let us look at the government's last two throne speeches. There were roughly 118 promises in those two speeches. How many of them have been kept? Only 25 of those solemn promises were actually acted on by the government. It is a disgrace. It is shameful.

Fully 44 of those old promises, promises not kept, showed up again in the throne speech delivered yesterday. That raises very directly the question: Why did the Prime Minister shut Parliament down? If this Parliament had met in mid-September, when it was supposed to, some of the measures proposed in yesterday's throne speech would already be well on the way to becoming law.

The Prime Minister did not shut Parliament down to provide a new vision. There is no new vision. He needed a diversion to take attention away from the shameful way the government put its party's interest ahead of Canada's interest this summer, so he manipulated Parliament to serve his partisan and personal interests.

The Address

[Translation]

At its best, the Speech from the Throne is supposed to be a clear statement of the challenges we are facing and the solutions the government proposes.

[English]

That is what a throne speech is supposed to do. It should be a guide to the country's priorities and a guide to the government's intentions over the next session of Parliament. An honest government would have spelled out clearly the issues facing Canada and the actions the government intends. Let us make no mistake, this country faces grave and fundamental issues in the next year. Let us consider just five of those challenges that Canada cannot duck.

First, a deadly war may start in Iraq. If pursued unilaterally, it could trigger turmoil throughout the Middle East and beyond and could wound the United Nations. What is Canada's position? The throne speech says the government will "set out a long-term direction on international and defence policy". When will it do that? It will do that "before the end of this mandate"; that is, some vague time in the next two years. There is absolutely no investment in a military that has been starved to the breaking point. There are no initiatives to apply Canada's hard-won reputation as a country that can make a difference in international affairs.

I want to talk about the Prime Minister's new found commitment to Africa. I am delighted that he has decided to increase official development assistance. I also know the record of his government. Year after year, consistently, since coming into office until the last fiscal year, the Liberals cut official development assistance, including, cruelly, to Africa. There is a vast gap between what the Prime Minister says now and what he did when he had a chance to make a difference. If he talks about legacy, he will be remembered by the lives he cost, by the hardship he allowed to happen, by the people in the countries and communities who had aid cut off in Africa under his watch.

Second, there are fundamental questions about the strength of the international economy and of Canada's economy. Since the last federal budget the finance minister has either quit or been pushed out, markets are falling, confidence in corporate leadership is falling, the threat of war is in the air and there are wildly different projections on the actual size of the federal government's surpluses for the next few years.

Third, Canada's health care system has been in evident crisis ever since the Liberal government unilaterally cut billions of dollars of transfer payments to the provinces. Other levels of government are ready to act and have proposals. The Romanow commission is winding to a conclusion. Why did the government rush into a throne speech weeks before Romanow reports? How can there be a sensible discussion of social policy priorities in the country when the government has no idea what it will do about health care? The major health initiative, as others have mentioned, in the throne speech is a promise to call a first minister's conference. The Prime Minister does not need a throne speech to call a first minister's conference.

Fourth, there must be a decision on how we deal with climate change. What is the government's plan? The throne speech states:

Before the end of this year, the government will bring forward a resolution to Parliament on the issue of ratifying the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change.

A "resolution on the issue of ratifying". What careful, convoluted language. That is not a plan. That will not answer the tough questions on the costs of ratifying Kyoto. It will not generate a serious debate on the pros, the cons and the alternatives.

Whatever those words mean, they are different from what the Prime Minister promised and they are not a commitment to ratifying Kyoto. The Prime Minister is not saying today what he said in South Africa. There he was clear. Here he is ambiguous, again.

He claims he has a vision for climate change. He just does not know what it is. However he wants Parliament and the country to buy into it blindly. The deliberate ambiguity of the government's language betrays the fact that the government itself does not know what it will propose to the House in November to meet the Prime Minister's arbitrary deadline for ratification. How can it know when the Prime Minister hides the facts and costs of ratification from his own cabinet?

In the coming weeks it will fall on Parliament, this House and the other place, to do the homework that the government has failed to do. The Progressive Conservative Party is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but no responsible parliamentarian can support blind ratification of the Kyoto accord.

● (1240)

The Prime Minister has promised detailed impact studies by province and by sector. We need to see those studies. He promised a serious implementation plan. We need to see that plan. He promised consultations with the provinces, territories, shareholders and the public before taking a decision. We need to hear the arguments. We need to hear and consider the alternatives of the provinces, the environmental committees and others.

We need to know that any action by Parliament respects the Constitution of Canada. Before Canada ratifies the Kyoto protocol we must ensure we can live up to the international commitments that the protocol entails. That is why we have proposed that the Kyoto protocol be referred immediately to a joint committee of both Houses to ensure that the evidence is heard immediately, so that parliamentarians in both Houses will have an opportunity to be fully informed.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the government must heal the self-inflicted wound of its own bargain basement ethical standards. The government broke its word in winning office. It said it would cancel the GST. It campaigned against NAFTA. It took a highly partisan position that cost the Canadian military helicopters it could use safely, a price a men and women in uniform continue to pay to this very day.

The Address

Having broken its word so many times before, it set out to break the ethical standards that have guided other governments. That started at the top with Shawinigate and stretches on each day through Groupaction and its family of scandals, to the Prime Minister's \$101 million gift to himself of two fancy new Challenger aircraft that his own officials said he does not need. Yet who judges ethical conduct in the government? It is an official who reports only to the Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

It is amazing that, after so many scandals, the reform of the government's code of ethics does not deserve more than just one reference at the end of the speech. Canadians deserve better. The government had an opportunity to really move forward by announcing that the next ethics counsellor would report to Parliament alone, but it chose not to do so.

[*English*]

Canadians should ask two questions about this throne speech. First, what exactly is the government proposing on health care, national defence, ethics, the Kyoto protocol, Iraq, or on anything else? The short answer is that we have no indication what it is proposing.

Second, can the government deliver on any of these promises? How can we know what we can afford? Only a full budget could tell Canadians that, but following in his predecessor's footsteps the new Minister of Finance has delayed the tabling of a new budget until the new year.

Yesterday's Speech from the Throne was little more than a public relations exercise designed to give the Prime Minister's last 18 months in office the semblance of a plan. There were no significant announcements, no important details, nothing certainly to justify the prorogation of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Canadians did not need more promises from this government. What they were looking for was some real measures to help those in need.

This Speech from the Throne adds nothing, hinders our ability to take action on issues of concern to our fellow citizens, and recycles old promises. As an example, the government has repeatedly promised to re-equip our armed forces, to increase our foreign aid, to prepare a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to strengthen its code of ethics. We are no further ahead on any of these promises the day after the throne speech than we were the day before. That is this government's most regrettable mistake.

• (1245)

[*English*]

Contrary to what the Prime Minister is quoted as saying, this is not an agenda for Main Street. This is an agenda for the backrooms of the Liberal Party. This has nothing to do with the nation's business but it has everything to do with the internal business of the Liberal Party of Canada and every day Canadians are paying the price for that sad reality.

[*Translation*]

Had the government wished to present a real action plan for all Canadians, it would have focused on the four pillars of good public management: healthier public finances, a more visible presence on the international scene, a more cooperative approach with respect to social policies, especially health and the environment, and the reform of our democratic institutions.

[*English*]

The government chose not to act.

Parliament had a ceremony yesterday. There was a wish list but there was no vision of how the country might command the future. There was no plan of action. The government's responsibility is to spell out how it intends to deal with the urgent issues the country cannot avoid. It should state its priorities. It must outline exactly how much each proposal will cost and set out those costs in the context of a full budget. That is what a responsible Speech from the Throne would have done. There was none of that yesterday. What posed as a Speech from the Throne yesterday was an abandonment of the clear responsibility of the government and set no course of direction for Parliament or for the country.

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened respectfully to the words from the Right Hon. member for Calgary Centre. I am disappointed that he has missed an opportunity with his allotted time to present a different vision here in the House rather than to simply criticize for the purpose of undermining the hard work over the past seven to eight years by Canadians to get the country in the shape that it is in today.

Is it the hon. member's opinion that the country is in better shape today under the Liberal government, with single digit unemployment, running back to back five year surpluses, debt reduction, investment in our children and attacking poverty? Or does he believe it was better when the Conservatives were in power with double digit unemployment, \$43 billion deficits, debts growing beyond belief, mismanagement and I will not comment on the integrity of the former Prime Minister and his colleague, Mr. Mulroney.

Does the hon. member believe that the country is in better shape today financially than it was when his party was sitting on this side of the House?

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I will start with a list of questions for my colleague. Is the military stronger in Canada than when the government came to office? No, it is not. Is health care stronger than it was when the government came to office? No, it is not. Is the dollar higher than when the government came to office? No, it is not. Has the economy grown? It has grown because of the free trade agreement. Did the government introduce the free trade agreement? No, it did not. Did it oppose the free trade agreement? Yes, it did.

We could have a vigorous debate about the past. That is not the issue. The issue is the future. The obligation of the Government of Canada is to bring in a throne speech that spells out a clear and detailed plan for the future. The Prime Minister is an abject failure on that as on other accounts.

The Address

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Simcoe—Grey, it is an absolute pleasure and an honour to stand here today in the House and bring forward my comments on the throne speech, the history of this government and the future of this great country of ours. Sadly enough, as I listened to members of the opposition, namely the member for Calgary Centre, I was disappointed because this is an opportunity for all parliamentarians regardless of political stripe to present a different vision, to present a vision for this great land of ours.

I am firmly convinced that we stand on the threshold of a great opportunity in this country. As a government, as parliamentarians and most important as a nation, we are provided these efforts based on the efforts of all Canadians from past generations and this present generation as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis and apologize for not mentioning that initially.

We stand at the crossroads of an incredible opportunity. The government has the opportunity to take our great nation and create a model for countries all around this great world. It is no secret that as a government, as Canadians, we want to make sure that all Canadians are provided an opportunity to move forward, that all Canadians benefit from the hard work and commitment of many generations of Canadians and from the sound financial management of the economic and social priorities the government has demonstrated over the last number of years.

I believe the throne speech articulates the very things that Canadians want, that they expect and that they deserve.

Few things can be as important to this country blessed with such a diverse, complex and sensitive environment as a commitment to protect that very environment for future generations. It is for this reason I was pleased to see the commitment from our government that suggests there is no greater priority than safeguarding the very environment that will provide healthy lives for our children and our children's children. This is fundamental to the health and prosperity of our nation for generations to come. I could not have been more pleased to see that our government, the only party in this House, is truly standing up to defend environmental initiatives and make sure there is a strong commitment to ensure we are addressing our responsibilities not only in Canada but around the world.

Speaking of future generations, environment and health are critically important. However, we recognize clearly that in order for our future generations to experience all the benefits they are certainly entitled to, they must be provided a good sound knowledge base and access to that knowledge base. I could not have been more pleased when I heard the Governor General say, "no investments do more to break the cycle of poverty and dependency, and to maximize the potential of every Canadian", leading into long term investment plans that allow "to break the welfare trap so that children born into poverty do not carry the consequences of that poverty throughout their lives".

That demonstrates the caring and compassion of Canadians and the direction of the government. We do not want to see children left in poverty. We want to focus on programs that support financially challenged families, single mothers and single fathers raising

children. It is incumbent on any government to make sure the appropriate programs are in place so that we break the cycle of poverty. I believe that vision is articulated in the very throne speech we heard yesterday.

I believe I speak on behalf of all my fellow Canadians in recognizing the enormous benefit and the enormous investment that has been made in providing schools and libraries, and the children who are using those schools and libraries, with the information technology and access to that information technology that is second to no other country in the world. There has been a huge investment made in that very topic. Canadians are better off because of it and will continue to be better off because of it.

● (1250)

I have heard hon. members across the floor talk about lack of vision but I have heard no vision from them. I have heard criticism for the purpose of criticizing. That is a shame.

When I sat here yesterday and heard the Governor General speak about the commitment to supporting municipalities, rural municipalities in my particular case, I could not have been more pleased. For years I have stood in caucus and in the House and suggested we need a long term sustainable infrastructure program.

Contrary to what the members in the Alliance or the members in the Conservative Party would say, this is fundamentally important to the growth of rural municipalities. They need a federal partner on an ongoing basis, not time sensitive programs. We are talking about providing some of the most basic of things within municipalities: water, sewers, roads, bridges, things that would allow them to grow and prosper. We cannot be setting specific timelines in place, putting them in a position where financially they are compromising themselves simply by way of a specific date.

In that respect, I could not have been more pleased to hear the government commit to a long term plan to support municipalities. That is a vision for Canada, not the type of vision we hear from across the floor.

I must state clearly that there were many things in the throne speech that I was very pleased with. However, there were a couple of points that I was somewhat disappointed in and which I certainly must address.

I make the commitment that between now and the budget some time next year, I will be a strong advocate to ensure that we maintain a strong commitment to debt reduction as well.

We hear about the strong economy. We hear about a decline in our debt to GDP ratio. We are experiencing the 7% unemployment rate, contrary to the 11% and 14% rates when the Conservatives were in power.

It is important as a legacy for the government and as a legacy for future generations that we continue the ardent approach we have had for the last five years in dropping our hard national debt. It is no legacy to leave the children of tomorrow with a beautiful home and a huge mortgage. We have the beautiful home, but it is incumbent upon the government to continue its focus on debt reduction while trying to balance a social and economic agenda.

The Address

The government has to operate under three principles, a three-legged stool. One is the economy; one is social programs; and the third one is the will.

When I listened to my colleagues from the Alliance, they simply missed the point. They are solely focused on the economic points and are prepared to gut social programs. They have no accountability when they talk about \$20 billion for spending on this and \$10 billion for spending on that and in the same breath talk about eliminating or reducing taxes.

It is a three-legged stool. A government must offer a balanced approach. A government must recognize that the economy and the social programs are very much intertwined. We have to recognize that it is an incredible investment on behalf of all Canadians to provide opportunities for those who do not have them today.

It has been said many times in the House and all across Canada that our most valuable resources are our youth. That was clearly articulated in the throne speech yesterday.

The government has a history, a track record of sound financial stewardship. When I came to the House in 1997 I was looking at a \$43 billion deficit. They throw that out loosely. That was just a few short years ago. Since then we have experienced some hard decisions. We have experienced an opportunity to create balanced and surplus budgets while supporting things like agriculture and child benefit programs, reinvesting in the military and seeing unemployment rates drop from 11% to 7%.

I would stand here today and tell Canadians to take comfort in the fact that the government in moving forward is not going to leave the weak behind. We will remain steadfast.

• (1255)

As I said at the start, we are at the threshold of greatness and great opportunity. As outlined in the throne speech, we will capitalize on that.

• (1300)

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member comment on the fact that only 25% of the promises in the last two Liberal throne speeches were implemented? Would the hon. member comment about rural Canadians and the fact that they were omitted from the throne speech, as were the core industries including fisheries, agriculture and forestry? A plan to increase the number of health care workers was missing as well. A commitment to equip and support our military men and women was missing. Student debt is a very important point as well.

Given the fact that only 25% of the promises of the last two throne speeches were taken seriously, how can the member expect the House to take seriously the promises that were made in yesterday's throne speech?

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Mr. Speaker, sadly enough, I will assume that the hon. member has the same speech writer as the Alliance Party. Clearly he is confused about the numbers that he is using. I assume he read one of his colleague's notes over in the other lobby.

Clearly, 25% of the promises may be already realized. Keep in mind that we are in the middle of our mandate. The government is still working on these things. The government is still accomplishing

many things. Unlike the hon. members from the Conservative Party, on a daily basis we are here and we are committed to resolving many of the commitments that have already been raised.

The hon. member brought up several points. I will not try to respond to all of them because I would like to open the floor to some intelligent questions from other members. The member talked about student debt. I seem to remember sitting here a couple of years ago and listening to the announcement of one of the largest investments in post-secondary education, namely the Canadian millennium scholarship endowment fund. That was one of the largest investments ever made on behalf of a government for young people in this country.

There are RESPs. Canadians all across this great land are benefiting from RESPs under the sound financial stewardship of this government.

I am absolutely amazed. Quite clearly the member either did not listen to the throne speech or he has not followed the record of the House over the last number of years. In my opinion the government has made incredible investments in our youth.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, we are getting the same arrogant, vacuous rhetoric that one might expect. I did not realize the member had cottoned on to it or perhaps he drank the Kool-Aid that some of his colleagues have.

The member talked about facts. In particular reference to students, the fact is that student debt has quadrupled for most students in Canada. The cost of tuition has gone up 5% during his government's almost 10 years in office.

The member can talk about facts, but there is one undeniable inalienable fact that he and the member for LaSalle—Émard, the former finance minister, continually mislead Canadians on and that is the deficit. The member mentioned the \$42 billion deficit that his government inherited. I want to ask him a very simple question. What was the deficit when the previous administration took office? It was \$34.6 billion, contributed one thousand fold by the Minister of Finance at the time, the right hon. Prime Minister. How does he address that simple fact when he speaks of the deficit that his government, the Trudeau government, the Liberal government, left when they took office?

Mr. Paul Bonwick: Mr. Speaker, the member may suggest that we are drinking Kool-Aid, but I think something a little more lively is in their cocktail across the floor with that silly rhetoric.

I will stand here today and say quite clearly that there is nothing arrogant about my position. I am humbled to be able to serve the residents of Simcoe—Grey and for that matter Canadians all across this great land and there is no arrogance about it.

The member talked about students. Does he recognize first of all that under his colleagues in the province of Ontario the cutbacks to students have been absolutely shameful? Where the federal government has been investing, the provincial Conservative government has been dropping. Does he also recognize that enrolments are up in universities all across this great country? Does the member not also recognize that 95% of student loans are being repaid in a timely fashion and in the appropriate timeline?

The Address

Obviously the premise of the hon. member's question is totally unfounded. Canadians are being provided an opportunity for education. The government is investing in those young people to provide them an opportunity to make sure that we achieve the greatness that we rightly deserve.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to join those who have already expressed their condolences to the family of our friend, Ron Duhamel, with whom I had the pleasure of working on a number of issues, including veterans affairs when he was the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

I remember visiting the veterans' hospital with him, not too long ago, before leaving his position. He was wearing a wig. He told me how difficult it was dealing with the first effects of cancer.

He was a remarkable man for whom I had a great deal of esteem. Once again, I offer my condolences to his family.

I was in Norway in August and I had the opportunity to speak with Norway's secretary of state for the environment. He told me about the pride their country had taken in ratifying the Kyoto protocol. Norway was one of the first countries to do so, even before the European Union.

He told me that Norway, which is one of the largest producers and exporters of oil and gas in the world, would finance its Kyoto plan in part through royalties from Norway's oil companies.

What an incredible contrast with Premier Klein of Alberta, who is threatening to leave the federation, to separate from us because of the Kyoto accord. Today, we heard the leader of the official opposition tell us that his party would use every possible trick to block the Kyoto process and that it would join the provinces opposed to the protocol to ensure that it is never ratified. Some confidence.

Yet, the evidence is clear. For a number of years now, the United Nations have mandated 2,500 top level scientists. These people have come to the conclusion that the anthropological contribution to climate change, that is the human impact, is very significant. These experts urged us to act as quickly as possible and to change our way of doing things and of living.

Kyoto is far from perfect. No international agreement is. We could review them all; international agreements are never perfect. Yet, this is a collective resolution taken by countries, particularly rich and industrialized countries, to change their ways of doing things, to live differently, to create and to produce things differently in order to save our planet.

The fact is that, ironically, the richest and most fortunate countries are the ones that did all the damage. These are the same countries that benefited the most from the past few decades of unbridled development. At the same time, innocent nations, including small insular ones, have suffered from the causes generated by rich and developed countries.

These innocent nations are telling us "What did we do to deserve this? You better change your ways of doing things and your lifestyles as quickly as possible".

[*English*]

Kyoto is a planetary question no doubt, but above all it is a question of international equity. We owe it to innocent nations to change our ways and do something about it. Kyoto represents a collective process, a collective resolve to change our ways. Given our tremendous skills as a country and given our bountiful resources, Canada remains the dwarf of renewable energies.

Statistics abound in wind energy. For instance, Germany produces 6,000 megawatts. A small country like Denmark produces 2,500 megawatts and has created thousands of jobs out of wind energy. Canada has barely reached 200 megawatts.

In solar energy Japan has reached 128 megawatts while Canada is barely at 2 megawatts. In solar energy, a poor country like India is way ahead of us. It has the second largest wind farm in the world and has invested \$450 million U.S. in a project to provide solar energy to residential homes.

The other day I was listening to an interview with the deputy CEO of British Petroleum, Mr. Rodney Chase, on *As It Happens*. He explained that in the last eight years BP, an oil producer, has reduced its emissions by 10% compared to 1990 without spending an additional penny. He said that production had gone up by 5.5% despite it, and it will continue with the trend on these projections now to 2005 without any penalty to BP.

Ironically, Calgary, the city of the Premier of Alberta, has installed solar collectors for its bus barns. It is using wind power to propel its C-train in the city.

The winners of the 2000 energy efficiency awards in housing received their award because they improved the efficiency of their homes compared to the R-2000 standard by 25% to 42%. The Office of Energy Efficiency stated that for an investment of \$4,000, over the years people could reduce their energy bills by 25% each year. Yet Canada still uses the additive MMT manganese and is one of the only industrial nations to use MMT in our gasoline when biofuels could be used and produced in quantity.

Canada is the dwarf of renewable energy. Kyoto will help us change our ways. It will in fact force us to change our ways.

The Leader of the Opposition never mentioned the benefits to our health. How can we disassociate the environment from health? How can we disassociate health from the environment? The figures which have been produced by the Minister of the Environment in the option paper show savings of \$500 million a year to a health program due to better air quality. That is \$5 billion a year in the 10 years that we would have to reach our Kyoto target of 6%. The naysayers only produce negative statistics such as the loss of 450,000 jobs and yet they do not know how this will happen.

I would like to read from the interview held with the deputy CEO of BP. He is not just talking statistics and making wild statements. He said this about climate change:

The Address

...our view is, we can't prove that, and we'd rather get on with taking action that we don't have any regrets about. Things that we can do that in case the world is actually heating up and it's to do with us, in case the weather is turning against us and it's our fault, we can take these actions with no regrets, and it doesn't trade off jobs and the standards of living in the developed world. Now that's our view, and the practice that we've pursued over the last four years has not changed our mind at all. In fact, it's encouraging us to say we can do a heck of a lot more to prevent emissions of greenhouse before we begin to approach the problem at which our industrial effectiveness is threatened.

• (1310)

The idea that we threaten our economic effectiveness because of Kyoto or because of climate change is again a bogus argument.

I applaud the government for taking the stand that ratification must happen before December. We have to take leadership to show the world that we are part of a collective resolve, an international regrouping to change our ways of thinking, to change our ways of living and to practise equity toward the innocent nations that we ourselves have harmed with our own pollution.

I will applaud the government when it produces the bill to ratify and I will stand four-square behind it.

• (1315)

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across did a wonderful job of presenting some of the good points of Kyoto. However I believe we could discover that there may not be all strong points. There may be some very weak points. He made the comment that we owe it to poorer countries to change our ways. That is probably a very good statement. However for poorer countries to benefit from a cut in greenhouse emissions they must see us change our ways.

Within the Kyoto agreement is the transfer of money plan. It sounds like a plan to simply enrich the poorer countries in that we can buy credits and not reduce our emissions at all.

If we are really serious, if Kyoto is designed to reduce greenhouse emissions, then why would we want to send money to underdeveloped countries to develop them industrially and help them produce greenhouse emissions? Why would we not want to spend that money on reducing our own greenhouse emissions? After all, industrialized countries are where most of the greenhouse emissions are produced

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, the Kyoto agreement is an assemblage of many parts of a project. It is a project with many components. The chief component is for us to change our ways and adopt renewable energies as a parallel to what we do today.

We have not even started to scratch the surface. Our public transportation, compared to that of Norway, Finland, France and Germany, is away behind the times. We have to get up to steam by using a parallel track while at the same time transferring modern, non-polluting technology to the developing world to help it also reach a better standard of living. At the same time, reducing greenhouse gases collectively is a very good idea so long as modern technology is used for that purpose. If we just transferred polluting technology, I would agree with the member. However that is not the spirit of it. The spirit of it is to produce and transfer technology which is designed to curb gas emissions. That is the whole idea.

Kyoto is an assemblage of many components. We have to first decide that here we can do something instead of whining like rich provinces like Alberta and Ontario. They say that they cannot do it because they will lose jobs. What about Denmark? What about Norway? What about Finland? What about Germany? What about France? They also have problems of job creation, but at least they look at positive things and resolve to change their ways. That is what we must start doing very soon.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member opposite a question along those same lines.

If major countries like the U.S., China and India, particularly the U.S., which are not involved in this agreement, are able to use some of the dollars they will not be putting into this somewhat fraudulent scam of trading credits and so on to actually create green technology and do research along those lines, would we not be even farther behind? We will not be able to do it. The whole Canadian economy, people on fixed incomes and so on will be hurt considerably by it and we will not have the dollars to do the green technology research and development that the U.S. in particular, our neighbour to the south, will be able to do as a result of staying out of this somewhat fraudulent scam called Kyoto.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, what diminishes the credibility of the argument is when we talk about Kyoto as a fraudulent scam. I was at Kyoto in 1997. I do not think the people who signed the Kyoto accord were producing a fraudulent scam.

Instead of always looking at negatives and finding all kinds of arguments not to do things, perhaps we should look at what countries like India have done.

People say that India is staying out of it. I will introduce the member to an Indian expert, Dr. Amulya Reddy, who brought electricity to 1,000 villages in India out of biomass. I will show the House how India used 27 sugar mill factories to create a grid which made it so that the Indian government did not have to invest in one nuclear plant. It is also investing in solar power in a big way and has the second biggest wind farm in the world.

At least India is doing things, which is what we must start to do instead of always looking for escape hatches and negatives. It is about time we stopped whining, ratified Kyoto and went forward.

• (1320)

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Langley—Abbotsford.

The throne speech reminds me of something Albert Einstein once said. He said "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them".

The Address

This throne speech is an attempt by the Prime Minister to solve problems he created for himself and to solve problems created by his corrupt government. However, as Einstein said, he cannot do that at the same level of thinking he was at when he created those problems.

He will never solve problems we face if he continues with the same style of governing, continues to use patronage to reward his friends, continues to abuse the authority of his office to punish his opponents for personal gain, continues to waste taxpayer money, continues to divide Canadians and continues to demean parliament and its members.

On Tuesday, September 24 the Prime Minister and his cabinet leaked most of what was in the Speech from the Throne. At a time when members were seriously questioning the concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office and the lack of freedom and respect afforded to them, the Prime Minister sidesteps and blindsides them with the shameless leak of the throne speech.

This debate was supposed to start today but because of the Prime Minister's lack of respect for parliament, it started last week in the media with an address in reply to the leak from the throne.

It was only a few days before the cabinet revealed the contents of the throne speech that members of the Liberal caucus were complaining in the media that the Speech from the Throne would be written by a handful of bureaucrats. While I shared their outrage, we cannot be surprised by the Prime Minister's latest insult since this Speech from the Throne is about his loyalty to his legacy and not to his country, parliament, party or colleagues.

Last week the Alliance released its parliamentary reform package, Building Trust II. The Prime Minister's recent dismissal of the role of Parliament has highlighted the urgency to begin the process of curbing the power of the Prime Minister's Office and curtailing its actions that disrespect this institution.

Building Trust II aims to enhance the pre-eminence of Parliament and the role of its members.

In my Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I will focus on the need for parliamentary reform, with an emphasis on advancing the idea of electing our Speaker by secret ballot to the committees of the House of Commons. The Reform Party began suggesting change in 1994 and passed the baton on to the Canadian Alliance.

The policy of providing for all private members' business to be votable shares the same history as the initiative to provide for secret ballot elections in committee. In the course of three parliaments the Liberal government ridiculed us over that proposal and after nine years the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs finally has adopted it. The next hurdle is to convince the cabinet to do it. In a Parliament with a Liberal government, the cabinet controls the House and the rules that govern it. We need to look at the Liberal track record to give us an idea of our success probability.

When it comes to parliamentary reform the government likes to talk the talk but has to be shoved up against the wall before it is willing to walk the walk.

Appended to the first Liberal red book was a document entitled "Reviving Parliamentary Democracy: the Liberal Plan for House of

Commons and Electoral Reform". This document contained the Liberal promises for parliamentary reform. Upon taking office, the Prime Minister proceeded to ignore most of the recommendations in that document.

The ones that he did adopt were quickly controlled and abused. For example, the procedure to refer bills to committee before second reading. The reasons to refer a bill to committee before second reading is to allow for a wider scope of amendments and allow a committee to redraft a bill as it sees fit. In practice we ended up with the same old cabinet control over any changes to legislation. The Liberal committee members performed as they had always done, as puppets for the Prime Minister and his cabinet. Without free votes, the new procedure became useless.

In addition, the Liberals exploited the new rule as another means to invoke closure without notice. The new procedure has a limit of 180 minutes at the first stage. The trade off for this built in closure was supposed to be the admissibility for a wider scope of amendments.

● (1325)

However, when the government began referring bills that were based on ways and means motions to committee before second reading in the 35th Parliament, it clearly showed its hand. These sorts of bills cannot be substantially amended so committee members could not take advantage of the new process. Instead of enhancing the role of members, the government used the new procedure in such a way that it actually impeded private members by curtailing debate at the first stage.

Here is another example. The Liberals also promised to appoint two opposition members to the Speaker's chair. That promise came from the Liberal plan to reform the House. On page 9 of the document it states:

In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the Government party, two of the junior Chair Officers should be from the Opposition, so that four presiding officer positions are shared equally by Government and Opposition.

Once in power they totally ignored the idea. In the next session when they had to re-appoint the junior Chair officers, the Reform Party moved an amendment to the appointment motion, the adoption of which would have resulted in the appointment of an opposition member to the Chair. The House debated the amendment for three days and under closure the government voted the Reform amendment down securing all Chair occupants for government members and breaking another Liberal red book promise.

When the opportunity to appoint Chair officers presented itself again in the future, the Prime Minister implemented half of his promise by appointing one opposition member to the Chair. Ian McClelland was appointed Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole. The Prime Minister was quick to attach a condition to that appointment. Ian was not allowed to vote, giving the government a permanent pair.

The Address

In this Parliament we chose not to put forward a name because it was not worth making the same deal with the devil. Besides, the Liberals should implement their policies because they promised them, not because the opposition forced them to or because they saw an unintended self-serving opportunity.

Having said that, we did try once again to force the Liberal government to implement another one of its promised parliamentary reforms. In February 2001, my party introduced a motion to appoint an independent ethics commissioner who would report directly to Parliament. We lifted the policy word for word from the Liberal red book, introduced it as a motion and after debate the government voted it down, just like it did with its promise to appoint opposition members to the Chair.

Recently the member for LaSalle—Émard has been very vocal about the topic of parliamentary reform and he would like us to believe that he is sincere about positive change but his parliamentary record tells a different story. He too voted against his party's own parliamentary reform policies. The one promise I mentioned earlier that his government did implement, and subsequently abuse, was tailored to be the most demeaning to members when it was used for finance bills. I am talking about referring bills to committee before second reading. As you know, Mr. Speaker, he was the finance minister when these bills were being referred to committee before second reading and as a result the legislative role of members was hampered significantly.

I am puzzled why the member sat silent for nine years as his own supporters were forced to vote for policies that they did not believe in and vote against policies that they did believe in.

The Reform motion to compensate hepatitis C victims comes to mind. I remember seeing Liberal members in tears after being forced to vote against the motion. Now, after nine years of silence, when the member is revving up his leadership efforts, he hints at allowing for free votes. I urge all members to question his sincerity and examine the motivation behind his recent reform promises.

I will now move on to the secret ballot elections at committee. The secret ballot method of voting which was introduced to secure and protect the rights of the voter. I think it is essential that it be used.

One of the most remarkable reforms that came out of the McGrath recommendations was the reform that gave freedom to committees to set their own agendas without recourse to the House. However what good is that freedom when the Prime Minister controls it. We only have freedom when we can exercise it. Voting without secret ballot at committee clearly robs members of this freedom because they cannot exercise their free vote without fear of consequence. This has been the experience of open voting for hundreds of years.

● (1330)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech just given by my colleague. It brought to mind a number of serious breaches of the democratic process both in committee and also in the House where members are not given the freedom to vote the way they believe they should on a number of occasions. The one example that I am thinking of was the election of the chair.

Yesterday, this same member stood up in debate when a motion was proposed to appoint the Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole. She went to some length in arguing that democracy would be better served if that were done by secret ballot similar to the election of the Speaker.

I went through that fiasco in the finance committee where there was a whipped vote in the committee on the selection of the chair. Would the member tell us why is it that there is an advantage to the secret ballot? What is the reason behind it? What is wrong with standing up? We have had this debate about whether or not members should always vote in secret ballot and yet the other argument is, "No. I want my MP to stand up and show the world where he stands on these issues". In that case there is the argument against voting in secret so that we can be held accountable. How does the member reconcile those two conflicting points of view?

Mrs. Carol Skelton: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. colleague for his question. I too have sat through committee meetings and have watched whipped votes. I find it uncomfortable. During committee we express our views. When members feel that they want to vote against something that the government is forcing on them it is their right and privilege as Canadian citizens to do that.

As we sit at our desks we have the right to openly vote our feelings and our constituents realize what we are doing. We are held accountable at home in our ridings for what we do in the House. My constituents know my feelings and respect them. If I voted in a whipped vote they would not appreciate it and I might not be here next time.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House to talk about the throne speech because it should be about the dreams of Canadians and how they see their future, not necessarily the dreams of a party and how it sees Canadians. We all have dreams and I would like to talk about some of the dreams that I have, as well as individuals in my riding.

Like many Canadians I have been thinking about retirement. After 37 years of working without being unemployed for even a day, I wonder if it is time. My lifelong savings in mutual funds and investments in the stock market are worth 45% of what I originally put in. Any bonds or liquid assets I have receive about 1.75% interest. To top it all off, the government taxes the few dollars I receive. Essentially my lifelong dream goes to a government that has an insatiable appetite for spending.

I wish the government would truly reflect some downsizing, stand up with courage and drop taxes substantially, take every possible cent it can find and pay down the debt and allow seniors the privilege of less taxes and more disposable income. However, these are just dreams. Like many people in Canada, we have dreams too. Those dreams are not necessarily met in the throne speech.

The Address

I watched the government when it was in opposition and the Conservatives lower the age of consensual sex from 16 to 14. Now older criminals are using our kids within the law for sex partners, prostitutes and drug sales. I witnessed the elimination of the Lord's Prayer from the House of Commons because it might have offended some other religion. I watched the government stand by and allow some obscure judge decide that pornography was okay to possess but not to produce. How does one possess pornography without someone producing it?

I recently saw an unelected, unaccountable Senate recommend after a three year study that we legalize marijuana and allow it to be smoked starting at age 16. Cigarettes cannot be smoked until age 18. Another obscure judge decided that marriage was no longer the legal union of a man and woman and the government stood by and did nothing.

I would like the government to stop being my social conscience and moral parent. I would like to see the Senate elected and accountable or eliminated. I want judges to ensure laws are upheld, not to make laws as they see fit. I wish politicians, the government in particular, would cherish Canadians for what they are and not for what they want them to be.

These are the things I would have liked to see reflected in the throne speech. The throne speech said the government would add more to legal aid. I have some experience there. A prisoner fell out of the top bunk of his cell and successfully sued the government for \$250,000 using legal aid. The prison system has a zero tolerance policy on drugs but gives inmates bleach to sterilize their needles. Just what is the definition of contradiction over there?

Inmates set fire to a prison and successfully sued the government using legal aid because of smoke inhalation from the very fire they set. One of our own senior citizens cannot fight for her rights after some creep nearly beat her to death because she has no money for a lawyer.

I want legal aid stopped for criminals in prison. I want the prison system to make work the number one priority and insist that zero tolerance means no drugs in prison. However, these are just dreams. Like the government, we have dreams too.

●(1335)

A man came to me the other day and wanted a grant to start a business. He did not want to borrow the money because there was a risk he might fail. Numerous working, young people come to me hoping I will help them write off their student loans because they cut into their disposable income. I watched as my own child left Canada to work in another country that offered less taxes, more benefits and more freedom of expression in the workplace.

I wish the government would wake up and inspire business and workers with less intrusion. I want our young to stay at home, feel responsible for their loans and be optimistic about their future. However, these are just dreams, dreams that were not reflected in the throne speech. We have dreams too.

While Canada wallows in debt I watched as the government forgave \$2.8 million in debt owed to us by Colombia and \$2.7 million by El Salvador. Now it will double foreign aid by billions. I watched as Canada gave \$120,000 to the Prisoners' HIV/AIDS

Support Action Network, \$54,600 to the United Steelworkers of America and \$51,000 to the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, but not one red cent to any one of the 39 struggling drug rehabilitation centres for our youth.

I worry when \$249,000 is given to develop a local movie about *Frank/The Rabbit*, a film about how humans and rabbits formulate and justify beliefs. I wish the government would spend my money as though it was its own. I wish we could all learn to live within our means and I wish money would help end evil not be the root of it. However, these are just dreams, dreams that were not reflected in the statement by the government as to where it is going. We all have dreams.

Two more home invasions occurred the other day in my immediate area. There are young people beating elderly people to death. Where have their values gone? Better yet, why have we stopped teaching them? My area is now noted for problems with young people prostituting themselves and for car theft. Both are signs of a deteriorating society and major drug problems. While these problems continue to grow at a rapid pace I watch drug rehabilitation centres close for lack of commitment and funding from all levels of government.

I sat in disbelief with a family as some obscure judge awarded a criminal a sentence much too low for murdering that family's daughter. The loss in confidence in our justice system is more than justified from the victim's point of view.

I wish we could get back to the self-respect, the discipline, the values and the integrity we had and were noted for. I wish schools, parents and governments would stop listening to the vocal minority libertarians out there who would have no discipline, no values and no self-respect in our society. However, these are just dreams, dreams not reflected in the government's statement.

I wrote a victims bill of rights in 1994. It became law in 1998, in part. I wrote the legislation for the national sex offender registry, which the government committed to, and it did not even show up in the throne speech. I initiated the House of Commons special committee on drugs to look at drugs and the government announces, heaven forbid, that it is headed toward decriminalization without even waiting for the report.

The Address

● (1340)

Finally, I wish governments would take good ideas and implement them, even if it means swallowing that bitter pill of humility because someone else thought of them first. All the good ideas do not come just from over there, from a throne speech. They come from the hearts and minds of Canadians. These are all just dreams, dreams we all have. We should not be listening just to the dreams the Liberal government has for all of us, with nothing in return.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying how saddened I was to hear of the passing of our hon. colleague, Ron Duhamel. He was a friend. He was an honourable and respected member of this chamber. I know we will all miss him very much.

Yesterday's throne speech and today's speech by the Prime Minister provide Canadians with an important road map for our journey through the next few years of the new millennium. They are important documents. I certainly commend them to all Canadians, who can check the Prime Minister's website or their own members' websites to read these important words and guides for Canadians.

I believe that one of the most important themes in the throne speech is one that has been one with us for some time. It is the issue of child poverty, on which I would like to focus my comments today.

Poverty is one of the least understood issues in Canada. Advocacy groups call it child poverty and it tugs at the heartstrings of all caring persons. They have evoked images of children starving in the streets and they report that the problem has increased by almost 50% over the past decade. Who could possibly be against eliminating child poverty? The bold reality is that poverty in Canada is more a matter of social poverty, not economic poverty. I will explain that.

There is also a heated debate going on today in the backrooms of government on how to define poverty. The positions range from the deprivation of food, clothing and shelter to not being able to more fully participate in Canadian society. This debate is on absolute versus relative measures of poverty. Once we get this resolved, it will become the foundation of social welfare in Canada. It will also define the level of poverty that we are prepared to tolerate in Canada.

In the absence of an official poverty line in Canada, groups such as Campaign 2000 relied on LICOs, low-income cut-offs, as a measurement. The current data suggests that 17% of Canadians are significantly below the income of the average Canadian family. This is a relative measure and anti-poverty groups use it as a measure of who is poor in Canada. However, the measure does have a number of flaws. For example, 40% of the families considered poor under the LICO measurement actually own their own homes. Of those, one-half do not even have a mortgage. We have to ask ourselves: Is a family who owns its own home free and clear really living in poverty in Canada?

On February 11, 1999, Parliament debated the issue, as we did back in 1989, I believe, when there was that famous resolution to seek to achieve the elimination of poverty by the year 2000. The speeches covered the same range of relevant information but no one noticed. No one really noticed. Not only was the substance the same as the 1989 statistics, but the statistics were significantly more tragic.

How is it that nobody cared? I begin to believe that maybe Canadians do not see poverty in their own neighbourhoods and do not believe it exists.

It is important that Canadians understand that poverty exists and what the characteristics of poverty really are.

Anti-poverty groups are growing in size and influence. They report annually on the growing level of poverty in Canada and fiercely lobby governments to act. More jobs, more social assistance, more social housing, more tax benefits for families with children, more money for health care and early childhood development, more employment insurance benefits, and more subsidized day care are but a few of the solutions offered by anti-poverty groups.

They universally accept LICO as the measure of poverty for one simple reason: It is an economic measure that calls for economic solutions. If they had to address the root causes of poverty, it would open up a Pandora's box that clearly no one wants to face.

Homelessness has also become the latest focus for poverty in Canada. In January 1999, a task force chaired by Anne Golden issued a report on the homeless in Toronto, declaring that there were workable solutions. They wanted to engage all levels of government to come up with these workable solutions and set up their responsibilities. However, if we were to look closely at the report, we would find some interesting statistics. Of the homeless identified in Toronto, 35% were mentally ill, 15% were aboriginals off reserve, 10% were abused women, and 28% were youths, of whom 70% had experienced physical or sexual abuse. In addition, the majority of these homeless were abusers of drugs and of alcohol.

● (1345)

In Toronto they found out that 47% of the homeless did not even come from Toronto. They had migrated from other centres. This is the urban magnet.

It is clear that Canadian cities right across the country are not doing their share to provide the services and the care for those who need it.

These are the causes of homelessness. They are the same causes of poverty. People who live in squalor on the streets in Canada, sadly, represent those whom no one loves.

The Address

Another point on this whole issue of poverty has to do with the family. Lone parent families represent about 15% of the families in Canada, but sadly they also account for about 54% of all children living in poverty. The rate of family breakdown is almost 40% in Canada. The incidence of domestic violence continues at record levels. Alcohol and drug abuse in our schools and our communities have escalated, with tragic consequences. Unwanted teen pregnancies continue to rise. Close to 30% of students drop out of high school and become Canada's poor in waiting. Nearly 25% of all children enter adult life with significant mental, social or behavioural problems. They represent the social poverty in our society and are the root causes of the vast majority of the economic poverty in Canada.

If poverty in Canada is a horror and national disgrace, then the breakdown of the Canadian family is the principal cause of that disgrace. Those who express outrage at poverty but do not express the same outrage about the breakdown of the Canadian family are truly in denial. However, in these days of political correctness, the family and its structure and condition represent a minefield through which few are prepared to tread. Anti-poverty groups have meekly sidestepped the social poverty dimension. However, if we are not prepared to address social poverty in Canada then we are effectively choosing to tolerate the very poverty that we seek to eliminate.

There are solutions, but the solutions must be to stabilize the situations of those who are unable to care for themselves or those who cannot care for themselves because of disabilities or other challenges that they have in life.

I believe that the solution has to do with dealing with those who have the problem now, with stabilizing their situation while we stop the creation of new poor. We have to stop the creation of new poor, which means that we have to raise one healthy, well-adjusted generation of children who have good social, moral and family values, and it means that our educators and legislators have to promote and defend those values that I believe children have. If we raise this healthy generation of children, it will then propagate another generation of children who have the same value system. They will propagate another generation of children who will not aspire to live on welfare, who will ensure that they get a proper education and who will ensure that they are going to be contributing members of Canadian society.

I cannot speak strongly enough about how important it is for Canadians to be engaged in the issue of child poverty. It is family poverty; it is not child poverty. It is not economic poverty; it is social poverty. There are very important reasons why Canadians should be engaged in defining what that poverty is, in addressing its current problems, and in spending less money on trying to provide sources of assistance after there is a problem and trying to mitigate the incidence of the problem in the first place.

Our children are a function of the society in which they live. Those who become our future poor do so because of our failure to put their interests ahead of our own.

Collectively we are responsible for the poverty that exists in Canada today. It is therefore our collective responsibility to resolve both its social and its economic causes.

● (1350)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I feel a little guilty dominating the debate in comments and questions, but I always look around to give other people a chance. They do not rise to the occasion, so here I am.

I enjoyed the speech of the hon. member opposite because I agree with him that children generally are not living in poverty unless their families are. There might be some exceptions, but for most cases that is true. Even those in the richest families will not give thousands of dollars to a five-year-old, so in fact as children independent from their parents they are really very poor.

I have two comments with respect to this speech. First I would like the hon. member opposite to comment on the definitions that are used for poverty. By the definitions that I have heard from time to time, my wife and I and our kids lived in poverty for a number of years. I remember that one of the criteria for poverty was not taking a vacation that took a person at least 100 miles from home in the last year. That was one of the characteristics of someone living in poverty.

For many years my wife and I had limited vacations because of the commitments we made. As I have said before in the House, we lived on 30% of my salary because about 50% of it went to taxes at all different levels, hopefully 10% went for preparation for our future retirement and another 10% went to charity, which is sort of a rule of thumb, although sometimes it was more. We ended up living on 30% of what I earned as a single wage-earner so that my wife could be a full-time mom. That government policy was very detrimental to us. I would like the hon. member to qualify the definition of poverty, because we never felt poor, but we were.

The second thing I would like to—

An hon. member: Time.

Mr. Ken Epp: Okay, let him answer.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

● (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: Simply by way of a compliment, the hon. member for Elk Island always seems to be able to get the Chair's eye and that is why he is granted the floor as often as he is.

A response from the hon. member for Mississauga South.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, definition certainly is an important aspect. I know that the Government of Canada and the provinces have been working for some years on what is called a market-basket measure, which would be a different definition. It involves food, shelter and clothing, plus an allowance for other things, which would allow someone to actually live in their community without being noticed. I think it is an important concept that we should discuss.

I would also like to suggest to the hon. member that there is another aspect to the definition of poverty. It is the manufactured poverty. Manufactured poverty occurs when a family that is not living in poverty breaks down and there are then two principal residences. By mathematics and definition, the two people both reduce down to living in poverty because they spend such a high proportion of their disposable income or income on housing. Manufactured poverty is also another issue.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

Youth is the time to study wisdom, age the time to practise it.

So said Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

It is with a great deal of admiration and appreciation that I pay tribute to the millions of Canadian men and women who, today, will be celebrating the International Day of Older Persons. This is an opportunity to reflect upon their huge contribution to society.

The concerns of our older citizens can be summed up in three words: health, dignity and security. We need to ensure that the rights of all those who built this country are wholly respected.

With the greying of our population, I call upon all Canadians to take advantage of this opportunity to acknowledge the important role of elders of our society and to encourage mutual respect and assistance between the generations.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the General Assembly of the United Nations has designated today, October 1, as International Day of Older Persons and in so doing recognizes the important contribution seniors make to our society.

The Canadian Alliance believes that not one Canadian senior in this country should be in distress because of a lack of service or support: by managing the Canada Pension Plan properly; by administering sensible tax policies that support families; by committing to health care and ensuring that the services that seniors require are there when they need them; and by making our streets safe and our communities strong so that Canadian seniors are free to fully participate in their communities.

With a concerted effort from all levels of government, we can achieve the kind of healthy, productive, independent living Canadian seniors deserve. By creating an environment that benefits our seniors, we continue to ensure their valuable contribution to Canadian society.

S. O. 31

JACK BURGHARDT

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Fanshawe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jack Burghardt, former member of Parliament for London West, died Saturday at the age of 73. Mr. Burghardt was a well-known and highly respected newscaster in both Hamilton and London, where he was the outstanding news anchorman for 10 years.

After serving as a Liberal MP from 1981 to 1984, Jack turned to municipal politics and served as deputy mayor of the City of London from 1985 to 1994. I had the pleasure to serve with him on city council during those years and saw firsthand his dedicated and outstanding service to Londoners.

Jack was a strong Christian and after his political career ended he became the full time pastor and minister to two United Churches near London.

A dedicated father, a man of many talents, a proud Canadian and a great friend, Jack Burghardt was loved and respected by so many people. He was truly a gentle man. We extend our sincere sympathies.

May he rest in peace.

* * *

● (1400)

JACK BURGHARDT

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 28 Londoners were deeply saddened to learn that Jack Burghardt, member of Parliament for London West from 1981 to 1984, had passed away.

Jack Burghardt was one of London's best known and most loved citizens. Londoners quickly adopted Jack Burghardt as one of their own when he came to London in 1971 to anchor the evening news. For the next decade, Jack's booming and trusted voice would deliver the day's events throughout the living rooms of southwestern Ontario.

Jack was committed to the health and well-being of his city and its people. He was talented, respected and admired. The love of his community inspired him to seek and win federal office in 1981. Following a successful term as the member of Parliament for London West, he entered municipal politics in 1985 and was elected deputy mayor for three successive terms. Under his financial stewardship, London was named the best run city in the country in 1992.

Londoners join me in extending our most heartfelt sympathies to Jack's family for their recent loss. We join with them in remembering and celebrating the life of a wonderful father, citizen and friend.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC DAY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, October 1, is International Music Day. The famous violinist and musicologist, Yehudi Menuhin, first proclaimed this day 27 years ago right here in Ottawa. Since then it has been celebrated in many countries, including in cities across Canada.

S. O. 31

International Music Day highlights the universal importance of music. Music promotes the ideals of peace and friendship between people, the evolution of their cultures and the reciprocal exchange and appreciation of aesthetic values. Music knows no borders and transcends language barriers. Music touches each and every one of us.

Canada can be proud to have a great number of musicians who have, or have had, most exceptional careers: Glenn Gould, Maureen Forrester, Oscar Peterson, Ben Heppner, Robbie Robertson, Kevin Parent and Nelly Furtado just to name a few.

Please join me in wishing everyone a wonderful and inspiring International Music Day.

* * *

NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this last Sunday police and peace officers from across the country gathered on Parliament Hill and in local services to honour their colleagues who died in the line of duty this past year.

On behalf of the Canadian Alliance I would like to pay tribute to these brave men and women who so selflessly and honourably served their fellow citizens. As we honour these men and women, let us remember that their ultimate sacrifice was in the course of fulfilling the pledge they made to protect the lives of others.

We offer our deepest condolences to the families and friends of these officers as well as the police and peace services and communities that have lost officers in the past year and years past.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Nunavut Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth will sign a renewal of the Canada-Nunavut General Agreement on the Promotion of French and Inuktitut Languages.

The Government of Canada is committed to protecting the cultural identity of Inuit through the recognition, revitalization, preservation, use and development of Inuktitut and to provide for community involvement.

The agreement also ensures the provision of French services in the Government of Nunavut and supports community development in compliance with the Nunavut Official Languages Act.

The federal government's contribution will amount to \$2.55 million; \$1.1 million for Inuit community based projects in Inuktitut and \$1.45 million for French language services and community projects.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, twelve years ago, the United Nations designated October 1 the International

Day of Older Persons. This was a way of acknowledging their contribution to social development and their indispensable role in intergenerational cooperation.

Seniors are the living repositories of our past. They can share the sum and significance of their experience with the younger generations; their stories and comments in connection with milestone events of our people make it possible for the rest of us to discover more about the fascinating events, heroic even, of our history.

Seniors are actively involved in their communities. They constitute an increasingly large segment of our society. They are partners in change, a change that could not take place without their knowledge, their wisdom, and their willingness to get involved for the sake of their nation.

On this, the first day of October, I wish to pay tribute to our older persons and to express my conviction that we must tap the rich human potential they represent for the benefit of our communities.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

RONALD DUHAMEL

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is an ache in our hearts today. Members of the House have lost a true and valued friend in the death yesterday of Ron Duhamel who served as the member for Saint Boniface from 1988 to early 2002 when he was appointed to the Senate.

It was a privilege and honour to work alongside Ron for nearly 14 years. He had a deep passion for Canada and I witnessed that each and every day he worked on Parliament Hill. He cared about people and understood that government played a vital role in improving the human condition. That made him an outstanding parliamentarian and public servant.

I will never forget his decency, his humanity and his kindness. To know him was to love him. He will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

On behalf of my wife and myself, I wish to extend my heartfelt sympathy to the Duhamel family.

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INCOME TAX

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this is the 85th anniversary of the introduction of one of Canada's biggest broken promises. We have both the Liberal and Conservative Parties to thank for this occasion.

It was in 1917 when Prime Minister Robert Borden introduced the very temporary income tax law. It was only a temporary measure he assured Canadians.

Arthur Meighen took office as the head of the new coalition of federal Liberal and Conservative Parties. He maintained the temporary income tax.

He was followed by Mackenzie King who increased the temporary tax. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments over the past 85 years have done the same.

This is also the ninth anniversary of another whopper. Nine years ago the Liberals promised to abolish, scrap, kill the GST; that hated tax introduced by the Conservative government. Who said there is any difference between those two parties?

* * *

RONALD DUHAMEL

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too stand to pay tribute to the hon. Ron Duhamel who died last night. Sincerest condolences go out to his wife Carolyn and his three daughters.

Ron was my friend. He was also my mentor when I was elected to the House. I shall miss his wise counsel and friendship greatly.

I will remember Ron in many ways, but in particular I will recall most fondly his desire to help young people. Ron was an educator. Nothing pleased him more than to participate in the education of young people, be it through his work in the Manitoba school system to here in the House working with the interns and pages of parliament. I know Ron was most happy during his annual school supply drive, and what a success it has been.

Ron Duhamel had many roles: a husband, a father, a proud Manitoban, indeed a proud Franco-Manitoban. He was a minister of the Crown and an honourable senator, but most of all he was a gentle spirit, a gentleman and a good friend.

* * *

STUART LEGGATT

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to another of our former colleagues, a former member of the House, Stuart Leggatt, who served with distinction from 1972 to 1979 as the New Democratic member of Parliament for New Westminster-Burnaby.

Stuart had a long history of distinguished public service as an elected official at the local level, the federal level and at the provincial level, and was a respected judge of the B.C. county court and supreme court for many years. His colleagues referred to him as "the People's Judge".

As a member of Parliament, Stuart was respected on all sides of the House. He took a courageous and visionary stand on many issues as justice critic for our party, issues like freedom of choice on abortion, gun control, capital punishment, ending discrimination based upon sexual orientation, and prisoners' rights. Stuart was a fine, compassionate person who made a tremendous contribution to public life.

On behalf of my New Democratic colleagues, particularly the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle who served with him, and indeed all members of the House, we extend our sincere condolences to his wife Marlene and children David, Carrie and Anne and other members of his family.

Tribute

● (1410)

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's throne speech completely ignored the issues most relevant to Atlantic Canada. Despite the fact that foreign overfishing, resource protection and Canada's role in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization have become national concerns, not a single word was mentioned about the fishery in yesterday's recycled material.

Where is the commitment to let resource rich provinces benefit primarily from the development of their resources? The silence is deafening.

The Prime Minister wants to sign off on Kyoto. He is concerned about the environment. He is willing to trample on provincial jurisdictions. There are 1001 ways to protect the environment. He can start by protecting the fishery off Newfoundland, an area within unchallenged federal jurisdiction.

The environment is being destroyed, a way of life is being destroyed, a region of Canada is being destroyed, and this is his legacy.

The Speaker: I understand there is agreement to proceed with one minute statements in respect of our former colleague.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RONALD DUHAMEL

Mr. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was with a heavy heart last night that we learned of the passing of my predecessor, the hon. Ronald Duhamel. Mr. Duhamel fought a courageous fight against cancer for more than three years. The riding of Saint Boniface was privileged to have had a member of the stature of Mr. Duhamel.

Known for his devotion to his country, and more particularly for western Canada, Mr. Duhamel knew how to represent all of the constituents of his riding. It is important to underscore his contribution to the Franco-Manitoban community, a community he was extremely proud of, and one that was very thankful in kind.

[*English*]

Mr. Duhamel was a person of integrity and a tireless worker who accomplished so much in his lifetime. His commitment to youth and their advancement was legendary in Manitoba.

As a recent member of Parliament, I regret I did not have a greater opportunity to work with Senator Duhamel in caucus, as I am convinced that Canada would have continued to benefit enormously from his experience and his wisdom.

I am certain I speak for my colleagues from Manitoba and indeed all members in the House in wishing his family our most sincere condolences and courage in this most difficult period. I was extremely fortunate to have him as an adviser, as a mentor, but more important, and I say this with humility, as a friend.

Oral Questions

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Canadian Alliance I rise today to pay tribute to our distinguished friend and colleague, Senator Ron Duhamel.

Prior to his appointment to the Senate, Senator Duhamel served his country as a senior cabinet minister in the federal government, and before that his public service included holding the position of assistant deputy minister in the Department of Education in Manitoba.

As a former public servant in Manitoba as well, I can advise the House that he had a reputation as a distinguished public administrator.

As many members know, he received the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Excellence in Public Administration in 1997.

Senator Duhamel also had a close connection to many francophone communities in my riding of Provencher. He understood better than many the concerns of that rural francophone minority.

Senator Duhamel will be missed by all Manitobans, including his former constituents who were well served by him for many years.

I wish to extend our condolences to his family and to his many friends.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Duhamel and I fought the same battle at around the same time, a fight that brought us together. He lost his fight, and left us too soon. However, the memory of his kindness will remain in our memories forever.

Born in Saint Boniface, Mr. Duhamel obtained his Ph.D. in 1973 from the University of Toronto. Before entering into active politics, he was a teacher, school principal, professor at the University of Manitoba, assistant deputy minister of education, and then deputy minister of education in Manitoba.

He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1988, then re-elected in 1993 and 1997. He held a number of cabinet positions, including Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development, for Western Economic Diversification, and for the Francophonie as well as Minister of Veterans Affairs.

The driving force in his life was sharing his knowledge and commitment to democracy. The Francophonie has lost a tireless champion.

The Bloc Québécois offers its sincere condolences to his wife Carolyn and his daughters Kathy, Nathalie and Karine.

• (1415)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is a very sad day for the Senate, the House of Commons, Manitoba, the community of St. Boniface, the Franco-Manitoban community, and above all, the family of our former colleague, Ron Duhamel.

[*English*]

Ron had a distinguished career as an educator, as a senior civil servant in the province of Manitoba, as the MP for Saint Boniface

and as veterans affairs minister up until recently when he was appointed to the Senate. He was known for his competence and for his dedication to Manitoba. Locally he was known for his annual school supplies drive, which reflected no doubt his earlier career in education and his concern for students.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I wish to offer our sincere condolences to his wife Carolyn and his daughters Kathy, Nathalie and Karine.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, I too rise in the House today to mourn the loss of a fellow Manitoban, a colleague of this House and, most recently, a colleague of the Senate.

Senator Ron Duhamel passed away last night at the much too young age of 64. I had the personal opportunity of knowing Mr. Duhamel as the deputy minister of education and as the senior cabinet minister of Manitoba. His tireless work on behalf of the people of Manitoba speaks for itself. His conscientious work and approachable manner, despite the carrying of a different political stripe, gives ample witness to his dedication, to his beliefs and to the people whom he represented.

On behalf of my constituency of Brandon—Souris, which he also helped on numerous occasions, on behalf of all Manitobans and on behalf of my party, the caucus of the Progressive Conservative Party, I offer my deepest condolences and sympathy to his family and to all those who knew him. He will be desperately missed. Au revoir, mon ami.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I invite all honourable members to observe a minute of silence in memory of our friend and former colleague, the Honourable Senator Ron Duhamel.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.*]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's throne speech told Canadians a lot about the government's political strategy on the Kyoto accord but nothing about how it intended to implement Kyoto.

A growing array of provinces, prominent Canadians and national business organizations have all agreed that Kyoto will devastate our economy.

My question is quite straightforward. How can the government commit to ratifying Kyoto without having any plan to implement it?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ministers at this moment are dealing with their provincial counterparts. They have had many meetings so far. A meeting is being held at this moment with industry and other possible partners. A meeting will be held at the end of this month between provincial ministers and federal ministers, and we intend to have a plan.

There will be a vote before the end of the year on the ratification.

Many countries have implemented or have voted for Kyoto without any plans at all. Here in Canada we have had discussions for months and years. We will have a plan and we will proceed before the end of the year with a vote in the House of Commons.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government has already had five years to work on a plan and it has failed to deliver. The government has not told Canadians what the cost of Kyoto will be and reportedly the cost of Kyoto has even been withheld from the cabinet.

Will the government come clean and table its own estimates as to what the costs of Kyoto will be for ordinary Canadians?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition always asks us to consult before moving. We are doing consultation. Everybody would be very disappointed with us if we were to just say what is the end result.

We are having consultations. We will develop the plan in consultation. We will make it public. After that parliament will vote on it and the country will have 10 years to implement it.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are not just saying that the government should consult before moving. We are saying that it should not move until it knows where it is going.

[Translation]

In the case of the Kyoto accord, the Liberal government keeps feeding Canadians unfounded rhetoric. This accord will have devastating consequences for our economy. Canadians deserve a clear explanation.

How is the Kyoto accord going to work, and how much will it cost Canadians?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that the government has had to act in the public interest. We acted in its interest when we eliminated lead from gasoline. People said that it would be disastrous for the oil industry. It was done without any harm to anyone.

In my own riding, everyone was afraid because there were new standards for the six paper mills in the Mauricie valley, and they were going to shut down if stringent anti-pollution standards were enforced. The measures were enforced, the six companies are prospering, and the region's ecology is the better for it.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party's last budget was tabled in the fall of 2001. According to the Prime Minister, the next budget will be tabled in 2003. We cannot wait that long, considering the huge costs included in the Speech from the Throne.

Why does the Prime Minister not table a budget this fall?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will decide when a budget shall be tabled. A very important matter for our government is the promise I made to

Oral Questions

meet with provincial premiers to discuss the issue of health early in the new year. It might be wise to meet with the premiers before tabling a budget. This is why we may postpone the budget from December to February, so as to be in a better position to provide the Minister of Finance with every available option.

[English]

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech has 59 promises in it, some, of course, recycled. We deserve to know what these promises will cost. That means a budget. A return to an annual budget in fact would be real nice.

Could Canada have a budget this year to cost out this Prime Minister's legacy promises, yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a pretty good record. We have had five consecutive balanced budgets in Canada.

We had a \$42 billion deficit from the last Conservative government administration and we have managed to produce a balanced budget. There will be another balanced budget because we have good administration on this side of the House of Commons.

* * *

[Translation]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the Johannesburg summit, the Prime Minister said that Parliament would be called upon to ratify the Kyoto protocol before the holiday season. This firm commitment does not, however, appear in the throne speech. There is instead mention of a resolution before the end of the year.

Could the Prime Minister tell us clearly whether or not Parliament is going to ratify the Kyoto protocol before we adjourn for the holiday season?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said that there would be a vote on the ratification of Kyoto in the House of Commons before the end of the current year.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, the government says the following, in connection with the Kyoto protocol, "As part of the Kyoto protocol, Canada agreed to obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2012".

If the Prime Minister is really committed to ratifying the Kyoto protocol, why does the throne speech refer to "obligations" without specifying "all obligations"? With such wording, is the Prime Minister not reneging on his commitments?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said and say again, it is the Canadian government's intention to respect the criteria, which means that, by 2012, we will have reduced Canada's CO₂ emissions by 6% compared to the 1990 level.

Oral Questions

• (1425)

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of the Environment said that he felt it was possible that we might not meet the objectives for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions set out in the Kyoto protocol.

In making this statement, is the Minister of the Environment not announcing in advance that he is giving up, that he already accepts that we might not reach the objectives that were set, when in fact he should be the one leading the offensive, motivating the industry? He should do his part and state clearly that, in the end, we will fully respect the objectives of the Kyoto protocol.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am fully confident that we will meet the objective of 6% below the 1990 levels by the year 2010. I am also confident about the years 2008 to 2012.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of the Environment not aware that the message he is sending gives hope to those who oppose the Kyoto protocol, rather than setting the bar higher and letting them know that the only choice for the government is to fully enforce the commitments contained in the Kyoto protocol?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, we will reach the Prime Minister's objective and that of the Government of Canada. If other interests in Canada oppose this, it is a free country. However, as far as we are concerned, the Government of Canada will reach the objective.

[English]

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

After five years of foot dragging on the path to Kyoto ratification, the Prime Minister finally in Johannesburg made an unequivocal commitment to ratify, but some weasel words snuck into yesterday's throne speech which referred to a government resolution on the issue of ratifying Kyoto, creating renewed ambiguity.

Will the Prime Minister allay concerns about the weasel words and state unequivocally today that the government will ratify the Kyoto accord before the end of the year?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a technicality because the ratification is an act of the government, not of Parliament. However, we will consult Parliament before the government ratifies.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the concerns do not stop there. Yesterday the health minister stated that she could not make a decision about the Kyoto ratification until she saw the implementation plan.

Here is the problem: her colleague, the environment minister, said yesterday that he would not present a plan before the vote on ratification.

In Johannesburg the Prime Minister said "we are finalizing an implementation plan that will permit us to achieve the objectives of the Kyoto Accord."

I ask the Prime Minister again, when will the implementation plan be brought forward and shared with Canadians?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I explained earlier, there will be a meeting of the responsible ministers and their provincial counterparts before the end of this month to look at the plans to see what can be done collectively to achieve the goals that we have for 2012.

Of course there is always debate in my government, and it is normal. It is good because I have good ministers and they want to express their views. However, at the end of the day when the government makes a decision, the decision is a decision of the government.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

I placed on the order paper a motion that would establish a special joint committee of Parliament to allow provinces, environmentalists, industry, consumers and other interested Canadians the opportunity to present their views on the impact of the ratification or non-ratification of the Kyoto protocol.

Will the Prime Minister support the establishment of such a joint committee? Will he make available to us the relevant information, including the implementation plan and his government's regional, sectoral and other impact analysis?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said there will be a debate before the end of the year and there will be a vote.

At this moment the work is being done with the provinces and industry on that subject. There will be ratification if it is approved by the House of Commons. The implementation of the plan will be done between 2002 and 2012.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, if Parliament is to vote, it would be useful if it had the facts. Again, my question is for the Prime Minister. The member for LaSalle—Émard said about the Kyoto protocol:

Canadians are entitled to know what those costs are, what they're going to be asked to bear, and that it is going to be done in a way that is equitable and fair right across the country, region by region.

Does the Prime Minister agree with that statement by his colleague, and if so, will he table in the House the implementation plan and the regional, sectoral and other impact analysis?

• (1430)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been made clear a number of times in the House, the work is ongoing with the provinces, territories and industry. We believe that we should have a made in Canada plan that brings in all parts of the country in creating the plan and, of course, ultimately implementing that plan.

This is not an issue which is forced upon the provinces or territories by the federal government. Indeed, people from all parts of the country represented in the House will have an opportunity to vote on that very question of ratification.

Oral Questions

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we have an interesting quote from the health minister. She said, "An awful lot of countries have ratified Kyoto without a plan and that to me is irresponsible and frightening".

I found yesterday's ambiguous Kyoto reference in the throne speech rather frightening. The Prime Minister cannot convince his own cabinet to ratify without a plan. When will he drop this irresponsible and frightening scheme and give Canadians his exact plan for ratifying Kyoto?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has heard the Prime Minister this afternoon detailing exactly what he intends to do with respect to ratification and with respect to the vote in the House.

Certainly with respect to the remarks made there are many countries that have not done the analysis that Canada has done on this important issue. We intend to work with the provinces, territories and the committee established under the chairmanship of Peter Lougheed to ensure that we do in fact have a plan which is acceptable from coast to coast.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, what is frightening for Canadians is that the Prime Minister is not telling them how many jobs will be lost, how much gas will cost at the fuel pump or how much more their heating bills or lighting bills will go up.

When will the Prime Minister tell his cabinet and Canadians what Kyoto will cost them?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that there has been ongoing analysis for the past five years which has been done by the provinces and territories in consultation with industry. We have also had consultations with the general Canadian public.

It is very clear that we have done in fact, as has been said internationally time after time, more work on analysis than any other country that has been engaged in this process.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the summer, the Minister of Health said that she was opposed to the implementation of the Kyoto protocol. Yesterday, she again expressed strong reservations as to the position that she would take on this issue.

Will the Minister of the Environment admit that the lack of clarity and determination in his statements, his backtracking and the qualifications that he makes when discussing the Kyoto accord are the result of a deep split within cabinet itself, a split that jeopardizes the Kyoto accord?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps something was lost in the translation, because my colleague was on side with us and with the whole cabinet. The Liberal Party also wants the Kyoto protocol to be ratified.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the positions of the Minister of Health on this issue are well known, but we have a Prime Minister who is on borrowed time.

The main contender for the job of Prime Minister has never committed himself on the issue of the Kyoto accord.

The Minister of Health has very serious reservations. The Minister of Industry supports the accord half-heartedly. In light of this situation, will the Kyoto accord not be the first casualty of the lack of leadership in this government?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, things are quite clear. The Prime Minister clearly indicated what the Government of Canada wants to do and will do.

As for my colleague, the hon. Minister of Health, she did mention that it is important to know the details. This is why it is so critical to have the cooperation of the provinces and territories in order to draft in Canada a plan that can achieve the desired goal.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the first responsibility of the government is the security of our nation and the safety of all Canadians. The government has failed to provide that security.

Yesterday, as our soldiers stood out in the rain standing guard, the government recognized almost every other group but them. It promised money for infrastructure, social programs and housing but it found nothing for our military, its first responsibility. There was nothing for new uniforms or new helicopters. Why?

• (1435)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only did the throne speech explicitly recognize the four who were killed in Afghanistan and the response of Canadians to that but it went on to say that by the end of the mandate we would ensure that the Canadian Forces were equipped to do whatever the government wanted them to do in the world.

Not only that, we are as we speak heavily engaged in consultations and in studies of sustainability of our Canadian Forces to ensure that we have the fittest, strongest Canadian Forces for the 21st century.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member said, "heavily engaged in consultations." That is what the government has done for the military today. Both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence have already scuttled the Prime Minister's idea to conduct full-scale defence reviews.

The defence minister claims that the 1994 white paper is still solid but that white paper provided a commitment to the defence of our nation which the government has not honoured.

If the 1994 white paper is still the government's pledge to the Canadian people when it comes to security then why does the government refuse to provide the resources our troops need to meet those commitments?

Oral Questions

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the first place it is hardly in my power to scuttle any plans the Prime Minister might have. What we are in fact doing is carrying out our job in a serious manner.

Canadians want us to be serious at this time of global tensions and a possible war in Iraq. We are working very hard with stakeholders in studying the capabilities of our military, and hoping and planning to put in place armed forces for the future which will respond to the needs of all Canadians in the 21st century.

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[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber dispute is hitting the forest industry and its workers hard. Yesterday, in the Speech from the Throne, the government passed up a wonderful opportunity to announce a series of specific measures to help the victims of this trade dispute. The industry is disappointed that there is nothing in the Speech from the Throne, and workers still need help.

How does the Prime Minister explain that he did not feel it essential to take a stand on this important issue in the Speech from the Throne?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, good progress continues to be made in discussions with the Americans on the issue of softwood lumber. The Department of Commerce has indicated a willingness to take another look at the file with a view to coming up with a long term policy to resolve the softwood lumber dispute permanently.

Mr. Aldonas visited the provinces. He toured the country. We are all working together on this. I must say that I think we have definitely made some progress, and that more time may be needed, but we must continue our efforts.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the United States is going to lose this dispute with us. The Americans think so too, but their strategy is to play for time in order to deal a fatal blow to many forestry operations.

Does the government not understand that it is already way behind in implementing a plan of assistance for forestry companies and workers and that any action that comes too late will be of no use in many cases?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the Bloc Québécois member support our government's strategy and express his confidence in the case we have before the international tribunals. It is true that we are ultimately going to win this dispute, and find a long term solution to the softwood lumber issue.

We have already announced \$75 million in assistance to the industry for market development and R and D, as well as \$20 million with the industry to promote our case in the United States. My colleagues, the Minister of Human Resources Development, the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Natural Resources are working to come up with new measures for our industry during—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton North.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and our Sea King helicopters have something in common. They both arrived in 1963 and they both should have been retired long ago.

The Prime Minister said in 1993, "I'll take one piece of paper, I'll take my pen, I will write zero helicopters". Sadly that is one promise that he has kept for far too long.

Now team Cormorant is saying that it will forgive the \$500 million in penalties that the taxpayers of Canada paid when he cancelled the EH-101. Our first class military personnel deserve first class equipment.

When will he take that paper and pen and replace this aging fleet?

• (1440)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that helicopters are not a simple matter. We have had more than a thousand technical suggestions by industry on this matter and the fact remains the same. The bottom line is that we are doing our best to get the right helicopter at the right price as soon as possible.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, they may not be a simple matter, but they are surely old.

In 1994 the former defence minister said, "When we cancelled the EH-101 we did so with the full knowledge that the Sea Kings could last until the year 2000". But incredibly a May 2001 DND memo said, "there is a strong potential that we will be conducting (Sea King) operations until 2015".

We need to be concerned about the military. The government was awfully quick to buy executive jets for cabinet. It still has not even asked for bids for helicopter replacements.

Why is it so quick for cabinet and so slow for our troops?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is confusing two quite different transactions. In the case of the Challengers, it involved two planes. The value was \$100 million or less and there was one possible supplier.

In the case of the maritime helicopter, it is a fleet of 28 helicopters at a price of some billions, not millions, and the involvement of several multinational consortia. The two are quite different transactions.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

We are all aware of the importance highway 30 holds for the Montérégie and the greater Montreal region, not only for transportation, but also for the environment and for economic development. We have made commitment after commitment in connection with highway 30, which has been declared a priority, but to date all of us in the Montérégie are still waiting, with growing impatience, for the long awaited announcement.

What we in the Montérégie are waiting for is the signature of a federal-provincial-private sector agreement which will sanction this project. When will this be forthcoming and what is holding it up?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to reassure the hon. member, the Government of Canada is working on the extension of highway 30 in partnership with the private sector and the provincial government.

We have begun the environmental and the traffic studies. I have no doubt that this highway will be extended shortly.

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[English]

NATIONAL REVENUE

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even as yesterday's throne speech tried to paint a progressive face on the government, the finance department is further tightening the screws on Canadians with disabilities.

The Federal Court called for a more humane and compassionate interpretation of disabilities, yet the government is bringing in new regulations to cut even more people off the disability tax credit.

Why is the government defying the advice of the courts, advocacy groups, the medical profession and the disability subcommittee to provide humane and compassionate tax relief to our most vulnerable citizens?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we consider this matter very much a serious one. I am reviewing what the government has done with respect to deepening and broadening the disability tax credit. That is in fact the way to deal with these issues.

The hon. member will know that there are disability provisions in the Speech from the Throne. It is appropriate that we should decide the breadth and depth of the disability tax credit rather than the courts making decisions that are not the same as a policy that we would adopt in Parliament.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance as well.

We have just heard from my colleague about how some of the poorest of the poor are being shafted by the government in terms of the disability tax credit. While this is happening, the finance department is now proposing, get this, a tax change that would give a wealthy family in Montreal, the founding family of the Vidéotron

company, a \$180 million tax gift. They are among the wealthiest of the wealthy in this country.

I want the Minister of Finance to explain this. Why would the government consider giving a \$180 million tax gift to a very wealthy family at the same time it is cutting back on a tax credit to the disabled people in this country? That is absolutely scandalous. The minister—

● (1445)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of National Revenue.

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know that privacy provisions do not permit us to discuss individual tax cases on the floor of the House of Commons, but I can assure him that CCRA takes pride in the fact that it administers the tax laws in a way which is consistent and fair to all Canadians.

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FINANCE

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, throne speeches are about talk. Budgets are all about action.

Since the last election the Prime Minister has introduced two throne speeches and only one budget. This is the first government in Canadian history to introduce twice as many throne speeches as budgets.

With a health care system in chaos, a military in crisis and financial markets in a tailspin, we need a fall budget to address these issues and to provide a detailed costing of yesterday's throne speech promises.

What is the real reason the government is delaying a budget until sometime next year?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition member is all about talk. We generally have a budget for each fiscal year. The fiscal year, as he knows, starts on the first of April. We will have a budget in advance of the first of April, as we did in advance of the last first of April. Whether it falls within a particular calendar year is really of no consequence.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, some of the people who were most disappointed by yesterday's throne speech are the brave men and women of our military. Only a passing reference was made to our most courageous citizens, without any commitment to increase defence spending, and now we know we will not see a replacement for the Sea Kings until the Prime Minister retires so he does not have to debate the EH-101.

Will the Prime Minister give our armed forces a firm financial commitment today for new equipment and more personnel so they can do the job they need to do at home and abroad?

Oral Questions

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think there might have been more than one question in that question.

I would point out simply that in terms of pride in our military I share the hon. member's view. The fact of the massive response in Edmonton twice, once to the four deaths and secondly the largest response to homecoming soldiers since at least the second world war, indicates that the hon. member is not alone in being extremely proud of what our military has done.

As was cited in the throne speech, the government is committed to equip the army, the navy and the air force with the resources they need to carry on their duties.

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HEALTH

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, up to 10,000 Canadians die each year because of prescription drug reactions. Every year just under half of our seniors receive at least one inappropriate prescription. Prescribing errors account for over one-third of drug-related hospital admissions.

The throne speech announced faster drug approvals. Why did it say nothing about drug safety?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member probably is aware, some months ago we created the new marketed health products directorate at Health Canada. We have put additional resources into post-market surveillance to deal with the very issue that the hon. member has raised.

We are very concerned about adverse reactions in relation to drugs or other therapies and products. That is why we have enhanced our ability to do better and more timely surveillance to ensure the safety of the public.

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech did not address problems of addiction, over-prescription or medical errors in primary care.

Faster drug approval is a notable goal and in fact there are some health benefits for that, but the government is putting the cart before the horse when announcing faster drug approvals before dealing with drug safety.

How many deaths are acceptable to the minister? Is it 10,000, 15,000, 20,000? What is the number?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that this government and this department are very much concerned with drug safety. That is why, as I have indicated, we have put additional resources toward post-marketing surveillance so that in fact we can deal with incidents of adverse reaction.

I think the hon. member is probably also aware that last week a very important report was released in relation to patient safety. Only one part of patient safety is, of course, adverse reactions to drugs. My provincial-territorial colleagues and I are very committed to taking up the recommendations in and around patient safety and obviously adverse reactions to drugs will be part of that.

• (1450)

[Translation]

IRAQ

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne states that Canada will continue to work through international organizations such as the United Nations.

However, this broad commitment gives no specifics regarding the government's intentions and attitude in the event of possible action against Iraq.

Will the government make a commitment that Canada will under no circumstances participate in any strikes against Iraq without the UN's go-ahead?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tonight we will all have the opportunity to debate this very serious situation in the world.

I can assure the member—though I am sure she is fully aware of this—that the policy of the government has always been to act through the United Nations. We support the United Nations; we supported President Bush when he was before the United Nations and will continue to support a solution to this serious crisis through multilateral action. This is the policy of our government.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the government make a commitment to the effect that any decision to take action against Iraq, including in the context of the United Nations, will first be debated and voted on in the House before Canada takes part, and that there will not be a debate without any vote, after the troops have left, as was the case with Afghanistan?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to tonight's debate on this issue.

I am sure that the member and all members of the House will have the opportunity to express their concerns, their fears and their solutions with respect to this situation.

It has always been the policy of this government to consult the House. We will do so, as in the past, and we will listen to what the members have to say tonight with a great deal of attention and interest.

* * *

[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government's handling of softwood is off the rails. When the 1996 softwood deal went sour, the Minister for International Trade said that it was a good deal and that even if it was a bad deal how dare we criticize it when the forest industry made him do it.

Oral Questions

Predictably, the U.S. Department of Commerce is once again proceeding with its divide and conquer tactics. This time it is targeting the provinces rather than industry. When is the trade minister going to do his job and use his federal mandate to stop these U.S. divide and conquer tactics?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the strategy of our government has been very clear from day one on this. It is to find a long-term, policy-based strategy.

Now clearly we are doing our job when we resume discussions with the Americans to identify such a long-term, policy-based solution. We are going to the courts to get support from the WTO and NAFTA that the Canadian case is right. We are discussing with the Americans to identify an earlier resolution to this conflict. This is what the government is doing now.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this minister is using a wink and a nod to allow the Canadian position to erode. Yesterday's throne speech failed to offer any direction on trade disputes. The Liberals continue to avoid any commitment to forest workers and companies about federal financial assistance.

The minister is allowing the pursuit of free trade in lumber to be compromised by the lack of a federal financial package. Why was the long-awaited package not in yesterday's throne speech?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we rarely announce budgetary measures through throne speeches. Indeed, if the member wants to be a little more patient he will realize that my colleagues, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Human Resources Development, have been working very hard looking at all options to make sure that we will support our workers and communities and we will support our industry.

A package will be announced in the next few days. In the meantime we will continue to work with the provinces in a team Canada approach for a pan-Canadian solution.

* * *

•(1455)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister for Human Resources Development tell the House about any new developments with respect to the problem experienced by certain pregnant women and nursing mothers on preventative withdrawal whose maternity leave was cut short because they had exhausted their EI benefits?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada wants to ensure that all Canadian mothers are able to benefit fully from maternity and parental benefits. We are therefore providing over \$1.3 million in funding for a pilot project to help mothers who do not have full access to benefits. The pilot project will help some 400 women over the next three years.

I thank the member for Portneuf and the other members for their assistance on this important issue.

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's throne speech talked about putting Canadian families and children first. I have news for the Liberals: Farm families include children. Yet the throne speech, in its 15 seconds about agriculture, failed to address the agriculture crisis.

Why are the Liberals ignoring the needs of farm families at a time when severe drought and massive agriculture subsidies in the U.S. farm bill threaten the very existence of the Canadian family farm?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 20 of this year the Prime Minister and I announced the biggest farm support package in many years for Canadian farmers, with a number of elements, including risk management.

Since that time, we also have put in place, and the cheques will start going out later this week, \$600 million to assist Canadian farm families for the various types of threats that they have been undergoing in the last year.

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that our productive Canadian farmers cannot compete against massive agriculture subsidies provided to farmers in the United States and Europe.

Now that the Prime Minister recognizes that fact, why does the government refuse to implement a trade injury compensation program for struggling farm families?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would look at the programs that are there to assist Canadian farmers and have been put in place in the last number of years, she will quickly see that there are hundreds and hundreds of millions, actually billions, of dollars that have been put in place to help our Canadian farmers mitigate all of the challenges they have had come to them, whether they be weather related, whether they be trade related, whether they be market related, or whatever they have been.

No government has come forward in recent years with as much support to Canadian farm families and Canadian farmers as this government.

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Oral Questions

While the whole agricultural industry expected the government to renew its commitment to maintaining and protecting supply management in the eggs, dairy and poultry sector, the Speech from the Throne is silent on this issue.

Consequently, is the minister prepared to renew his commitment, here in this House, to maintain the current supply management system, and will he pledge not to use it as a bargaining chip in future WTO negotiations, contrary to the secret memo issued by his department on August 7?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear on this most important issue for our government.

The Minister of Agriculture and I were in Doha when, along with our colleagues from around the world, we decided to begin an important round of negotiations for our country.

In our mandate, it is very clear that supply management is among the objectives that we have to maintain a system that serves producers and consumers well in our country.

Our government firmly supports supply management. There is no doubt about that in anyone's mind.

* * *

• (1500)

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for 50 years aboriginal and Métis veterans have been systematically denied the same rights and benefits that other soldiers receive. The paltry settlement of \$20,000 now is less than one-quarter of even the most conservative estimate arrived at for the value of those benefits.

Will the Minister of Veterans Affairs agree to reopen this issue, revisit the issue and negotiate a fair compensation package that these aboriginal veterans so rightly deserve?

Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government was seized with this issue some two years ago. As soon as I was appointed to the ministry I sought to have this issue resolved.

As the member knows, I am not a negotiator; I am an advocate for veterans. I spoke to my government that we had an offer that should be seen as an offer of goodwill. It does not deal with the ascertainment of liability, absence or presence. It is an offer of goodwill.

I am pleased that the veterans have accepted the offer.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech committed the government to a program to provide benefits for workers who leave their jobs to look after a dying family member.

How is the minister going to keep this new program separate from the EI program so that hard-pressed employers and workers do not have to bear the entire burden of what clearly is a social program?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each year many Canadians face the challenge of going to work and also being responsible for looking after a gravely ill child or a parent.

The hon. member might be interested to know that 77% of Canadians taking care of gravely ill family members took time off work and 56% took leave without pay.

Helping Canadians find a balance between the workplace and family is a priority for the government. The hon. member can rest assured that we will look for the appropriate solutions in concert with the private sector.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the internal investigation in the sponsorship scandal revealed that 20% of all sponsorship contracts were flawed. Yet, these contracts account for 80% of all the moneys allocated for sponsorships.

When 80% of all the moneys of a government program are spent in a manner that is flawed, does this not warrant an independent public inquiry?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the former member for Windsor West within earshot, I must make the point that I thoroughly reject the premise of the question that has been put on the floor of the House of Commons.

I do not know where the hon. gentleman got the figure of 80%, but he is dead wrong.

* * *

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, on December 12, 1997 the Prime Minister and the premiers stated that first ministers agreed to establish a process in advance of Canada's ratification of the Kyoto protocol that will examine the consequences of Kyoto and provide for full participation of the provincial and territorial governments with the federal government in any implementation and management of the protocol.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister live up to that promise and not ratify Kyoto until Canadians know the consequences, the impact, the cost and the implementation strategy, or will this just be another Liberal broken promise?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should sort out these issues in his mind.

The Address

The fact is that we very clearly want to have the full participation of the provinces and territories, the private sector, the general public and environmental organizations in creating a made in Canada plan for achieving our ratification goal of minus 6% of 1990 levels. That has been clear all along.

I would like to point out to the hon. member that for five years this process has been ongoing. I would like to point out to him as well that the ministers of environment and energy of the provinces and the federal government were asked by 14 first ministers to do this, not just by the Prime Minister.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Mr. Armen Khachatryan, Chairman of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the Northern Ireland Assembly led by the Speaker, Lord Alderdice.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of two members of the International Joint Commission: the Hon. Dennis L. Schornack, Chairman of the U.S. Section, and the Right Hon. Herb Gray, Chairman of the Canadian Section.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

• (1505)

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to do two things in my remarks today. First, I want to talk about the benefits to my riding contained in the throne speech, and second, I want to refer to some comments made by members of the opposition parties. I listened to them carefully this morning and I would like to respond. Unfortunately my remarks on the benefits to my riding will take up virtually all of my time, but I will save my other remarks for question period and when the parties ask their questions, I could then comment on their comments.

I was delighted that a number of things in the throne speech will be very helpful for my riding. Last Friday I spoke at a conference and listed a few things I supported and I was very happy that these items showed up in the throne speech.

The first item was support for the headstart program which is very important to help in early childhood development. It has been very successful. I have been lobbying for a long time for an increase, and I was delighted to see it included in the throne speech.

The second item was support for small and medium size businesses to help them use emerging technologies. Everyone heard the loud applause this morning when the Prime Minister mentioned this type of support.

The third item relates to improving the regulatory environment. At the conference on Friday, a number of Yukoners came forward and said they wanted improvements in the regulatory environment. I told them I was very supportive of that and I was absolutely delighted to see it in the throne speech.

I was also very happy to see air quality included in the throne speech. Her Majesty's loyal opposition was happy as well because it suggested there should be help relating to pollution. Members might have missed it, but this item was included in the throne speech. I was delighted to see support for improving air quality because one of the Yukon medical associations lobbied me on that particular item.

One of the items that received the most applause was the 10 year infrastructure program. I was delighted to see that item in the throne speech because the last two iterations of the national infrastructure program have been very successful in the Yukon. They have helped all communities in some way or another. I was delighted to see it extended for a 10 year period. Local communities need to have a long time frame in which to do reasonable and logical capital planning. This will provide them with that. This is probably a very popular item with all parties across the country. The NDP in its response to the throne speech mentioned the importance of infrastructure.

I was delighted to see the extension of the supporting communities partnership program. This is another item that I had lobbied hard for. It is a program that supports homelessness initiatives. The Yukon has a very efficient and active committee which has done a number of innovative projects with that program but it realizes the job is not yet done. We were hoping the program would continue. I am delighted the minister responsible for homelessness, who has been doing a great job, was able to make that occur.

A number of initiatives to help first nations people were also included in the throne speech. Because my riding has a significant percentage of first nations people, perhaps 24% of the people in the Yukon, it will receive tremendous benefits from this.

Initiatives were included for new tools to deal with FAS. There were initiatives to improve support for skills and training of first nations people by increasing the funds for Aboriginal Business Canada. Money was included for early childhood intervention. There was support for health promotion and disease prevention in first nations communities. There was support for aboriginal children with special learning needs as well as support for aboriginal culture.

The Address

A very important item for my riding was support for the training of aboriginal people to take advantage of coming megaprojects in the country. Of the two or three mentioned, the northern pipeline was also included. The northern gas pipeline going through the Yukon with Alaska gas is the biggest industrial project in history, perhaps in the order of \$20 billion, of which Canada will receive half of the construction benefits as the study showed. We are providing support for helping northern people and aboriginal people be trained to take advantage of this project and the thousands of person years and millions of dollars of contracts. That is great news for my riding and for the people of northern Canada.

● (1510)

I think all parties were equally happy that there was a big emphasis on health care in the throne speech. The Romanow commission is doing a very detailed study. It will come up with suggestions and recommendations for improving the health care system, which we have all agreed is a challenge.

In the meantime, as the Bloc emphasized, the Canadian government is continuing to move ahead. It is dealing with emerging risks in the health care system. It is going to work on dealing with new technologies in the health care system and adding more health prevention into the health care strategy for Canada. This is very important. In my riding health care advocates have long emphasized the importance of prevention in the health care system. We are very excited to see that. A national drug strategy is linked intricately to health care and we were delighted to see that in the throne speech.

There are also a number of other areas with which I do not think any of the other parties could quarrel and which I believe they support. They include increased support for things like literacy and research, and reducing the barriers in the workplace for people with disabilities. I was delighted to see that because just this week I had a discussion with a constituent on that specific topic.

I am also happy that the throne speech mentioned that the government is going to put into action the accord it has with the voluntary sector. I have spoken a number of times in the House about the importance of volunteers to our society in Canada and the great contribution they make. I will be glad to see us move forward on that front.

I think everyone supports the increase to the child benefit, a very important element in the throne speech. This will help all Canadians, especially those children in poor families. How could people argue with other items in the throne speech such as helping families with gravely ill children or dealing with increased drug addiction?

As chair of the foreign affairs, defence and international cooperation caucus, I was very happy that the throne speech emphasized Canada's support for the rule of international law and for the United Nations, while maintaining that the United States is our closest and best ally. I was happy to see the reaffirmation of the fact that there is going to be a review of foreign affairs and defence policies to put them in line with today's world which has changed dramatically since the last throne speech. Coming out of those reviews, as from the Romanow commission, will be recommendations that we can act upon to deal with the problems that have been carefully and logically studied to respond to today's needs.

Another area is international cooperation and foreign aid. I can imagine that my colleagues on that committee are delighted about the increases announced to help the poorer nations. There are a lot of items in the throne speech to help poor people in Canada but this extends to the poorer people in the world. Another item which does that, and which members may not mention in the House too much, is that we are going to eliminate tariffs and quotas for most products for the least developed countries. When they try to attain self-dependence to get off foreign aid and do something for themselves such as making products and services, they will be able to sell them to the western world if we can reduce those tariffs and quotas to give them a chance to succeed.

In closing, I am also delighted in the way this is going to be accomplished and resourced. I was delighted to hear that we will be doing old spending in new ways. The Prime Minister emphasized that we are still going to have a balanced budget and that the debt to GDP ratio will continue to decline so there will not be an extra burden on our finances. Yet all these people in areas I have outlined relating to children and poverty, the environment and health will be helped.

This will be a worthy chapter in Canada's history. A country is judged, as we have heard many times before, not by how it helps the wealthy but by what it does for those most in need. This will be a very worthy final chapter in the Prime Minister's 40 year history in the House of Commons, with the support of his cabinet colleagues, in the area of assistance for people who should be helped in Canada.

● (1515)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech, not very much was mentioned about the possibilities for Canada in terms of expanding free trade. As a member from western Canada, the member understands as much or more than anyone else the major problems we will have if we do not expand free trade, particularly in natural resources so that we are not entirely dependent upon a single customer for our resources.

In mid-September I participated in the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation conference. The member was not there but I want to know specifically what is the member going to do within the current government, within his caucus and in concert with the cabinet of the Liberal Party to advance the idea of the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation in expanding free trade, developing the port of Prince Rupert, and making the northwest of North America a real trade hub to the Pacific Rim?

Mr. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his excellent question. I think increasing free trade is one of the areas in which our two parties generally agree.

At the end of my speech I talked about the benefits of increasing free trade for the less developed nations, which is outlined in the throne speech. It will allow the least developed nations to become less dependent on foreign aid. It will boost their economies and provide them with incomes with which to buy our products.

The Address

The member is probably not aware that I was director of the international trade centre program in Yukon before I had this job. I have always been a big supporter of increased trade. Reducing the tariffs at borders between countries, including in the northwest, of course, reduces costs for all of us, especially for poor people who cannot afford to pay those costs at the border. It gives poor people reasonable access to products at lower prices. I was also delighted to hear in the last budget about all the money going toward improving the borders subsequent to September 11.

Before September 11 there were a number of border irritants and problems. It has been one of the remarkable success stories over the last year. I am sure the Alliance has contributed to keeping the emphasis on our borders. However we have made progress in improving those borders. The Prime Minister and the Minister for International Cooperation announced funding of \$300 million for the busiest border crossing in the world to increase our goods and services crossing the border. I am sure the member will be happy about that.

I will do anything I can to support increased trade into the northern regions. Prince Rupert is outside my jurisdiction, but in my region I am supportive of having competitive airline services. I have been using a new service to ensure competition. Businesses will now have the option of getting their products out at more reasonable rates which will enable them to compete with the rest of the world.

• (1520)

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to what the member had to say and I can tell that he has done his homework on the Speech from the Throne. I am pleased that so many of the things I have supported were represented in the throne speech.

I know the hon. member is pleased for Yukon college and other colleges and universities across the country with the emphasis being placed on access to college and university education. He specifically mentioned research. Yukon and the other territories stand to benefit particularly from research.

There is great emphasis in the throne speech on strengthening the research capacity of Canada. However there is one sentence which I think bears repeating very often:

It will strengthen government science, integrating its efforts across departments and disciplines, and focusing on the priorities of Canadians.

Given the special responsibility of the federal government in the north, does the member not think that he, I and the rest of us here should take to heart the recommendation in the Speech from the Throne about integrating government science, that we should use northern science as an example and take all the federal departments which do research in the north and get them to continue the fine work that they are doing but integrate their efforts better to the benefit of Yukoners, other northerners and of all Canadians?

Mr. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I do not see a problem with that. I and some of my colleagues lobbied hard last winter for more research moneys from the granting councils for the north and for rural universities, small universities like the member's university. Historically that has been a problem for people like myself and members from rural constituencies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before commenting on the Speech from the Throne, I would like to extend the condolences of myself and my family to the family of Mr. Duhamel, who passed away last evening.

The throne speech is often an opportunity to inform the public on the government's choices of priorities for the coming weeks, if not months, in this House.

Yesterday, however, the Prime Minister, through the Governor General, missed the mark a bit in that he omitted several priorities that ought to have been part of the throne speech, an omission that may have been deliberate.

One of these was employment insurance. The Speech from the Throne is totally silent on this subject, despite countless promises that have been made to the public in the past by representatives of the Liberal Party of Canada and despite demonstrations by representatives of the unemployed in all parts of Quebec and Canada, thousands of whom have been pushed out of the employment insurance program by this government in the last six years.

We might have expected a Prime Minister who was presenting his final throne speech—a kind of political last will and testament after 41 years in politics—to be sensitive to the fate of people who are getting kicked while they are down, that is those who have already been hit by job loss and now find they are not eligible for benefits, as is particularly the case for seasonal workers.

The Prime Minister was also off the track in omitting to mention a fundamental and urgent problem, that is health funding. There was no need to pay for a commission to travel the length and breadth of Canada in order to find out that there was a problem in the health system. All that was needed was to turn on the TV. Every day from morning to night, there are reports on the problems from east to west, from coast to coast to coast, as the Prime Minister is so fond of saying, particularly the situation in emergency rooms and the underfunding of the health system.

It does not take an astrophysicist to know that one plus one makes two, to figure that if \$30 billion is cut from transfers to the provinces since 1995, thanks to the member for LaSalle—Émard, the former Minister of Finance, and also to the Prime Minister, that there will be underfunding in the end. Two plus two equals four, four minus two equals two. It is basic arithmetic. When cuts are made on one side, there will be problems on the other side. Everyone everywhere agrees unanimously, from Quebec to British Columbia, including the maritimes. I will make a special detour.

During their last meeting, the premiers of Canada and the ministers of finance put the issue of health care underfunding back on the table. They reached a consensus. As the Romanow commission recently stated, we have been talking about the underfunding of the healthcare system thanks to the thoughtless acts of the member for LaSalle—Émard and the Prime Minister for a long time now.

The Address

The premiers and ministers of finance of Canada came together with one voice to call on the federal government, which has accumulated considerable surpluses in the last three years, to increase health care funding. There is not one word about this. There is reference to the possibility that some day certain things may be corrected, but there is no firm commitment in the Speech from the Throne when it comes to health care, when everyone was expecting that there would be some firm commitment to increase health care funding.

It is easy to pen a fine Speech from the Throne, with carefully crafted phrases and carefully chosen words, but it is quite a different ball game to head a provincial government and manage the health sector, which is in constant crisis from week to week, across Canada. There is not one word about this urgent need for additional funding.

• (1525)

One would also have expected that the urgent situation created by the softwood lumber dispute and the measures taken by the Americans would be echoed in the Speech from the Throne. But the government is silent on this issue, as if the softwood lumber crisis and the situation in numerous regions affected by job losses and an economic slowdown did not exist. There is a limit to the government ignoring priorities, particularly in a government program that will guide our proceedings in the months to come.

The throne speech is also silent on the WTO negotiations that will begin this fall, except for small minor references to globalization. It looks good to talk about globalization and new technologies in a document. It looks very good. But what is Canada's position regarding this round of WTO negotiations?

There are major issues at stake in these negotiations, including cultural diversity and agriculture. There are memos signed by ministers that are circulating. They are drafted, signed, then re-drafted and re-signed. These memos are saying that Canada is prepared to sacrifice the supply management system for the dairy, poultry, table eggs and hatching eggs sector. In this regard, the minister told us during oral question period that it is out of the question, that they will fight tooth and nail during the negotiations to protect this system.

I remember that, in 1988, another minister, sitting almost in the same seat, said the same thing when the agricultural industry asked that article 11 of GATT be maintained. At the time, this article protected Canadian borders by controlling import volumes for dairy, poultry and eggs. These imports were strictly regulated because, in Canada and Quebec, a strict production system has been put in place, whereby farmers produce only what the market needs. This way, imports that could destabilize this system are regulated.

We are being told the same thing today. But a memo to the Canadian negotiators says that they can sacrifice the supply management system to save international grain markets, for instance. At some point, the members opposite are going to have to wake up, just as the Progressive Conservatives did. It took at least five major demonstrations in Ottawa in the late 1980s for the government of the day to understand that the supply management system is not for sale internationally, that it is working, and that it does not cause distortions.

Right now, we have the same situation again, with a Minister for International Trade telling us that he believes firmly in it. If that is so, let us have no more memos circulating with his signature and the signatures of two other colleagues, which serve as mandates for the Canadian negotiating team acting on behalf of Canada in Geneva as part of this WTO round.

There is fiscal imbalance and much harm is caused by too much money going to Ottawa and not enough to the provinces to finance such things as health, education and social assistance. There is not a word about fiscal imbalance, as though it did not exist.

Once again, there is unanimity in Canada. The provincial ministers of finance have even called for another study to look into what fiscal receipts in Ottawa and the provinces will be like in the years to come, as well as the size of the federal surplus and the provincial shortfalls.

Once again a conclusion has been reached: a third such study. We have had the Séguin commission, the Conference Board, and now Conference Board 2. What more does the government need before it understands that there is fiscal imbalance and that this imbalance is having serious impact on the health and education sectors in both Quebec and Canada.

But no, it is as if there had never been such a thing as a fiscal imbalance. Never such a thing as regions, either. There is very little reference to them in the throne speech, although there are specific problems with regional and rural development. There is just one small mention of the fact that new technologies should be accessible in the regions. This is just the same wish list we have been hearing since 1993.

• (1530)

We would have expected an action plan, but all we got in this throne speech was bla bla bla and repetition. There are even some passages, which I can point out later, that say essentially the same thing, or just about, as in the 1993, 1997 and 1999 speeches. The same words, the same things.

The Prime Minister could have taken advantage of this unique opportunity afforded him at this point in political career to ignore the mandarins and advisers who are pushing him to take a certain direction, but not to go too far, because the potential successor, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, does not want to go too far in this or that direction. In short, we are dealing already with the machinery that is in gear for finding his successor. The Prime Minister could have taken a stand and said, "I want to end my political career by solving real problems, by seeing that the real priorities of the people of Quebec and of Canada are dealt with in this Speech from the Throne, and that there is follow-up action".

Here too, when there is a Speech from the Throne, not only does the work plan have to be mapped out and the priorities defined, but the government must follow up. Since 1993, there have been surprises on this score. Often, there have been contradictions between the intentions expressed in the throne speech and subsequent action, and sometimes no action at all.

The Address

Some of the statements, including those about the disabled, which have appeared in the various throne speeches since 1993 have also surprised me. It is embarrassing to be sitting opposite a government which claims to be so concerned about the disabled. This frequently comes up. At the same time, my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I more often than not have heard stories in our riding offices of flagrant cases of unfair treatment of the disabled. These involve cases where Revenue Canada was unbelievably harsh with disabled individuals.

Because of bureaucratic changes in definition, people who had been allowed the federal disability tax credit for the past 10 years had their eligibility questioned—despite the presence of a disability and often even one that was growing worse.

People were not examined. No doctor was sent. Revenue Canada did not send a doctor to examine people and determine whether they were still entitled to the disability tax credit. They were simply denied it. Despite examinations carried out by doctors supplied by the disabled, the government would not budge on this unbelievable ruling precipitated by Revenue Canada.

Now, after having blocked the right of the disabled to the federal disability tax credit for nine years, we are treated to a Speech from the Throne where it looks good to talk about the disabled and the concern the government has for them. It is a real disgrace.

It is the same thing for aboriginals. I asked for copies of the throne speeches for 1997, 1999 and 2002. I did not go further back, because one has to stop somewhere. I found the same wishes expressed, but no follow-up with respect to aboriginal health, to take one example.

The 1997 Speech from the Throne said that the government wanted to work with aboriginal communities to find solutions to aboriginal health problems.

In 1999, we were told that the government would “continue to address the serious health problems in aboriginal communities”. The speech said “continue to address”. This means that it was already being addressed before. However, the government wanted to “continue to address” the problems, not solve them, but “continue to address” them.

Yesterday, the speech mentioned possible measures that could be established to fight fetal alcohol syndrome in particular. It is high time the members opposite start acting and stop simply paying lip service through the Speech from the Throne because it looks good to talk about aboriginals and their health.

As regards aboriginal peoples, I found other interesting things about past throne speeches. I am referring to the throne speeches from 1997, 1999 and 2002. If we look at how this government's position has evolved, it is clear why a bill on governance was tabled before hearing the Speech from the Throne yesterday. The governance bill will be carried over.

• (1535)

In 1997, we were told that the government wanted to “develop relationships with aboriginal people based on the principles of partnership and transparency”. In 1999, the government said it wanted to “building stronger partnerships with aboriginal people”. The 1997 speech talked about partnerships, in 1999, the government

talked about building stronger partnerships and, in 2002, it no longer mentions partnerships, but talks about adopting legislative measures to establish First Nations governance institutions.

The bill that was tabled and that will be carried over has been widely criticized by aboriginal communities as extending the paternalistic guardianship of aboriginal nations that is already found in the Indian Act. Aboriginals continue to be treated paternalistically. The language has evolved from 1997, when it referred to partnership. In 1999, reference was made to partnerships between nations and now, of paternalistic governance for aboriginals.

It is shameful that things evolved in such a direction. If the government does not come back to better provisions, it may well run into problems with aboriginal communities in the coming months.

I will take a few minutes to discuss the aboriginal issue, since it is part of my new responsibilities.

Aboriginal communities released their first nation plan in February 2002. I will quote an excerpt that will show how aboriginal nations envision the future, the notion of self-government and aboriginal rights inherent to their self-government. We will see that, given the governance bill and the infantilization of aboriginal people with the Indian Act and with reserves everywhere in Canada, there is an incredible margin between how aboriginals envision the future and what the government thinks.

This excerpt is from the first nation plan released in February 2002:

First Nations must re-draw constitutions which will lead to the establishment of the basic governmental institutions, including the designations of laws and courts and the confirmation of citizenship criteria and procedures. First Nations will then be in the position to run their own schools, maintain their own health and social services, deal with family matters, regulate many economic activities, foster and protect their language, culture and identity, regulate the use of its lands, waters and resources, levy taxes, deal with aspects of criminal law and procedure, and generally maintain peace and security within their territory.

This is the sovereignty of aboriginal nations. This is not an act on governance that infantilizes them and maintains them in a state of dependency, as the Indian Act has been doing for decades. The act keeps them on reserves which, traditionally and silently, have served to assimilate them rather than to ensure that they become full partners.

This must stop. There must be a return to the situation in 1997, indeed in 1993, one when there was talk of true partnership, which led in fact to the Nisga'a agreement, and now to the negotiation with the Innu of Quebec. That is what nation to nation is, not paternalism, but dealing one nation with another. That is all I will say for the moment about the aboriginal nations.

As usual—and we should be used to it after 41 years, and not be surprised—in his Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister has laid the foundation for squabbles with the Government of Quebec. They no longer even try to conceal it; the Prime Minister has become the specialist in invading areas of provincial jurisdiction. From a reading of the throne speech, this is even more flagrant than before.

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Not only has he invaded education, an area exclusive to Quebec, with his millennium scholarships, but he continues to do so. He is at it again here. With his reference to a summit on innovation and learning, he is getting into education through the back door. Again, when he speaks of securities regulation, this too is exclusive to Quebec and the provinces. If he wants to please Toronto, that is his political choice, but in other parts of Canada where there are other major securities commissions, there is opposition to that idea.

● (1540)

In conjunction with the securities commissions, we have developed harmonized regulations as well as centralized procedures, the latter being necessary in order to keep securities costs to a minimum. As well, administrative procedures have been reduced to a minimum.

The federal government has no need to meddle in this sector. In coming days, my colleagues and I will have an opportunity to revisit some of the questions contained in the throne speech. We will, moreover, also have an opportunity to do so in the weeks to come, as the government tries to implement certain negative aspects of the throne speech.

[English]

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome everyone back. I am glad to be here with everyone else.

The Speech From the Throne, which was given yesterday by the Governor General, but of course is the Prime Minister's thoughts and ideas on where he wants to take the government in the next period of time, was an excellent speech. It covered many topics that were of real importance to Canadians. In my opinion, the Prime Minister probably gave the best throne speech since the early Trudeau era. He was really visionary. He talked about a map for Canada.

The Guelph *Mercury* phoned me and wanted to know how we were going to pay for all this. That was a good question and it is a question that is not answered in the throne speech. A throne speech is something that maps out where a government sees itself going. It is a good thing to have a strategic plan, a vision, a map.

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for York West, who has been instrumental in the throne speech. She worked on a special task force to recommend to the Prime Minister that he look at funding our cities in a different way.

What we have been doing with infrastructure has been a tremendous success. The City of Guelph has benefited from it greatly, as have cities, communities and rural areas all over Canada. However, more is needed. As the member for York West said in her task force, new ways of doing business need to be looked at. My policy planner from the City of Guelph really welcomed this inclusion in the throne speech.

One of the things I have been most interested in over the last three to four years has been the health care issue. I have certainly spoken on it time after time in caucus. I have written to the Prime Minister a number of times on the issue and have spoken with the ministers of health. I really feel that Canada needs to continue to have a first rate health care system.

A national poll on health care, which, oddly enough, was released today, stated that 85% of Canadians across the country were very happy with the delivery of health care. However that is not to say that there are not problems. There is no question that communities, such as mine in Guelph, and Kitchener and in many areas around, are short of doctors. It is a serious problem.

I know this is a provincial issue. I also know that my counterpart, the member from the legislature in my area, actually led a task force on this. However no solution came out of that, and I do not think that is good enough. I think people have a right to universal health care. We say they do and I think they do. I think when one cannot get access to a general practitioner that is not fulfilling everything that all governments want to fulfill in every province across Canada.

My hope is that in this throne speech, with the desire to do more for health care, we now will look to working closer with the provinces, to get them to do things like opening up rather than capping the medical schools so tightly, and to try to find other avenues to help bring in more general practitioners, perhaps from other countries, to help service Canada.

● (1545)

There is a multitude of things that need to be discussed and explored to fix this bottleneck. Will it happen overnight? Probably not. Should we be trying harder? Yes, we should.

The other thing I have seen for quite some time as a problem in health care, and I have spoken on it a number of times, is the waiting lists to see a specialist if some help is required. That is serious. If people are sick or someone in the household is sick and that person is unable to get in to find out what the problem is, they become afraid. They do not know what is happening. These are two very concrete areas that are governed by the province. We have little say over this.

As a federal government we need to push the provinces harder and try to help them find solutions.

I also want to say that my experience with doctors, nurses and the staff in the hospitals has been tremendously positive. I was at St. Joseph's Hospital recently for the opening of a new unit. Many of the staff at St. Joseph's are nuns. I told them that somebody was watching over the hospital. I told them also that I believed in angels and in this hospital I had seen angels helping the sick.

The people who do this on a daily basis and give of themselves, the doctors who go out in the middle of the night, the nurses who stay after their shift to help someone or come in after someone has died or go to the funeral, are the people who really care and genuinely make a difference in society day after day, sometimes by the minute. I think they are tremendously undervalued and not thanked.

I want to thank them all for all they do on a daily basis to make our health care system what it is. We all know the health care system is nothing without the people who work in it.

The Address

In this particular initiative of the throne speech health care is paramount to me. I want to see movement. I want to see the provinces opening up avenues to help us get doctors. I want to be more responsive, even though 85% of people say that this is a good system.

I recently did a survey in Guelph on the health care system. I found that it was consistent with this 85%. The people in Guelph spoke of the system as generally very good. They said that some reorganization was needed to increase efficiency and effectiveness. They also said additional resources were needed, but not at the expense of other priorities. My constituents were concerned about user fees and paying for quicker access. My constituents believed that quality of care and timely access to services were the two most essential aspects of health care.

I found that my survey was very much in line with the national survey. I am pleased to say that the people of Guelph are right on the money as usual. They know exactly what is going on.

In the Speech from the Throne the skills and training at the University of Guelph of course are very important. On the subject of the environment the throne speech spoke of 10 new national parks.

These are all things that are a road map to make our lives as Canadians better. I ask the House this. Is this not what a throne speech is all about?

● (1550)

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest as the member for Guelph—Wellington spent most of her time on Canada's number one issue which is health care. In my constituency I happen to represent the hometown of Tommy Douglas who was the founder of health care.

I would like to repeat to the House and have the House's suggestion. He said that at no time should care be given without some user fee. The second thing he said was that all families or all corporations would have a premium to pay.

We used to have that and we disbanded it. I wonder if we went back to the founder himself and took a look at what we badly need, which is money, if she would not agree with what the founder of our national system had to say?

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, certainly I think everything has to be looked at and I would agree with the hon. member on that. However having said that, I would really be against user fees for low income families.

There are families, even if we were talking about \$5, who could not pay it. I have three sons who used to get a thing called red ear. If treated with penicillin, it was no big deal. It was cured without a problem. However they had to be taken to a doctor to get the penicillin because we needed a prescription. If a young family with three, four or five kids who had this, which is highly contagious, and they had to pay a user fee each time of \$5 or whatever might be proposed, that family might not go to the doctor.

That would be extremely terrible because children who could be cured within a matter of days by taking penicillin might not get it because perhaps the mom did not have the \$5. That red ear could go

into the ear and the child could go deaf. That would be a terrible thing and we cannot do that to Canada. We have never done that to Canada and we must not embark on that.

● (1555)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear my colleague from Ontario talk about the importance of health care in the Speech from the Throne but it gives me great distress to hear some of the comments with regard to the lack of action by the government on health care since 1993.

In particular, the comments were "bringing in other practitioners from other countries." Windsor West has a significant shortage in our community of practitioners in many of the different departments of health. On top of that we have issues with regard to foreign trained professionals who cannot practise in this country because of the lack of support received from the government. They are driving cabs, working in convenience stores and going into businesses.

Sadly, what is happening in our community is that many of them, hundreds in the medical professions, are going to the United States to practise. Ironically Canadians are often sent there to get services they cannot get here and they are practised on by people who are not recognized here by our own government. It is ironic and sad.

I would like to direct my question to the member with regard to specific timelines for these people with these current credentials and qualifications. Michigan state is moving toward reciprocity with regard to nurses, doctors and respirologists. What can they expect—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for Guelph—Wellington.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, more of these things have to be explored but the hon. member knows it is a provincial jurisdiction. This is not just a federal area. The hon. member knows that the Province of Ontario is ruled by the Conservative government. It is duly elected and we have to work with it.

I hope we will continue to explore all options and, as I said early on in my speech, that would be one of them.

Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have a few minutes today to give my comments on the throne speech on behalf of my constituents of York West and to compliment the Prime Minister on both the comments in the throne speech and his comments today.

The recognition of the need for an urban strategy to carry our country into the 21st century was clearly enunciated today and articulated very well by the Prime Minister in the throne speech as well.

Canada has changed immensely in the last 100 years, where 80% of our people currently live in our large urban regions. The recognition of their contribution and how important they are to the well-being of this country was clearly recognized in the throne speech.

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The commitment to establishing a long term infrastructure program so that our urban regions can plan their development and their futures was a key issue in the work we, as a task force, were doing on behalf of the Prime Minister. It recognized the need for cities to be able to plan their futures when it came to infrastructure issues and the capital investment required to deal with long term transit issues, sewer, water and so on. These are very expensive things for many municipalities and many of them are having tremendous difficulty.

The FCM recently indicated that there was a requirement for \$44 billion worth of infrastructure to bring it up to the level that it should be in 2002. That is a very significant amount. The fact that the government has, since 1993, invested over \$4 billion already is a start in moving toward really meeting those needs, together with the private sector.

Yesterday there were many issues that were raised in the throne speech that affect the urban agenda, including children and the disabled. I compliment the Prime Minister on those particular issues. Compensating caregivers who need to take time away from their work to take care of an elderly person or a sick child is a critically important part of who we all are and the type of people we are.

As we move forward in the throne speech on the current initiatives, there is also mention made of the need for affordable housing and an investment into affordable housing that we want to see hopefully in the spring budget. These are issues that are critically important. They were raised in our work on the task force regarding urban regions: lack of affordable housing; the need for long term infrastructure; quality of life services; support for new immigrants moving into our cities who are predominantly settling in our large urban regions; and additional support for ESL.

Clearly, these issues were raised in the throne speech as acknowledgment of the work done by my colleagues on the task force. I must compliment them for the great work they did in helping to bring that forward. As well, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Urban Development Institute of Canada, CUTA and other organizations worked along with them to ensure that the government understood the importance of the regions.

On behalf of the mayors of our cities, I pass on their compliments to the Prime Minister that the throne speech clearly recognizes the issues that are very important to them and the need for change. Reassessing our priorities, focusing on innovation, skills and training, support for research and development and our universities are all key issues at play in our large urban regions.

We can do all that while still respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and working with them as a partner as we move forward. We need to be investing our dollars in economic engines to ensure that they stay strong and have the services required to provide a healthy lifestyle for the citizens who live there. This is just the beginning of putting together an urban strategy. It is one that will take a lot of time to develop but will clearly map out a future for Canada in partnership with our urban regions and with our provinces. By respecting our jurisdictional matters and working with them to target programs at the regional level, we can build this country together. That is clearly what the task force has recommended in its report as a way to target the support we want

to offer our communities and where we can reap the benefits as a federal government.

●(1600)

We talked in that report about a new relationship to develop an urban strategy for Canada. After the throne speech yesterday and the Prime Minister's comments today, I believe we are heading in that direction to offer the support to the people living in our urban centres so that we are building a strong Canada for everyone.

The recognition of the problems with foreign credentials continues to be a significant problem, especially in the large urban centres. The need for removing those barriers for foreign credentials continues to be an important issue.

Encouraging skilled foreign workers to come to Canada and fast-tracking the immigration process is something that is needed. In speaking with construction people and so on, they have a real slowdown in getting the skilled trades work done when they are building houses and apartments. There are not enough workers in Canada currently trained who can move that forward.

The recognition of these issues is important when we are trying to ensure that we have strong, vibrant urban regions that can position our country to compete internationally and nationally as we go forward.

The review of the security regulations was another issue that we pointed out in our report. It was important have a national security commission that could move those agendas forward and reduce the over-regulation that we currently have in a variety of areas throughout Canada.

There is recognition of the need for a national drug strategy that is currently being discussed with another one of our caucus groups.

Those issues impact the important decisions that are made in urban regions. The need for us to be moving forward on them are another few ways of how we can make our urban regions stronger. We can also implement the many recommendations in the throne speech, as well as what the Prime Minister commented on today.

It is targeted investments, ensuring that we have strong urban regions, that will be helpful as we move forward on these agendas.

The throne speech captured all the reasons that I am the member of Parliament for York West. It talked about how we are to continue to be a caring society, one that cares about those who are sick, one that cares about the disabled. The reinforcement of our support for the health care system in Canada, as well as the interest in the Kyoto agreement, and the fact that we must find a mechanism to be able to carry it out recognizes the importance of it for healthy communities. It talks about the need to ensure that new technologies are also coming on line and that we are investing as we go forward on all those issues.

The Address

We have a great opportunity with the throne speech to set us in a new direction. The Prime Minister said an urban strategy for the 21st century. Clearly he showed the vision to put that in the throne speech and it is one thing that we all need to appreciate how wonderful it was. It talked about so many issues that matter to all of us as Canadians. We can work together to ensure that we are building a strong and powerful country.

• (1605)

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to the hon. member's speech. I noticed that she said how much the government reaffirmed its commitment to health care. We have also had the Prime Minister confirm that he is waiting for the Romanow commission report that is coming down very soon to tell us how to administer our health care. If that report says that we need to bring in some private investment money into health care, will that continue to enjoy her support if that is the recommendation of the Romanow commission?

Ms. Judy Sgro: Mr. Speaker, we all wait with much anticipation for the Romanow commission report to come out. We all recognize that when we talk about a compassionate and caring society, we talk about a good quality health care system.

There was a recent survey done a couple of weeks ago that found that nine out of ten people in Ontario were satisfied with the health care system. So maybe it is not as bad as we all tend to think it is. I look forward to the Romanow commission and I look forward to working with my government and everybody else involved in ensuring that we have a strong, powerful health care system.

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to ask if that was a yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member will have to figure that out by himself.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague and I heard her talk a lot about the regions, but she was talking almost exclusively about urban areas. If she read the throne speech carefully and if she listened to it attentively, she knows that it is quite obvious that the government intends to invest in urban areas only.

Rural areas are being totally abandoned. I will give an example. In my region, Air Canada is getting ready to drop air service. We will virtually have no services left in my region. The same goes for the Gaspé, for the Magdalen Islands, for all rural areas.

I simply want to remind my colleague that nearly 80% of public service cuts made by the Liberal government have been in areas such as mine, that is in so-called rural areas.

I understand that the member represents an urban riding, but I would like to ask her if the government has thought about rural areas in the throne speech.

My answer is no, but I would like to have her answer.

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I can answer that question quite clearly. Yes, I view Canada as one country. We talk about rural and

urban regions. Urban Canada needs to do well but so does rural Canada.

There were cuts made when we first came into office because we had to deal with an enormous debt. Nobody necessarily wanted to make cuts. They were necessary to get through the debt that we had to carry. Investment in urban and rural regions is just as important. One feeds off the other and is very important to the quality of life we all want to enjoy. Regardless of where someone comes from, we are Canadians and we are proud of Canada and we want to ensure that all regions are healthy.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not feel any better today than I did yesterday. The reality of the throne speech is that it completely ignored the issues of Atlantic Canada, namely the fishing industry, the coast guard and coastal patrols. The most important needs of our military have been completely ignored. Military spending was strictly ignored.

At the same time the government is taking \$60 million out of the Atlantic economy for the airport security tax and only putting \$10 million back in for security. Where is the other \$50 million? Why is the government so ignorant when it comes to rural issues, shipbuilding, the military, farmers and especially seniors in rural areas, those who were at one time collecting the disability tax credit?

The hon. member may not understand or may not realize that the government is now changing the definition of feeding oneself and clothing oneself which makes it even more restrictive for the most vulnerable in our society to collect the tax credit. Why is the government so hateful and hurtful toward those people in Atlantic and rural Canada?

• (1610)

Ms. Judy Sgro: Mr. Speaker, when I spoke earlier I talked about why I am a member of Parliament. The throne speech was reflective of what I think most of us, at least those who sit on this side of the House, want Canada to be, which is compassionate and caring. That includes all Canadians regardless of whether they are from the west or from the Maritimes. It makes no difference. We care about all Canadians and our job is to ensure a good quality of life for everyone.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Elk Island. I want to focus this afternoon on the ethics deficit by the government.

As the chair of the public accounts committee in the previous session and in the previous parliament, I spent a lot of time dealing with the problems that have arisen in the government and how, on behalf of Canadian taxpayers, we could make some progress to ensure that they get value for money, that the government works for them and so on.

The Address

We find that the ethics deficit we have had for a long time is continuing because the Prime Minister made some vague noises in the throne speech, but we have yet to see what he intends to do. As the leader of our party, the member for Calgary Southwest, pointed out this morning, it was in the red book in 1993, the government said that it would introduce an ethics commissioner to ensure that the ethical standards of the House and the Government of Canada were beyond reproach.

What did we get? We got an ethics counsellor who became a lapdog instead of a watchdog. He reports to the Prime Minister, gives the Prime Minister advice how to answer questions and how to deflect questions on ethics. That is not an ethics commissioner. That is some lapdog who keeps the Prime Minister protected from answering the difficult questions on ethics. That cannot be.

We had the Groupaction scandal investigated by the public accounts committee. This is the type of thing that an ethics code would prevent happening in the first place. I cannot see why the government is dragging its feet.

We have asked the Prime Minister time and again in the House about an ethics commissioner. He keeps coming back and saying that an ethics counsellor is fine. It is not fine. He brags about the fact that we do not need more ethics rules in the House because things are great. Let me tell the Prime Minister and the government in the House that they are so far behind they think they are first. That is why they think they are first.

There are codes of conduct elsewhere. For example, Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States and the United Kingdom either have codes of conduct or a requirement for members of parliament to declare their personal assets. In Canada, nothing. We are so far behind the Prime Minister thinks he is first.

There are two countries in the G-8 that do not have codes of conduct. One is Russia and the other is Canada. We are in with Russia rather than the developed countries. This is shameful. Surely it is more than time.

Let us take, for example, our neighbours to the south. They have a whole package on house ethics and rules. I have a copy of it right here. They have statements on errant income restrictions: members and all employees, no honoraria. It is in big bold letters. No honoraria. It is fairly simple stuff. Does one think the Prime Minister could rise in the House someday, sometime, and say, "No honoraria". Is that too hard? Obviously it is too hard.

What else does it say under errant income restrictions? The errant income limit is 15% of a member's salary level. Is that hard to figure out? What else? It deals with conflicts of interest, return on investments and so on. It states that a member should vote on matters unless legislation uniquely affects personal and financial interests. We wonder what happened to the former minister of public works, how often he was voting on a personal interest, because we never found out what he was up to.

•(1615)

On post-employment restrictions, there is one year after leaving office before anyone can do anything. Yet we see people being promoted out of this House into ambassadorships and other kinds of

posts around the country to move them out of the embarrassment of having to answer for their ethical behaviour in the House. They get posted to Denmark and other places.

We plead, on this side of the House, for the Prime Minister to stand up and say such things as no honoraria, no ethical conflicts.

What else does it talk about? Gifts. There is a maximum of \$250 in one year from one source. Do you know what the rule is regarding gifts in this House, Mr. Speaker? The Prime Minister in this House can accept a gift from any country around the world of any value and he can keep it as his personal gift. All he has to do is declare it, to say "I got a gift worth \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 from the government of wherever, but it is mine because I declared it". The only illegality is not to say he received it. In the United States, every gift received by the head of state belongs to the state. It is fairly simple stuff, but here in Canada it is all personal and the only time the rule is broken is if it is not declared.

What else do they have? They have rules on travel. They have rules on financial disclosure. Where are our rules on financial disclosure? We do not have any rules on financial disclosure.

On staff rights and duties, staff cannot work on campaigns by ministers. There is some question about the Minister of Industry, the former minister of health, and what his staff were doing, but we could not get the access to information. We could not get the answer to that because it was blocked. We could never find out why that staff member went to Winnipeg. Was he working on a campaign or was he working on government business? We cannot find out.

On communications to government agencies: Avoid favouritism. It goes on: involvement with outside entities. They also have campaign activities: no contributions directed to congressional officers. You cannot pick up the money through your government office. It goes on. I could give this to the Prime Minister rather than having him try to figure out this complex thing, which has taken him eight or nine years and he still is not there. It is only about 10 or 15 pages. He can get a copy of it.

There are also, of course, our friends in the United Kingdom. They have a wonderful code of conduct. It basically covers, I think, some seven different principles. They have selflessness, duty to your constituents, and integrity. Integrity is a word that does not get used very often, but integrity is important. They have objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. There are the principles and then they have a synopsis of these ideas.

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Under selflessness, the code states “Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest”. It states “solely in terms of the public interest”. It continues “They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends”. Some people may say that goes without saying. Obviously the Prime Minister’s opinion is that it goes without saying, because he has not said it. We have to write it down and make everyone abide by these things because that is why we have all these sleaze accusations coming from the government.

If the government wants to avoid that, it is fairly simple. It can adopt a code of conduct and have an ethics commissioner reporting to Parliament to enforce it. That way it would, hopefully, be above reproach.

The code continues, under integrity stating that “Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligations” and so on and so forth. I have it all here. It is available to anyone who wants it.

I am waiting for the Prime Minister’s call. I would be glad to give him a copy of what is done in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey and so on. Surely it is our turn. We are waiting.

• (1620)

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no contest: We on this side agree entirely with the remarks made by the member opposite and point out that it is right in the Speech from the Throne, where it states that the government is going to “provide clear guidance and better enforcement of the ethical standards expected of elected officials”.

I agree that it is overdue, but I would like to ask the member opposite, is he going to actually walk the talk? Because in the same paragraph on page 13 of the Speech from the Throne, it is also said that “the government will introduce legislative changes to the financing of political parties and candidates for office”. Does he not agree that we ought to know who is behind the National Citizens’ Coalition, which was the former employer of the Leader of the Opposition? Does he not agree that the Leader of the Opposition should declare who is behind the financing of his leadership campaign in his campaign for office?

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting for legislation to cancel the GST too. Until I see legislation on the table I am going to reserve judgment because the proof is in the pudding and we are still waiting for the legislation. Members may remember that the Liberals promised ethics legislation nine years ago. Nine years ago they said they would cancel the GST. Neither has happened. We are not sure about this particular commitment in this Speech from the Throne because we heard the Leader of the Opposition tell us today how many promises have been broken.

I agree with the member on openness and transparency, but I also agreed with the leader of the official opposition when he said today that we do not regulate and restrict the freedom of expression by Canadians. Rather, we restrict what political parties can do. That is the fundamental thing that members over there cannot figure out. They want to restrict what Canadians can do. They want this top-down, Communist style of government whereas we want openness,

transparency, freedom of action and freedom of expression, and the limit is on political parties.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his remarks in regard to ethics and for trying to elevate the standards of morals and ethics within government. I would ask him, though, if his party agrees that one important step that could have been taken is the step that was taken recently in the province of Manitoba. In that province, in the interest of clarity and the interest of stopping abuse or for ethical reasons, all contributions to political parties from unions, corporations or businesses were banned. The only person who can make a political campaign contribution is somebody who is on the registered voters list.

Would the hon. member agree that the Speech from the Throne is an opportunity to announce this type of measure banning all corporate and union donations from the political process?

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, it is a great idea that was not contained in the Speech from the Throne, but it certainly was in the speech made this morning by the leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is only a brief time, I would like to make a comment. I do agree with the member that there is always scope for improvement in transparency and openness. But when he reads out a list of parliaments like that, I truly believe that in most respects this Parliament is the best, in terms of openness to the media, for example, just outside this door, in terms of the television coverage which we receive and which any committee of the House can now receive, in terms of support for members of Parliament and their staff and the opportunity we all have to travel the country and deal with our constituents, and in terms of the decentralization of power. In Canada, Parliament is not the only seat of power and in most of the countries he described parliament actually is.

I believe we have the best Elections Act in the world, although it requires improvement. I think the member gets carried away. To damn this House and put it at the bottom of the list that he described is a disgrace, I think, and a discredit to us. In general this is the most open and transparent parliament in the world.

• (1625)

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, it is fine to let in television cameras, but we do not have access to information. When we cannot examine the expense accounts of ministers’ employees who may or may not have been travelling on public business or other business, all the cameras in the world will not resolve that issue. It is openness, freedom of information and transparency, as the member said. That is what we want. We want a commitment to a set of standards. That is why we need a code of ethics and a code of standards in the House. We consider ourselves great. As I have always said, we always think we are good until we check with somebody else and find out they are doing things better. We can do it better. We must do it better.

The Address

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am greatly honoured to be able to speak on the information that has been given to Canadian people through the throne speech.

I read it with interest. I have to confess that I was one who did not go down to the Senate yesterday. I always think it is ironic. The Usher of the Black Rod comes from the Senate, bangs on the door and very solemnly declares that the people of the House are invited to the Senate to hear the Speech from the Throne. I have gone there five times, each throne speech until this one. I get to the door and they will not let me in. I think that is somehow wrong. I am a parliamentarian. I am here to represent around 100,000 people in the wonderful riding of Elk Island. It insults all of us.

What would happen if I asked my friends over for a social visit, then when they rang the doorbell I opened the door a crack, stood there for about 45 minutes and had a visit but never let them in? It is disrespectful and I think it is a symptom of what is wrong in this place, that is, parliamentarians are second class in terms of the parliamentary process. It is run as a top-down organization.

I would like to follow up somewhat on the speech that my colleague from St. Albert just gave. It had to do with ethical behaviour. I have a theory. I have developed it over a number of years. As members can tell, I am old enough to have developed a whole bunch of theories, many of which I have discarded, but some of them have endured. This one has endured because I have observed it during my lifetime and indeed in my own life, and that is that all behaviour, whether it is classified as ethical or unethical, good or bad, right or wrong, is driven or instructed by one's beliefs. If one believes something, that is how one is going to act.

I think of some unethical behaviour. For example, not long ago in a Canadian city which I will not identify, some young people jumped into a car, hot-wired it, made it go and went off for a ride in a car that was not theirs. Obviously their beliefs were that it did not matter, that somehow they were entitled to do this even though the vehicle belonged to someone else. Unfortunately the chase resulted in an accident with some injuries. It is very unfortunate that those people behaved that way because in their minds at that time they thought it was correct.

If I can make a huge leap here, the individuals who flew airplanes into buildings a little over a year ago believed at the time that it was okay. They were totally informed, or misinformed I might say. Their beliefs instructed their behaviour.

I wish we did not need to have this debate in the House. Realistically speaking, it should not be necessary. However, here we are in Canada's Parliament and one of our big functions here is to pass laws. I always say that certain laws are not necessary. For example, there should be no law necessary that states one shall not murder. To me that is self-evident. It is built into my moral structure. It is a belief I have which instructs my behaviour. I am not inclined to go around taking other people's lives, yet we see over and over again or on the news that people do this by whatever means and for whatever reasons. To me, it is the belief that drives the action. Why, then, do we have a law? It is against the law in Canada to commit murder. Why do we need that law? That law is needed in order to show people who do not have that belief built in what the standard is.

•(1630)

That is why the rules and the laws are required. I suppose it is one of the reasons we need a code of conduct for parliamentarians. Some people are ignorant of what is acceptable.

I do not know how I can make this leap politely so I will jump right into it. We often follow leadership in terms of what standards we accept. I have observed this in families and in my own children. They will generally adopt behaviour they have learned at home as acceptable and they will avoid behaviour which is demonstrated or which is taught by word as being unacceptable. Much to my regret, I have to point the finger right at the top leadership of the federal government that is presently governing this country. Why is it that we are embroiled in these debates on ethical behaviour? Why did it have to appear in the throne speech? It was because there has been a serious breach of ethical behaviour by the top members of the Liberal government and I would venture to say even as far as right to the Prime Minister.

I will give an example. When dealing with the issues in the Prime Minister's riding we demanded answers. We got runarounds, we got cover-up. On an opposition day, the official opposition moved a motion that there be an independent inquiry. The Prime Minister directed the cabinet ministers who in turn I guess sent the message to the whip who sent the message to the Liberal members. While every opposition member of the House voted in favour of an independent inquiry to look into the Shawinigan shenanigans, every member in the Liberal Party said, "No, we don't want an independent inquiry". Frankly, I consider that an admission of guilt. That is very simple. It is not a large leap.

If I am innocent and somebody was proposing to investigate the occurrence, I would welcome it. I would say to do it as soon as possible and get it under way because if I am innocent, that inquiry will find me innocent. If it has the authenticity of being independent and not directed by the person who is being investigated, then it also has the ability to totally clear the name and exonerate the person who is under suspicion. The Prime Minister chose not to allow that inquiry, and he has killed a number of other inquiries.

I am sure in questions and comments someone will say that one could argue that perhaps it was an unnecessary expense or perhaps there might be other reasons. In something so serious, I think the money would have been very well spent. I believe that it was shut down because the government did not want to find the true facts in the issue.

I found an interesting quote:

Yet after nine years of [this government's] rule, cynicism about public institutions, governments, politicians and the political process is at an all-time high.... This erosion of confidence seems to have many causes: some have to do with the behaviour of certain elected politicians, others with an arrogant style of political leadership.

That quotation, with one change, comes from the 1993 red book. It was nine years ago when we had had nine years of Conservative government. In order to add drama to the quotation, I omitted the word "Conservative". In 2002 we could as easily change it to Liberal rule and ask what has changed.

The Address

It is interesting that the Liberals who were proposing to become the government at that time said, "We are going to clean this up". Among other things, they promised to have an ethics commissioner, which by the way is based on exactly the same principle. The 1993 red book offered an independent ethics councillor for exactly the same reasons that I said the independent hearing was necessary. It would have given authenticity to a ruling whether it went one way or the other.

• (1635)

What did the government do? It gave us an ethics counsellor who reports to the Prime Minister and who would have to report to the very person under investigation in that issue. That is not acceptable.

We gave the government an opportunity to actually live up to its promise by making that very clause, word for word, a supply day motion. Again, every Liberal voted against it.

Mr. Speaker, you do not know how sorry I am that I am not the leader of the official opposition today. Then I would have had unlimited time and I could have carried on.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member for Elk Island suggesting that leadership demands the ultimate in integrity and transparency.

I would ask him in the context of his remarks, would he therefore support what is proposed in the Speech from the Throne that there be transparency in the financing of candidates for high office? In particular, the Leader of the Opposition is suspected of receiving financing from the National Citizens Coalition, which he was formerly employed by, which we on this side suspect is financed in turn by social conservative interests in the United States.

I ask him, would he support, as suggested in the Speech from the Throne, transparency on the part of the Leader of the Opposition that he should declare who financed his leadership campaign and who financed those who financed it?

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question and my answer is short and succinct. I would indeed favour that whatever rules were established, we would live by them.

If there is to be transparency for leadership campaigns and election campaigns, of course, but let it not be one sided and I will give the reason. Why would the leader of the official opposition even hesitate to declare his sources? It is very simple. We have seen preference given by the government to people who have contributed to Liberal Party causes. There is obviously a risk to people who contribute to an opposition party's campaign. They would lose government contracts as long as those people are in business under their present mode of operation.

We have to be very careful when we talk about that. Will we take away their freedom or will we give them more freedom? In this particular instance we have to have the same rules for everybody to level that playing field. Otherwise it is like playing football with all the players on one side having their feet tied to the ground.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always listen with interest to what the member has to say. I am sorry that he is not the leader of the official opposition.

I know that in a previous life he was a teacher and taught mathematics. I know he is very interested in young people. One of the features of the Speech from the Throne is its emphasis on young people, starting with headstart programs for infants, early childhood development programs and things of that type. Like most members of the House, I think anything we can do to help young people is a wonderful thing.

I know the hon. member studies these things much more than I do. There is a paragraph which I have not heard mentioned or repeated by anybody. It is on page 12. It says that the government will create more opportunities for young Canadians to help clean up our environment and assist in achieving Canada's global priorities, particularly in Africa.

The hon. member has a great interest in young people. Most of us would like to think of our young people being happy and creatively and constructively involved in things like the environment or, as it says here, in Africa. We recall decades ago when Katimavik was at its peak, it offered activities to young people both in Canada and overseas. Katimavik still exists and does wonderful work.

I wonder if the member has any ideas about how he sees this paragraph as being—

• (1640)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for Elk Island.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I need to clarify that the only reason I would like now to be the Leader of the Opposition is that he and the Prime Minister alone in the House have unlimited time to speak. That is the only reason. Let us make that very clear.

With respect to the question, indeed the best investment we as Canadians can make is in the education and the physical health and well-being of our young people and children. I have no quarrel with that whatsoever. However the practice of the Liberal government has been to arrange for students nowadays to graduate from university with a maximum debt. I would do it better. I would assure that the cost of university and college education would be sufficiently covered by various levels of government so that the tuition fees could come down. The students would have much less debt so that when they graduated they could use that money to establish themselves in business and purchase homes, thereby helping our economy.

I could go on for another hour. I regret that time goes by so fast.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sat here as I listened to the debate, including the words by the member for Elk Island, and leafed through the printed copy of the Speech from the Throne. I think it would be appropriate to actually characterize the Speech from the Throne as the Speech from the Throne of the Liberal backbench.

The Address

The member for Guelph—Wellington made a reference to the fact that she felt that the Speech from the Throne was really the words of the Prime Minister. When we go through the Speech from the Throne and look at the ideas, what we discover is that many of those ideas come from individual backbench members. For instance, the part in the Speech from the Throne that speaks of steps to strengthen the security of Canada's food system is an idea that was floated in a letter to the Prime Minister by the member for Toronto—Danforth. He circulated the letter to other colleagues and then I see it in the Speech from the Throne. I am sharing my time with the member for Toronto—Danforth and he can explain himself how his ideas were picked up in this document.

Further on we find references to addressing fetal alcohol syndrome which I happen to know was an issue that has been advocated by the member for Mississauga South. Again on the next page the Speech from the Throne is saying that the government will reform family law and put greater emphasis on the best interests of the child. Again, this is an idea that was very much advocated by the member for Mississauga South and the member for Sarnia—Lambton if my memory serves me correctly.

Then there is another section on implementing a national drug strategy. That has been advocated relentlessly by the member for Burlington.

These are the ones that I could identify easily and readily as I looked through the Speech from the Throne. No one should characterize this Speech from the Throne or this side of the House as not willing to listen to the ideas of backbench MPs.

I regret in the early days of the summer there was some talk that there was no point—and this was mostly coming from opposition members, I must say—in backbench MPs on the Liberal side responding to a letter from the Prime Minister encouraging them to submit ideas for the Speech from the Throne. The evidence is in the Speech from the Throne. I am sure I have only singled out half of the members on the Liberal side and I think even some members on the opposition side who find their ideas and their direct suggestions to the Prime Minister incorporated into government policy.

I too had some ideas that I submitted in writing to the Prime Minister. Members know that I have been very engaged in issues of transparency and accountability. In my letter to the Prime Minister I suggested to him, particularly in this time when the markets are so uncertain and confidence in public institutions is shaken by the type of scandals that we have in the United States with WorldCom and Enron, that the Prime Minister should concentrate on a transparency and accountability agenda whereby he would change the Canada Corporations Act and improve standards of corporate governance for both for profit and non-profit corporations.

Lo and behold there it is on page 10 of the Speech from the Throne, where it says that the government will review and, where necessary, change its laws and strengthen enforcement that ensures that governance standards for federally incorporated companies will be followed.

I discover elsewhere, again in my letter I suggested that the Lobbyists Registration Act should be reformed and strengthened, and lo and behold here it is:

The government will strengthen the legislation governing its relationship with lobbyists.

This is long overdue because the Lobbyists Registration Act lacks the teeth to discipline lobbyists who ignore the spirit and the letter of that law, so it is something that has to be done.

Also in my letter I suggested that the government should reintroduce Bill C-61, which would require high standards and proper standards of transparency and accountability of aboriginal communities, both in terms of their financial dealings and their democratic methods. We see that at the top of page 13.

● (1645)

Indeed, if I have one real criticism of the Speech from the Throne, particularly as it pertains to what I feel should be the policy of the government, I do not think the government emphasized it sufficiently that this is indeed a Speech from the Throne that commits the government to a new program, an expanded program and an urgent program of transparency and accountability.

We see that the government is calling for better ethical standards and a code of conduct for MPs. I agree with that and it has been alluded to by the opposition, but it is only one small part of the type of transparency and accountability that we must bring to all public institutions. I do believe that one of the most important institutions of all is the method whereby we elect our representatives in the House, whether it is individual members of Parliament or whether it is leadership candidates, the leadership of parties.

I deplore the fact that we cannot get the campaign financing information out of the Leader of the Opposition. I do not accept the explanation of the member for Elk Island that he is not divulging this because he is afraid the government will penalize the people who might have supported that leadership candidate.

Well, in an election campaign it is very obvious that people are supporting other parties than the party that is in power. I do not think that this government, and I would hope any other government that was ever formed by any opposition party, would penalize any member of the community who donates to a party or to a candidate. The key is transparency.

Unfortunately, we do not know, although we suspect that the Leader of the Opposition received financing from a notorious pressure group called the National Citizens' Coalition which operates out of the west. We cannot see where it gets its money. I think the Leader of the Opposition was the president of that organization. Why should he not tell us whether that organization is supporting him? Why should he not tell us who is supporting that organization? We on this side suspect that it is offshore money.

I remind the member for Elk Island that while the Leader of the Opposition was the leader of the National Citizens' Coalition, the National Citizens' Coalition went to court in order to prevent us from ever knowing who actually finances the National Citizens' Coalition should it be a third party advertiser in an election campaign.

One really needs to walk the talk. It is not just about the ethics of individual MPs. It is about the ethics of leaders. It is a question of transparency of all institutions.

The Address

I must say that there is a disappointment for me in this because, while it touched on so many things, the one area that is nearest and dearest to me is that the Speech from the Throne did not clearly commit the government to reforming the Access to Information Act. There is a reference. It says that Canadians want their governments to be open. In the talking points, which are the points given to ministers when they meet the media and which give them some sort of background on how they should respond in the context of what is actually in the Speech from the Throne, it does have a sense of government policy. This particular talking point says:

To serve Canadians better, we will make our public and political institutions more open, transparent, and accountable.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think my own government should walk the talk. I hope that in the weeks to come, very soon indeed, it will walk that talk and we will not only hear words calling for open government, we will see legislation reforming the Access to Information Act that gives Canadians proper, better access to the inner workings of government. Transparency and accountability is what we all should stand for and I think the Speech from the Throne, short of what it failed to specify in the Access to Information Act, is a long step forward.

•(1650)

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I like that saying, walk the talk. That is good and I agree with it. I will read a line from the throne speech. It reads “The government will reallocate resources to the highest priorities and transform old spending to new purposes.”

If I recall, we saw a mini-budget last fall or sometime just recently. I lose track of what season it is around here. It was suggested, I believe, by the Auditor General that approximately \$16 billion should be re-examined and could be reallocated to new spending but that party could not see \$1 that it could reallocate.

Does the hon. member really think the government will walk the talk and actually reallocate some of the old spending?

Mr. John Bryden: I think so, Mr. Speaker, but there are other ways of making major savings. In my reference to the Access to Information Act, another side that is very important to that reform is that it will create enormous efficiencies in government because if we can see the daily operation of government using Internet access, and that is why we need to reform it because Internet is upon us, then we can actually manage government and large corporations laterally rather than hierarchically.

If we can bring in that type of legislation we can save money in the billions. If we can apply that type of transparency to health care, like hospitals, and I proposed this to the Romanow commission, and again if hospitals were transparent in their methods of operation, the efficiencies would be enormous and the savings would be enormous.

So the real way to create new money to spend on new programs is to save money on existing programs.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech and he talked about walking the talk and what this all means. I well remember in this House the great speeches that came from the other side with regard to an ethics commissioner who was going to take control of a

lot of these problems and the excitement that even came from the government side that this could be the answer.

I just want to remind the member of the so-called ethics commissioner who was talked about being put in place and who only reports to the Prime Minister, not to a committee nor to any other parliamentarian in this House of Commons. Everything he says is kept secret unless the Prime Minister decides to let it out.

Maybe the hon. member should get rid of the rose tinted glasses and realize what has been said in the House before and what actually has happened here from throne speeches to budget speeches. Some people are getting awfully sick and tired of it.

•(1655)

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, first, I think the ethics commissioner should report to Parliament. Second, I would remind the member that my problems in forwarding an agenda of increased transparency by reforming the Access to Information Act came to grief when I had a private member's bill before the House that the opposition party, the party of which he is a member, systematically defeated it and brought it down. Now, instead of a private member's bill, I have to rely on a government bill.

I hope the government will come forward with an amended Access to Information Act in the months to come.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am so delighted to have this opportunity because I have just received a message that there was a lady who came to my constituency office in Sherwood Park who is limited to a CPP and the old age security pension. They gave her \$2,500 when her husband died. She did not have enough to pay for his funeral. Then the money was deemed as income and it was clawed back. She was left with 13 cents.

In view of that kind of abuse of taxpayers money why can we not have openness in contracts? The member asks for openness. Why can we not have openness and accountability in those contracts for advertising and things where no work is done except signing the cheque and cashing it?

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, the member knows that the government is committed to overhauling the sponsorship contract arrangements, which is precisely what I want to do with the Access to Information Act. I want it opened up to contracting out. This is what we want to do.

However I do not quite understand the connection with the senior citizen who has the problem with the CCRA. I have the same issue in my riding. I think it is a very difficult issue, but this is the government of compassion that will solve it.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue raised by the hon. member for Elk Island about his constituent who just buried her husband and who had a clawback on \$2,500 is the type of issue and the type of constituent that we in the House should be able to rally around.

The Address

I have always believed that the reason we are sitting here in the House as members of Parliament is to speak for men and women who do not have a voice; to speak for those men and women who are truly disadvantaged, men and women who cannot afford lobbyists. We must look after constituents such as the woman the member for Elk Island described.

For the last seven or eight years we have had a fiscal obsession in the House of Commons that on more than one occasion has driven me nuts. People cheered when we eliminated the deficit a year ahead of time. I have said in the House many times in the last few years that I did not think it was such a great big deal.

I come from a community in downtown Toronto with many low income families who carried the burden of that accelerated paydown of our deficit. Quite frankly, over the last few months I have been terribly discouraged at the direction of my Liberal government. I felt that we were missing an opportunity with the resurgence in the economy and with the great surpluses to deal with the real, true core value system of why we are Liberals.

When I heard the Speech from the Throne yesterday, I could not believe it. It was almost like a conversion. The Prime Minister has been in public office for 40 years and I thought that the clarity bill was his best crafted jewel, but this Speech from the Throne is a better crafted jewel.

In the latter part of August he sent out a memo to all members of caucus asking us for our ideas and thoughts on what we could do. I sat with some of my constituents over a few days and we decided to send the Prime Minister a tough letter on the issues that voters in my community really felt needed to be addressed. I told them that I did not want to create any expectation because for the last few years we have been hammering the executive of the government on lots of issues, and it has said that it has the fiscal obsession but that it has to keep cutting because it has no money. However, I said that we would try it one more time.

On April 9 we wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and challenged him to have the courage to deal with some of the issues that we raised in our community.

● (1700)

I want to thank all the men and women in my community who came together for a two and a half day crash period that put the ideas together. When I talked to some of them last night they were pretty excited.

Compassionate care for the gravely ill is on page 5 in the Speech from the Throne. We said that Canada is one of the few countries without a national food plan. The security and safety of our national food supply must become a priority and it is on page 4.

Canada does not have a national framework for managing its freshwater resources. It is there on page 7. We have approximately one million children in Canada who cannot participate in organized amateur sports and recreational activities because families cannot afford either the registration fees or the equipment. We talked about health care needs. Helping Canada's kids is on page 5 in the Speech from the Throne.

We all know the challenge we have right across the country regarding affordable housing. The government has extended the commitment to affordable housing on top of the \$650 million on page 11.

We put in a note to the Prime Minister a challenge regarding the plan for the redevelopment of the Toronto waterfront by Mr. Fung, Mr. Smith and the Minister of Transport that would see Government of Canada controlled areas turned into wall to wall condominiums for the wealthy. It is addressed on page 7. We would ensure that what is left of the Toronto waterfront becomes environmentally sensitive and recreational for families and kids.

I have been tough on the executive of the government over the years, but I must say that today I stand here and I am pleased. I know my constituents are pleased.

I salute the men and women who helped craft the words and who assisted in putting this renewed vision to what really is an old Liberalism but now will be the new Liberalism. I am hoping that the spirit which exists within this document will have a momentum which will move it into the execution phase. As my colleague from Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot said earlier, we must now take the commitments that are on this paper, in this crafted jewel, and ensure they happen.

As we execute what is in the Speech from the Throne we will lose some popularity, but for too long around here we have been worried about the polls and we have not been putting enough emphasis on causes. These causes will cost some money and cause some discomfort for some people, especially those who are in the advantaged class in the country, but when Canadians see that these initiatives are for a greater and higher good, after a while the causes will not be as unpopular and Canadians will rally around us. I am in full support of everything that is in the Speech from the Throne.

● (1705)

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member about his thoughts on the issue of persons with disabilities.

I have read the throne speech and I see two references to persons with disabilities. There are two promises which I hope happen: support for families with severely disabled children and possible moneys for training Canadians with disabilities in the workforce. However how is it that the same government which seems to see these as goals, on which it may or may not come through, can at the same time be cutting back on the number of people who are able to gain the disability tax credit?

We have heard within the last week or so that the regulations around the disability tax credit are tightening up even more stringently. People's feeding and clothing habits are being looked at through a microscope to see whether they would be eligible for this tiny tax credit.

We have on one hand a government that is scapegoating and almost going to war against people with disabilities, and then we have all the lofty goals the member just talked about. Would the member help me square this incredible dichotomy?

Mr. Dennis Mills: Madam Speaker, I appreciate this question because I tried to allude to this point in my opening remarks.

The Address

Two weeks ago several men and women with disabilities came into my constituency office on the Danforth. I was horrified when I saw the bureaucratic vision of the new regulations. I called the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and told him this was unacceptable. I have talked to other people in my party and I would be willing to stake anything that on this Liberal watch there is no way that our commitment to those who are the most disadvantaged will be diminished in any way, shape or form. That bureaucratic view of the regulations will be reviewed, repaired and corrected in the not too distant future.

• (1710)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for his views regarding environmental protection and national parks. He believed that on page 7 the throne speech referenced the Toronto waterfront.

There is a Spring Garden in Windsor, Ontario which is one of the last remaining spots for tall grass prairie. It has endangered species like the massasauga rattler that needs to be protected. The federal government has played a minor role in terms of that preservation. The municipality is bearing the burden of it right now.

I do not see the Toronto waterfront and its protection referenced on page 7 of the throne speech. Does that mean we can expect in Windsor West, for example, that this ecological and biological spot significant to North America will be protected? Can I bring that back to my constituents?

Mr. Dennis Mills: Madam Speaker, as I am from Toronto's waterfront I am not qualified to say whether or not there is potential for a national park classification in the member's particular area. We all know our species at risk legislation, which we all essentially passed fell off the Order Paper, will be reintroduced soon. That legislation should deal with that particular problem.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

As I was listening to the delivery of the throne speech yesterday by the Governor General, I had this recurring thought in my mind. After nine years, is this what we have been brought to as a country by this administration? Is this all there is? Could Canada not have expected better after the experience this administration has had over that nine year period?

Because of my area as critic I focussed particularly on the environmental messages that should have been coming from the throne speech, the themes and ideas we were looking forward and that the country was expecting. They were not there. There was a reference to Kyoto. As our leader indicated earlier today, was it the typical Liberal way of dealing with it or was it for real?

I was in Johannesburg with the Prime Minister. I heard him take a position there. When I returned to Canada a few days later I watched him and other ministers of the government weasel out of the commitment he made to the international community and the people of Canada at that time. I was hoping that maybe he had done some rethinking of his obligation to the country and to the planet on the issue of Kyoto, but I did not get any satisfaction out of that in the throne speech.

There was every opportunity in the throne speech for the government to send a clear message that it was serious about dealing with the issue of climate change and global warming. There was a need in the throne speech for specific references on timing for Kyoto, again because of some of the mushiness we have had from this administration and specifically from the Prime Minister, but it was not there.

There were no points about what the plan would be and whether we were ever going to get a plan. There was no specific reference as there should have been to the timing, both of the passage and the implementation. Given the status of concern in the country over the Kyoto protocol, it called for and demanded that those types of points would be covered and in fact they were not.

We have already had one reference in the last few minutes to other issues around the environment in the throne speech. There was a reference to the issue of water quality. We must look at the throne speech in the context of what has happened over the last few years around the issue of water quality. There was Walkerton and the deaths of seven citizens because we did not have safe water. In North Battleford there was serious illness among citizens in that community because we did not have good water quality.

• (1715)

I have lost count of how many water advisories and warnings we have had around the country. In that context again, would the country not have expected something more than a bland statement about dealing with what would clearly be non-mandatory, completely voluntary water guidelines? That is as good as the government could give us.

There was a reference to air quality. Again, in the context, could the country not have expected more? We hear from the medical association that thousands of people die prematurely in Canada every year due to poor air quality.

One reference in the throne speech was about talking to the United States. That was a sore point for me because I come from a community where a great deal of the poor, unhealthy air quality is as a result of practices in the United States.

This administration has spent a fair amount of time talking to the United States but not doing anything about improving the air quality. When we hear that bland statement about talking to the Americans, it does not give us any sense of confidence that those numbers of deaths will go down in the foreseeable future.

There was reference to our park system, a pledge to create 10 new parks and five new marine conservation areas. It sounded hollow to me because of how bad the situation is in not just some but every single national park. Every single one of them is deteriorating. There was no commitment by the government in that speech to turn around that deterioration.

There were other issues beyond the environment that should have been addressed in the speech. I just want to deal with a couple of them.

The Address

For all this period of time, we have heard from the former finance minister and the Prime Minister about how great a job they have done dealing with the debt and deficit. We never hear from them, and we did not hear it in this throne speech, about full employment.

I have been travelling a fair amount in the last few weeks. I hear the same thing every time, "What about value added employment and job creation?" I hear it from those communities that are based in the forestry sector and, similarly, in the energy sector. Why do we not have policies that would use the natural resources we have much more effectively than we have up to this point? There was nothing in this speech in that regard. I have heard that all over the country.

Just one more point, and that is on the issue of military spending. What did we get? We got, in spite of where we are at, a pledge to wait until the review was done. What we needed to hear was a recommitment to train, equip and supply our military for peace-keeping and for our international obligations. We did not hear that. We did not hear anything in the way of creativity about dealing with what our military could be doing. It was very bland and very inconclusive.

● (1720)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few comments about the Speech from the Throne as is my want sometimes in this place. I think there are at least three major areas of failure at the moment on the part of the government which I want to concentrate. There are probably a lot when I get to thinking about it. However I want to talk about health care briefly, Kyoto and also about democracy and the failure of the throne speech to address in any meaningful way the democratic deficit that the member for LaSalle—Émard has just discovered upon his becoming a backbencher.

The first area is medicare. What the government did not do in the Speech from the Throne was to commit to restoring the federal government to the position of being a full federal partner in the federal-provincial partnership that medicare was at the beginning and is no longer, thanks to the progressive unilateral withdrawal of the federal government from the funding of medicare.

I have seen this happen over the 23 years that I have been here, the unilateral reductions in federal transfer payments to the provinces for medicare starting with the Liberal government and the budget of Allan MacEachen in 1981 or 1982 and then by Conservatives and Jake Epp when he was the minister of health. After 1984 there were Tory unilateral reductions and then more Liberal unilateral reductions and finally of course there was the disaster of the budget of 1995 in which the current member for LaSalle—Émard basically gutted the federal contribution to medicare and set the conditions for the crisis in medicare that we now observe, which is that on the Liberal watch the privatizers have been given their opportunity.

Therefore what was needed here was not a commitment to have a first ministers meeting after the Romanow report, although there is nothing wrong with having a first ministers meeting on health care. That would be a good idea. However what was needed here was a commitment on the part of the federal government that it would become full federal partners once again and move toward, if it cannot move immediately to, full fifty-fifty cost sharing of health care which is the cost sharing basis on which medicare came into

being. That would constitute the federal government having both the moral high ground and the fiscal high ground and they come together. We do not get the moral high ground without having the fiscal high ground. This is something that the federal government has not been willing to acknowledge. It is only when the Liberals are willing to put the money back into health care that they took out fully, plus, because even if they went back to 1993 levels it would not be fifty-fifty cost sharing, and when they can say to the provinces, "This is the kind of national health care system we want and this is the kind of health care system that we demand of you". That is what the government has failed to do in the throne speech.

I will very quickly speak about Kyoto, because my colleague from Windsor—St. Clair has dealt with this quite adequately. What I think the government is failing to do is to show some enthusiasm for the accord. It kind of reminds me the way it defended the Nisga'a treaty. It was only when it had to. It let other people defend it and then defended it when it got to the floor of the House of Commons, as it probably will when we have a motion with respect to ratification. Maybe even the Minister of Health will have a positive word to say about it. We will wait and see.

This should be viewed as an opportunity, not as some kind of horrible necessity that the government had to be dragged into. The idea of creating a new economy, built around energy saving technologies, built around renewable energy, built around creating really a new way of life, getting more freight back on the rails and off the highways and creating new modes of public transportation should be seen as something about which to be excited. The idea of creating a way of life in which we do not constantly travel about with the knowledge that we may be contributing to the ultimate destruction of the planet should be something to be excited about and the government should be out there making the case much more strongly. We should not have to be criticizing the government on this. We should just have to be supporting it. We would like to support it, but it should show a little gumption, show a little enthusiasm for the task. This is not being done.

● (1725)

Finally, with respect to the democratic deficit, this is very interesting. I love to watch the member for LaSalle—Émard discover that there is a democratic deficit after having presided as the minister of finance over one of the most undemocratic regimes, parliamentarily speaking of course. Presumably many people on the Liberal backbench felt that there was a democratic deficit. If they feel that there is one now, surely it existed prior to the resignation, or the firing depending on how we look at it, of the minister of finance.

What do we have in the throne speech? There is some hint that we may get some changes with respect to campaign finance and how we finance electoral parties. That is probably directed at the member for LaSalle—Émard himself, for all we know, if the ongoing intrigue within the Liberal Party is any indication.

The Address

What we do not have is any tip of the hat or any acknowledgment that there is something profoundly wrong with our electoral system. Canadians want a system in which their vote counts no matter where they cast it and in which their vote contributes in some way to the ultimate makeup of their Parliament, no matter what region they are in and no matter for what party they vote. Of course I am talking about some kind of proportional representation.

At the very least the government could have said, "Why do we not have an all party task force on this? Why do we not have an all party task force that goes about the country and hears from Canadians on what they would like to see in terms of electoral reform?" Maybe it does not want proportional representation but it would at least be an opportunity for those who think it would be a good idea and for those who think that there may be other ways of improving our electoral system to come forward. Regrettably, that is not so.

There was a very good article today in the *Globe and Mail* by Hugh Segal and Ed Broadbent on this very topic, on what was absent from the government's democratic reform package, although I am being far too kind to call it a package. There really was hardly anything there at all.

There was no mention, for instance, in terms of the democratic deficit of chapter 11 in the paragraph or two about Canada and the world. There was no mention of the trade agreements or any need to improve them. Chapter 11, as the House knows, is the investor's stake dispute settlement mechanism which enables corporations to sue governments if, when acting in the public interest, they get in the way of the profit strategies of certain corporations.

This is a democratic issue. The real democratic deficit is in the trade agreement whereby the ability of democratically elected governments to protect the public interest or act in the common good is restricted by these agreements.

This is not unrelated to what is going on in health care at the moment. The Romanow Commission had a study commissioned which reported that if under NAFTA we permitted these private hospitals to proliferate, as they are now on the Liberal watch which refuses to do anything, and at some point a provincial government did not want to have private hospitals any more and acted to eliminate them, if they were owned by Americans who were making money from those hospitals, the province could not do so without being subjected to the terms and conditions of chapter 11.

Everything is connected to everything else. If the government really wanted to address the democratic deficit, this is one of the things it would have at least mentioned in the throne speech.

Finally, on democratic deficit, we had a unanimous recommendation of the justice committee for the second time in the last several years that the government bring forward corporate criminal liability legislation to deal with the kind of thing that happened at Westray. It was a unanimous recommendation. Where are the Liberal backbenchers? Why are they not up on their hind legs asking that the government respect a unanimous recommendation of a standing committee of this House? Why was there no mention in the throne speech of that?

That should have been one promise that was in the throne speech that grew right out of a recommendation of a committee of the House

of Commons. It was not there. Anybody who wants to talk about democratic deficit on the other side should be up saying: "Why is it that the government did not respect the unanimous recommendation of a standing committee of this House?"

Where are the Liberal voices on this one?

An hon. member: What if committees ran the whole House?

Mr. Bill Blaikie: I heard something over there. It would be nice if committees ran something. It would be nice if the unanimous recommendation of a committee was respected from time to time.

● (1730)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, the throne speech was also lacking an industrial strategy, for example when it comes to shipbuilding. The former minister of industry came forth with a committee and a unanimous recommendation in a report that was done with business, the provinces, the municipalities, labour, and with the support of many on the backbench of the Liberal Party. That was called "Breaking Through". That was to have an industrial strategy toward shipbuilding in this country. It was completely ignored in the throne speech.

That indication toward the shipbuilding policy could have indicated the possibility that thousands of people could be working in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario and on the west coast. I would like my learned colleague to explain why he thinks that was completely ignored by the Liberal government in the throne speech.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: I do not know exactly why it was ignored, whether it was through malice, stupidity or the usual disregard for the unanimous recommendations of a committee of this House.

I know the committee recommendation of which the member speaks. It seems ironic to me that a country with a coastline as long as Canada's should be a country that is not willing to invest in a shipbuilding strategy of its own. I certainly remember the shipbuilding lobby or whatever one wants to call it. It was not just industry. The unions and communities also came to our caucus to explain the absolute necessity of this happening.

While we are talking about ships and the lack of any national policy with respect to shipbuilding, we certainly would not expect a national policy with respect to shipbuilding from the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. His policy when it comes to ships is to flag the ships of the Canada Steamship Lines not under the Canadian flag but under the flag of some other country where Canadian taxes can be avoided. This hardly sounds to me like leadership or at least not leadership of the kind one would want to have in charge. It seems to me that someone who aspires to be the leader of the country would not want to be open to the charge that they were actually avoiding contributing to the overall good of Canada by configuring their own company and flagging ships that belong to that company in a way to avoid Canadian taxes.

The Address

• (1735)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, in reference to the very same member of which the hon. member speaks, I wonder what sort of a deficit in democracy might exist when one examines the record. It is more like a deficit in credibility when one talks about the number of times which that particular member voted with the government to shut down debate either through time allocation or simply using closure motions in the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona is a long serving member of the House of Commons. He may want to reference other governments, but let us look at the record of the government in the past 10 years as to how many times the debate itself was forced to collapse by the actions of the government. Voting with the government was the member for LaSalle—Émard.

I also wonder if the member for Winnipeg—Transcona would reference the 1993 promise co-written in the red book by that same member to have an independent ethics counsellor who would report directly to Parliament. When this same motion was drawn verbatim out of that red book co-written by the member for LaSalle—Émard and presented back to the government, the government and that member voted against their own words. Where is the credibility? What credibility deficit has the government sunk to for that occur?

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough makes a good point about the ethics counsellor. There was a promise to create an independent ethics commissioner, and I think that was the original language, that would be an officer of the House and that would report to the House. That was never done. I think that is a source of a lot of the problems the government has had over the last nine years. If it had actually kept its own promise and put that kind of person in place, it would have been able to deal with some of the problems that occurred on the other side.

The member mentioned closure. He was anticipating my response when he said that I might want to reference other governments. He said that because he knows that when he asks me about closure I often refer to the frequency with which Progressive Conservative governments that I was familiar with used closure.

Clearly this has become a feature of parliamentary life which we should abhor. We need to find a way to negotiate, all of us, in such a way that really important issues get the kind of attention they need. Instead what we have is a parliamentary culture in which if something is really important, we debate it for a day and if something is not that important, we debate it forever because when—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to speak in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I must say that after attending at the Senate chamber yesterday and listening to Her Excellency the Governor General read the Speech from the Throne, the moment I returned to the House I felt very proud to be a member of the Liberal government.

The Speech from the Throne reflected true Liberal values. More important, the values that were reflected and the priorities that were put forward in the Speech from the Throne are the values and the priorities of Canadians.

I want to begin by thanking the Prime Minister for his letter of August 5. He wrote to our caucus requesting our input and suggestions to the main policy areas that the Speech from the Throne should address. I was interested to hear my colleague from Toronto—Danforth talk about how he also acted upon that letter.

I conducted a number of round tables in my riding. As a result of those consultations there were four major priorities my constituents wanted addressed in the Speech from the Throne. Number one was health care. Number two was the environment. Number three was urban policy. Number four was the arts and cultural sector.

For anyone who has read the Speech from the Throne, as the member for Toronto—Danforth pointed out, those issues and priorities were indeed addressed. Within the time I have been allotted I would like to try to address those priorities. I should add that I am sharing my time with the member for Mississauga West.

First and foremost, with respect to health care my constituents were absolutely clear. They did not want the government to abandon the publicly funded, universally accessible health care that we now enjoy. In fact, the Speech from the Throne acknowledged that no issue is more important to Canadians than health care.

This morning we also heard the Prime Minister in his address in reply to the Speech from the Throne talk about the fact that health care is a fundamental right for Canadians. As the Speech from the Throne noted, the Prime Minister will be convening a first ministers meeting early next year for the very purpose of putting into place a comprehensive plan for reform.

In the Speech from the Throne the Prime Minister committed to renewing certain things: the federal health protection legislation; strengthening the security of Canada's food system; putting together a national strategy for healthy living, activity and sport. I cannot stress how important that is. We debated in the House how our children are faced with smoking and how we could make them stop smoking.

It is not just about smoking; it is about obesity. We Canadians tend to become stagnant and we do not do anything about it. We want to ensure that our health care system delivers for us. As individuals we also need to take some responsibility for our own health and put into place some kind of activity and sports strategy, as the member for Toronto—Danforth spoke about. A lot of families simply cannot afford those kinds of activities. What can we do to encourage those activities within our communities?

The Address

Last but not least, in the health care section of the Speech from the Throne the Prime Minister talked about the importance of providing compassionate care for a gravely ill child, parent or spouse. In fact a few years ago I posed a question to a predecessor to the current Minister for Human Resources Development about what our government was doing about something that was known as eternity care. It is legislation that has been put in place in Sweden. It is something we could do to ensure that individuals are not penalized because they find it necessary or they want to be at home with their gravely ill loved ones.

Currently my father is very ill and is about to undergo surgery. My mother died. We cared for her. It is so important that we as a society recognize that it does not take away from our health care system. We also must allow individuals to care for their families. I commend the Prime Minister and the government for that recommendation.

• (1740)

With respect to environmental programs, it was absolutely clear in my riding that we have to deal with global warming. Kyoto ratification is important. I heard some of the comments from across the way that there has been no commitment whatsoever, just simply a resolution. Obviously those members were not here during question period today when the Prime Minister explained that ratifying Kyoto is not an act of government. In fact we are going to pass a resolution in the House. We will debate it, talk about it and also be part of the consultative process.

My constituents felt that we also had to take measures to accelerate the use of non-polluting technologies. They also thought it was very important, especially in my urban riding in Toronto, to invest in increased rail travel to reduce the use of heavier polluting air and automobile transport. To my constituents I say, let us look at the Speech From the Throne. We will ratify Kyoto and we will do so by the end of the year.

We will also create 10 new national parks and five new national marine conservation areas. We are still committed to improving the ecological integrity of Canada's existing national parks. We will reintroduce the Canada environmental assessment act and reintroduce the species at risk bill and strengthen the pesticides legislation.

Under the section "Competitive Cities and Healthy Communities" of the Speech from the Throne, there is a commitment to a 10 year program for infrastructure. It specifically notes that we will work with partners to support the development of safe, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation systems that will help reduce congestion in our cities.

Regarding urban policy, the census came out not too long ago and we found, not surprisingly, that an increasing number of our population lives in urban areas. We are seeing the decay of our cities. We are seeing that cities are not able to fund the infrastructure that is necessary. Even before the Speech From the Throne, the Prime Minister appointed a task force headed by our colleague the member for York West to look at these issues. That committee has actually reported. An interim report is out there for discussion purposes. It made 54 recommendations. That was also discussed by my constituents.

What my constituents felt was very important was the need to implement a long term national affordable housing program. My riding is culturally and economically diverse. It is highly dense. We have newcomers, refugees, low income families, seniors and people who are almost homeless because they cannot afford to keep their homes. They do not have the money to repair their homes. It is a very big concern in my riding.

Related to urban policy, investment in public transit is absolutely key.

The other thing that my constituents felt, and which was also noted by the member for York West and her committee in its report, was that we have to recognize how continuing the investment in arts and culture actually serves to revitalize our communities. What does the Speech From the Throne say? Under the section "Competitive Cities and Healthy Communities" it states that dynamic cities and communities are vital to our well-being.

What did we commit to do? We did put in place a 10 year program for infrastructure to accommodate long term strategic initiatives that cities need to have in place. We have agreed to extend investment in affordable housing and also to extend the supporting communities initiative program which came about through our Minister of Labour's hard work also as the minister responsible for homelessness.

The supporting communities partnership initiative is very successful in Toronto and has been very successful in my riding. It has supported projects like Romero House which provides housing for new refugees. It has helped Redwood Shelter which is a home for abused women and children. It has made a difference in my riding.

The other thing that the section talked about was working with large cities to develop strategies to reduce the barriers that new immigrants find when settling. As I said, this is a very important issue in my riding because the area known as Parkdale is where new refugees and immigrants come to start their lives.

Last but not least I would like to talk about the importance of the need for a healthy and vibrant cultural sector. This was addressed in the Speech from the Throne. I noted that the Canadian Conference of the Arts has already sent out its bulletin reviewing the investment in the arts.

• (1745)

While CCA states at the beginning that arts and culture did not have a section dedicated to them, there are a number of things, including copyright. If members have not seen the CCA bulletin, I would ask them to do so. Again, it would appear to us that the Canadian Conference of the Arts is delighted with what it found in the Speech from the Throne.

The Address

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is obvious that the hon. member who just spoke represents a constituency that is different from mine in many ways. I would like to point out that I have two cities, a number of towns and, in all, 107 local governments. I met throughout the summer with most of them and with many different people.

You talked about the questions people ask you. I would like to ask the member, did no one ask you, because this was asked of me many times, what do you think the government has to do in the way of changing the ethics program and making it possible to show Canadians that it is truly accountable in every way? Did that question never come up in your riding? It came up at virtually every local government I attended.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I will remind the hon. member that questions are to be addressed through the Chair to hon. members.

Ms. Sarmite Bulte: Madam Speaker, again obviously the Speech from the Throne was listening to the concerns of the member's constituents. We have talked about addressing that issue. We have talked about bringing in new legislation to look at showing that members are accountable for their actions. We all are accountable. If we are not accountable, we will not be elected, first and foremost.

Second, again, if we look at the Speech from the Throne we will find that the issue was addressed. We are looking at reforming our lobbyist legislation. I was at a recent meeting of APEC at which the Mexican members of the APEC business advisory council asked me how we deal with our lobbyists. They asked what guidance can Canada give them. This is a brand new area for Mexico. Again, Canada is being seen as a leader in this area. It is a wonderful thing to be Canadian, to be proud of what we have accomplished to date and what we will continue to do. I also would like to remind members that the Prime Minister said this morning that we have a lot of work to do, so let us roll up our sleeves and start that work.

• (1750)

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member talks about competitive cities and health care. Currently in Newfoundland we have a royal commission holding public hearings on our status and our future prospects in Confederation. Some 53 years after joining Confederation, we have the highest economic growth rate in the nation. We had it this year, last year and the year before that, so we are doing quite well, but we are still the poorest province with the highest unemployment rate in all of Canada. I am sure the hon. member would agree that there seems to be something wrong with that picture.

One of the reasons for our lack of economic progress is the clawback provision in the current equalization formula, which keeps cities and provinces held back. Fully 80% of all revenues generated are clawed back by the federal government through equalization payments. Under that formula, it is impossible for any have-not province to make any headway, and most of the Atlantic area is have-not provinces. So we are going to have poor cities and provinces with poor health care as a result of some of these things. One of the main holdbacks is the equalization formula. We need a reduction in or the elimination of the current equalization formula.

In the throne speech, no reference was made to helping the poorer provinces find some kind of equality within Confederation. Would the hon. member care to comment?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. I do know that the royal commission is currently being undertaken in Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, there was extensive coverage on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation earlier this week about that task force. I am sure we are all looking forward to those recommendations.

One of the things the member asked about is how we encourage economic growth and continued growth. Again, I think we did address that. One of the things I am always so pleased to see is the role that needs to be played by small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs. Again, it is going to have to be thanks to my colleague from Mississauga West who headed a Prime Minister's task force on youth entrepreneurs. We are dealing with youth on the entrepreneurial side and looking at small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs in promoting our growth.

Going back to arts and culture, we also have to look at the role arts and culture play in vibrant communities like Newfoundland and Labrador. Those days of industrial manufacturing plants are not there any more, but—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mississauga West.

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is of course a pleasure to be back. We have been back for two days. After just a couple of days of getting into this, it feels like we never left.

I think it is an important time for the government. It is an important time for Canada. In fact, it is an important time for this Parliament because of all the discussions that take place around the various issues and the direction.

We all know that the Prime Minister has set a target that is a countdown to sixteen and a half or seventeen months until he retires. Also, a number of the parties in this establishment are either currently undergoing or soon will be undergoing or may yet again be undergoing leadership reviews. One never knows what could happen opposite if they decided they were not particularly happy with the third or fourth leader they have had in their reincarnation and their changing of the stripes, if you will.

However, that is not what this is about. This is about a vision for the future of the country, a vision for the young people that my friend from Parkdale—High Park mentioned, and about what the Prime Minister and the government want to see happen that is doable.

Many members have talked about health care, so I will leave that one on the table. I would like to focus on the urban issues, particularly on the infrastructure statement in the throne speech. I think it is critical.

The Address

There are those of us who have relationships with the other levels of government, involvement with our councils. We heard the hon. gentleman opposite say that he has something like 107 local governments. It is mind boggling and there should probably be a review of that. In any event, obviously those who have a relationship with those local governments would appreciate the fact that the Prime Minister and the throne speech have addressed the issue of long-term sustainability in the area of funding infrastructure.

While we are quite proud of the infrastructure programs that we have had with the government since 1993, I frankly think there were some things that perhaps we should have done differently. I think the initial infrastructure program was perhaps too broad. The definition of infrastructure allowed for various things like community centres and arenas, all of which are important in a community, to be built with the infrastructure dollars when in fact perhaps they should have been concentrated on what I call core infrastructure, which would lead to the development of clean and safe water, sewage disposal, roads, a national highway program, urban transit, high-speed rail transit, bus lanes and things of that nature. In my view, a nationally funded infrastructure program should focus on those areas.

The recent strategic infrastructure program of \$2 billion in fact is very specific and much more strategic in that area. We have not seen the numbers. Members opposite can criticize if there are no numbers in a throne speech, but I think we all know that is just for theatre. That is so they can make a point and perhaps be interviewed on the issue. Hard numbers are not put in a throne speech. It sets out the philosophy, the direction and the commitments that the government, the Prime Minister and the cabinet wish to see happen.

They have said that there will be a ten-year infrastructure program. It is my hope that it will be a substantial amount and that it will be tied to matching dollars from the provincial sector. As well, I would like to see, because this is something I thought we did very much right in the first program, a one-third matching opportunity for municipalities. Or in fact they could perhaps arrange for a one-third contribution from the private sector if there was some role for the private sector to play in that particular program. That made sense. The reason is that it basically tripled the amount of money that was going toward infrastructure.

• (1755)

I am hopeful that we will see a substantial commitment in this ten-year fund, that municipalities will be able to look at what most of them look at, which is a five-year capital program, not really ten, and will be able to look five years out into the future and say that they have some infrastructure needs that are core to the growth of their communities, to the safety of what they deliver in terms of sewer and water systems, and in speeding up and eliminating the congestion that so many of our large metropolitan areas are facing, the gridlock we are facing certainly in the greater Toronto area, in the city of Mississauga that I hail from. Hopefully we can help with that project referred to very often in the media as smart growth. It would be very smart if this money were used to help in the movement of people and goods, et cetera, throughout these dense areas.

I am hopeful we will see a substantial commitment, a three-way split and a long term. Who would disagree with that? In fact it is interesting that in the debates in this place about the throne speech

what we hear are complaints that the government has not done something in the past or it is just a promise. The reality is that it is a blueprint.

I would like members to stand up and be honest and tell us what it is in the throne speech that they actually do not like. I find it very hard to believe that anyone would be against a long-term, ten-year commitment to infrastructure and working with our provinces and municipalities. If they are, they should say that they are. What I do hear is them yelling "How are we going to pay for it?" The fact is that it is a budgetary process and members here know that the budgetary process will outline how it will be paid for in the many months to come.

Let me move from infrastructure to the housing commitment, something in which I have been very much involved. As parliamentary secretary for crown corporations, I had the opportunity to work closely with Canada Mortgage and Housing and Canada Lands, both crown corporations. I would recommend that all members take the time to look at some of the success stories of our crown corporations. These companies actually make money. People would be shocked.

In fact, let me take members to Alberta, to Garrison Woods in downtown Calgary. It is a development that was formerly a military site. It was taken over and transferred to Canada Lands. It put a development project in place and sold the lots to builders. The Canada Lands development company put restrictions on what could be built, how it could be built, and how it fit into the community, saving the trees. It is an absolute landmark of a development project in this country and it has received national recognition with a Grand SAM award from the Canadian Home Builders' Association. In fact people come from all over the world to find out how in the world the Garrison Woods project got developed. There are 1,600 houses in phase one. Not one of those doors is further than five minutes from a bus stop, yet there are no buses within the community. It is absolutely brilliant modern-age thinking, and it is a Canadian government crown corporation that has led the way. This stuff exists.

In the throne speech, we have said that we are going to extend the housing program. That means we are going to add to the \$680 million that was put into affordable housing right across the country and we are going to extend the mandate to the Canada Lands and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporations to find new and creative ways to deliver affordable housing to Canadians. If someone on that side of the House would like to stand and say they object to that, I would love to hear that statement today. I would be completely incredulous, because these are true Canadian success stories.

I will tell members what is most interesting. I was in Calgary last week and local Calgarians are astounded to find out that it actually is Canada Lands, a division of the government, a crown corporation of the federal government, that has delivered Garrison Woods. There is another project coming in on a military site in Edmonton.

The Address

I am sorry that I am out of time, because I wanted to spend several minutes talking about Kyoto and about the fact that there appears to be some kind of rebellion being led by Premier Ralph Klein and some of the folks in Alberta and our friends opposite who refuse to accept the fact that we do have a climate change problem. I have heard them say it.

• (1800)

They do not believe that climate change is the problem when in fact every scientist, environmentalist, expert and frankly, most average Canadians understand it is a serious problem. The government is committed to it and there will be a plan in place before Parliament votes to ratify Kyoto later this year.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member about the grants and matching grants of which he just spoke.

Has he ever experienced what we experienced in our province, particularly in the way of grants to agriculture where they were 60% federal and the provincial government would put up 40%?

Like the member from Newfoundland said, provincial governments have different amounts of income. Some are have not provinces like the province I represent. Would it mean that if the Province of Saskatchewan ran out of what it set aside it would not get any more grants even though the eligibility requirements were there? Matching grants can also be discriminatory grants and I have lived with them for 20 years in agriculture. I can assure the member that the idea of matching grants, with the sole criteria that they must be met, is probably not the right way to go if we are looking at Canada as a whole.

• (1805)

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, in all honesty the member raises a point. When the criteria is put in place for the infrastructure then there may be some flexibility required as we have had in the past in other areas such as the \$680 million housing money. We designed that program so that provinces who were unable to perhaps match the cash, it was \$25,000 per housing unit, hopefully would be given the option of matching what is called a rent supplement.

They would not have to put up the hard cash on the table to make the deal work and to get the housing under construction. However they would have to commit to assist and work with the municipal sector to create a social housing waiting list to occupy the house thereby reducing the waiting list and benefiting the municipality. They would also have to agree to provide some form of rent supplement so that they would receive the cost of renting a new home down to a more affordable level. I have no problem with some flexibility but the principle is to let us leverage the federal dollars to maximize every project that we enter into.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I could not help but rise when I heard the member talk about Kyoto and the environment. Where in the throne speech does it say that the government cares about pollution? All of us care about the environment and about pollution.

The government, in an obvious case in British Columbia in the Fraser Valley, had an opportunity to do something about air pollution. There is no mention of that in the throne speech. I

wonder if the member understands what Kyoto is all about. Does he think it is about pollution?

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, it is about the future of the planet and just about every aspect of the environment, the air we breath and the quality of life we will leave for our children.

It is also about an absolute refusal led by, and I am sorry to say because I am generally a big supporter of business, a business coalition that is putting ads out that are intended to do nothing but frighten Canadians, that somehow we will lose hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in investment. These people should realize that the impact to the oil industry is only one aspect.

Let us take a look at what we can do to give people better incentives to better insulate their homes. I ask the member opposite as he chirps at me, why is it that at the gasoline pump the most expensive gasoline we can buy will purport to reduce the emissions from vehicles by 15%? The oil industry is saying, buy our more expensive brand and we will reduce emissions. That tells me that something is askew in terms of the marketing and perhaps the goal of some of the people in that industry.

By and large through the leadership shown by the Prime Minister in his statement to ratify Kyoto, to bring the debate into this place, I believe business will see that there are many new technologies and new ways that we can leave a safer, cleaner planet for our children.

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for New Brunswick Southwest.

I am pleased to say a few words on the throne speech debate. A wide ranging debate like the one before us affords all of us the opportunity to raise a number of issues of importance to the people in St. John's East, to the people generally in the province and in the nation as a whole.

In my opinion this was a low-key, often vague throne speech. If there was a bright spot in the throne speech, and there was one bright spot and it deserves full marks, it would be the commitment to significantly increase the child tax benefit for poor families. I hope the government means it when it says that the increase in the child tax benefit will be significant. I am not encouraged by the fact that the last two throne speeches saw only 25% of the promises that had been made put into effect, implemented and finding their way into the nation's budget.

The child tax benefit is important to a lot of poor families. Child poverty rates in the nation are far too high for any western industrialized country. We all know what happened back in the nineties in the rush to balance the budgets back then. The Liberal government cut transfers to the provinces for the various health and social service programs that were designed to help poor families in particular.

The Address

I am sure all members will remember as it was only about a year and a half ago when the government cut deeply into the employment insurance program. This devastated whole regions dependent upon seasonal employment. The fishery was very important as was forestry and mining. The government cut deeply into those areas dependent upon seasonal employment. As a result poor families became poorer and more numerous. Child poverty increased nearly 20%. That was far too high.

Being a member of the committee that travelled the nation I will never forget the presentations made by people in every province between British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador with regard to poverty and homelessness. I found out something very important. Poverty has a real face in this nation. It is not fictional. It has a real look to it. It is on the faces of people on fixed incomes trying to make ends meet. It is on the faces of people who have to raise families on minimum wage. It is on the faces of single mothers who cannot find work, and even if they could find work they cannot find adequate day care programs that will enable them to work.

Poverty is real in this nation. Therefore any kind of significant increase in the national child benefit would be welcomed by a lot of families. We should constantly keep this before us. This is the House in which we passed a resolution to abolish child poverty by the year 2000. The year 2003 is fast approaching so we have a lot of ground to make up.

● (1810)

If the Prime Minister would like to have a legacy, for which he will be remembered and people will build monuments and statues of him, he should spend the next 18 months in office solving the child poverty issue and the issue of homelessness in this nation.

Health care is a very important matter in the throne speech. The Prime Minister proposes to meet the premiers on this issue and promises more money. Well, it is about time that he met the premiers on the business of the nation. He is long overdue in putting more money into the health care system.

The health care system back in my province is in a shambles at the moment. Doctors have walked out. They are the lowest paid in the nation and their employer is the most cash-strapped provincial government. The government balanced the nation's books. Nobody can deny that. It did balance the nation's books. The cuts to health care crushed the books of many of the provincial governments.

Simply put, our health care system needs reform, but it needs more money as well. Canadians have made it clear in public opinion poll after public opinion poll that they want the government to do something about it. No matter what changes and reforms are made to the system, it will require more money.

Roy Romanow will be issuing his report sometime in November and none of us would expect that report to make recommendations without making recommendations for an influx or infusion of money into the health care system. No matter what changes are recommended, it will require more money. If the federal government wants to establish national standards in this critical area of national policy, it has to be willing to pay a greater share of the costs involved. Simply put, if one does not pay the piper, one will not be able to call the tune.

The speech promises another infrastructure program for cities. This is the third infrastructure program we have heard about. We had a \$2 billion program, a second \$2 billion program and now we have a promise of a third infrastructure program announced by the government. So far, my province of Newfoundland and Labrador has seen only \$50 million over a five year period to provide infrastructure for a couple of hundred communities.

My riding in St. John's and area needs a federal commitment of about \$33 million to finance the sewage collection and treatment system required to clean up St. John's Harbour, one of the most polluted harbours in all of Canada. Just a simple, small commitment by the federal government for \$33 million. The provincial government has made its commitment. The municipalities have made their commitments. The federal government has yet to pony up that money and it has had two \$2 billion infrastructure programs. We are still waiting for the federal government to pony up a little bit of money to clean up one of the most beautiful harbours in the oldest city in North America.

Another matter of vital concern not mentioned in the throne speech is the need to reduce or eliminate the clawback provisions of the equalization program which I brought up a few moments ago in a question. Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the highest growth rates in all of the nation this year, last year and the year before that. Yet, we are still one of the poorest provinces with one of the highest unemployment rates. Something is definitely wrong with that picture. If there is a province with a high growth rate, it should not have have-not status almost permanently, but the lion's share of all these new revenues are clawed back to Ottawa and as a result the province cannot move ahead.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to what my colleague had to say about the Speech from the Throne. He talked, among other things, about the national child benefit. He also mentioned employment insurance and fishing, since he comes from an area where fishing is important.

I have not seen anything about fishing in the throne speech. With regard to the national child benefit, I agree that it must be increased. This is something that should be done.

However, why have these people become poor? That is the question that we must ask ourselves. Since 1993, people from so-called remote areas, like the one represented by the member, have become considerably poorer, and there is a reason for that. It is, among other things, because of cuts made to the employment insurance plan. Does my colleague think that rural areas have been fairly dealt with in the throne speech that was presented to us?

● (1820)

[*English*]

Mr. Norman Doyle: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very good question. Of course not. They have not been fairly dealt with in the throne speech, which is why we currently have a royal commission holding public hearings in Newfoundland and Labrador on our status and our future prospects within Confederation.

The Address

We could not agree more with the member. Newfoundland has been in Confederation for 53 years, has had the highest growth rate in the nation for the last two or three years and it is still a poor province with a very high unemployment rate. It all goes back to one point, which is affecting Quebec and all of Atlantic Canada, and that is that we cannot make any kind of economic progress in smaller provinces if we do not have some kind of recognition by the federal government that we need an adjustment in the equalization formula. Fully 80% of all revenues from the development of our natural resources is clawed back to the federal government. Under that kind of formula it is impossible for a small province to make any kind of economic headway. We need a reduction in or elimination of the equalization program.

Another area which I never had a chance to deal with is the fishery. The Speech from the Throne makes absolutely no reference to the fishery, as well as to our fish stocks on our continental shelf outside the 200 mile limit. Our fellow NAFO members do not enforce conservation rules as we are all very well aware. An item that is receiving a lot of debate in my province is the fact that NAFO members do not enforce conservation rules for their fleets fishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. Even if the federal government made some kind of commitment to help the province out in that regard it would be a step in the right direction toward establishing my province as a have province at some point in the future.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, does the member believe that if the federal government increased the present almost 14% for health care that the provinces should then have to report back as to how that money was spent?

Mr. Norman Doyle: Madam Speaker, I am not sure I understood the hon. member's question. I believe he is asking that if the federal government made money available should the provinces have to report back to the federal government on how these health care dollars were spent.

It is difficult for the federal government to demand that kind of reporting from the provinces given the fact that the federal government of late has not been paying the piper. I therefore do not believe it is in any position to call the tune.

However I believe it is reasonable to expect the provinces that receive money from the federal government for health care and social services to have some kind of reporting mechanism. I am sure the provinces, being the responsible groups that they are in spending money as wisely as they have, would have no objection to that kind of arrangement.

• (1825)

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Madam Speaker, prorogation was completely unnecessary as, of course, was the Speech from the Throne. However I will say that one of the few benefits of the Speech from the Throne and proroguing the House was your reappointment to the Chair. I fully support the Prime

Minister. It was a good choice and we wish you well in your continued capacity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I have honestly been trying to use this line. Flattery will get you nowhere.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Madam Speaker, those are the exact words I was waiting for because I intend to beat up on the government a little, so I guess that would be expected anyway.

The throne speech was completely unnecessary. To point this out and to reinforce that fact, almost half the promises from the 2001 throne speech have not been dealt with, 18 of 39 promises have not even started, 12 are partially completed and only 9 have actually been fulfilled.

This is all about the Prime Minister attempting to get some favourable air time. I believe that many members of the House are absolutely correct when they compare the throne speech to the Sears wish book. I am sure you, Madam Speaker, can remember looking through that book as a young child hoping and wishing that some of the things that you saw would actually be under the tree come Christmas morning. Well the reality is that the Prime Minister has given no consideration to how any of this will be paid for.

The throne speech is a regurgitation of many things that the government has spoken about over the years but has managed to sidestep or completely dishonour. I only have to go through red books one, two and three. All three editions have a familiar theme: broken promises and promises unfulfilled. Let us go through some of them so we will have an idea of what some of these recycled promises might be.

Many of the promises are recycled from previous throne speeches. One example is a resolution to the issues of our aboriginal people. We have heard that before. We also have heard before about support for children in poverty. More children are living in poverty today than when the government took office. The control of greenhouse emissions. The government side cannot even control its own gas emissions let alone greenhouse gas emissions.

What about increased support for foreign aid? Foreign aid now is exactly 0.2% of our GDP. It is the lowest it has ever been in the history of the country and it is getting worse, not better.

Mr. Speaker, could you clarify how much time I have left?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I would inform the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest that he will still have six minutes in his speech when debate resumes tomorrow on the Speech from the Throne.

It being 6.30 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Monday, September 30, the House will now move to the consideration of government business No. 1.

[Editor's Note: For continuation of proceedings see Part B]

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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, October 1, 2002
(Part B)**

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 1, 2002

[Editor's Note: Continuation of proceedings from Volume A]

•(1830)

[English]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

IRAQ

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That this House take note of the international situation concerning Iraq.

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, I am pleased that the House has decided to have a debate on the issue of Iraq. It is an honour for me to launch this debate. I will share my time with my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, with whom I am proud to work on such an important issue for Canadians.

Let me put things clearly from the outset: the tension that currently prevails throughout the world is a direct consequence of the persistent refusal of the Iraqi government to comply with its obligations toward the international community, under the terms of the resolution of the UN security council.

For the past eleven years, President Saddam Hussein has continually showed indefensible contempt for the demands of the international community and for his own people. His past actions and his current stubbornness have imposed tremendous suffering on the people of Iraq. His defiance of international sanctions has resulted in a dismal standard of living in Iraq.

Under the terms of resolution 687 of the UN security council, which was passed in April 1991 and which put an end to military operations after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the latter unconditionally agreed to the elimination, under international monitoring, of all its weapons of mass destruction and all its ballistic missiles, and it also allowed inspections by the United Nations to ensure compliance.

In spite of this official acceptance, Iraq refused to comply. Iraqi officials have systematically tried to hide their arms programs and to fool UN inspectors. While significant components of Iraqi programs relating to weapons of mass destruction and to the development of missiles were found and destroyed, the work of UN inspectors was never completed.

At this point in time, we must all do our utmost to ensure that Iraq understands that its compliance with these resolutions is not optional. It is not a matter for negotiation or mediation. There is no need, as some have suggested, for other UN member states to mediate on behalf of Iraq. As a member state, Iraq has full access to the United Nations, including the good offices of the secretary general himself, who has tried throughout to bring this crisis to a peaceful solution.

The government of Iraq is aware as to what is required. It understands the link between compliance and the lifting of sanctions, as laid out in Security Council resolutions 687 and 1284. We recognize that the sanctions issue is a difficult one, and our committee studied this some years ago. It raises painful questions about the effect of sanctions on ordinary Iraqi citizens.

However let us also remember that Iraq has always had the option of ending sanctions by complying with the Security Council resolutions rather than by continuing to subvert them. It has smuggled oil out of Iraq in order to generate revenues but not to meet the real and urgent needs of the Iraqi people. These revenues have instead been allocated to weapons programs and to reinforcing the structures of authoritarian rule. At various times the government of Iraq has placed its own restrictions on oil sales and embargoed imports from other countries, including Canada, without regard for the dire needs of the population.

The world has been frustrated with the lack of progress on this issue, to the point where over the summer months we were all concerned with the possibility of unilateral action being engaged by the United States, under the leadership of President Bush.

At that time we stated publicly and repeated that the appropriate forum for discussion and authorization of such action was the United Nations Security Council. The Prime Minister himself conveyed this message to President Bush when he met him in Detroit and indicated clearly the preference of the Canadian people.

As Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in his address to the General Assembly:

—when states decide to use force to deal with broader threats to international peace and security, there is no substitute for the unique legitimacy provided by the United Nations.

Government Orders

For this reason Canada, and much of the world, welcomed President Bush's commitment to the UN General Assembly that the United States would work with the Security Council in resolving this serious threat. We took to heart the challenge set out by President Bush. Now we must show that the UN can in fact assume its proper role and demonstrate its effectiveness by resolving this crisis. We must give it the opportunity to do so.

I met with Iraq's minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Naji Sabri, in New York on September 17. I welcomed Iraq's decision to accept the return of UN's weapons inspectors. I told him that his government must accept the return of the inspectors as early as possible and that it must work with UNMOVIC openly and unconditionally. I added that world opinion was skeptical of the government of Iraq's assurances because of the long history of its obstruction and its failures to comply with Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Sabri assured me that Iraq wanted the sanctions lifted so that it could return to the family of nations. However given Iraq's track record, we cannot accept these assurances just by themselves.

It is for this reason that we have supported the United States and the United Kingdom in their efforts to obtain a strong and clear Security Council resolution that would achieve two vital purposes: first, to provide Iraq with a fair and final opportunity to comply with the UN's inspections and therefore guarantee its sovereignty and its existence; and second, it must set out the consequences if it fails to do so.

I understand that provisional agreements have been reached in Vienna earlier today between Iraq and the United Nations' inspection team. We have, on behalf of Canada, offered our assistance to Dr. Blix and his team in carrying out their duties.

This is certainly a welcome step, but we all understand that this process has a long way to go. We must not lose sight of the absolute need to make Saddam Hussein understand the choice he faces. He can comply and have Iraq's sovereignty and security assured by the community of nations or he can continue to flout his international legal obligations and face the determination of the world community.

● (1835)

I hope that my words concerning Iraq have made it clear to the House that we on the government side do not make these assertions lightly. Nor is our insistence on working through the multilateral process undertaken without a careful analysis of what must be done. We are aware of the gravity of the situation but we are also aware of the dangers that conflict would bring to the greater region and that would likely be the terrible human cost.

In these circumstances unilateral action may have the benefit of clarity but it would lack international legal legitimacy. As well it risks destabilizing world order and possibly destroying the credibility of the United Nations itself. It risks destabilizing the Middle East. It risks destabilizing countries well beyond the region, to Pakistan, and with it the efforts that we are making in Afghanistan to recreate peace in that community, to Indonesia, to India and Malaysia where large Muslim populations watch with concern these developments. The use of force threatens the security of Israel. Prime Minister Sharon has made it clear to retaliate if his country is attacked, raising the spectre of a conflict escalating out of control.

As President Roosevelt once observed, "War is a contagion". Nowhere in my view is this proposition more applicable than in this volatile area of the world.

We are also concerned with what would be an enormous task of reconstruction in the event that we resort to force. Those who advocate war as a means of reconstructing Iraq might be mindful of the wise words of Lester Pearson who said, "The grim fact is that we prepare for war like precocious giants, and for peace like retarded pygmies".

The point of our efforts then is not to bring the parties to conflict but to prevent it if possible. We cannot allow this to diminish our resolve; the objective is to rid the Iraqi regime of weapons of mass destruction.

However as the Prime Minister emphasized in the House this morning, Canadians are proud of our longstanding tradition in foreign policy which has been to pursue and promote dialogue and understanding among the peoples of the world and to seek political and diplomatic solutions even in the face of imminent conflict. By continuing to act consistently with these values, world peace and security will be enhanced and international institutions strengthened.

To those who call upon us to follow blindly whenever and wherever the United States would lead, even if such actions would threaten the multilateral system we have built together with our American partners so painstakingly over the past 50 years, we say, true friends talk straight to each other and that is why their opinions are respected and valued.

Let us conclude with one last critical point. Our objective is to rid the Iraqi regime of weapons of mass destruction. There are those who claim that regime change is the only means to this end. If Iraq refuses to cooperate, they may turn out to be right. However our responsibility to Canadians, to the world community and to the future of the international rule of law is to be certain that we have exhausted all other options and that we so conduct ourselves in this crisis that the international order on which Canada so much depends emerges strengthened and reinvigorated.

I give the House my assurances that the government will act in this way.

● (1840)

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the minister clarify two points for the House today and for Canadians who are very concerned about the possibility of military strikes on the people of Iraq who have already suffered such terrible anguish and pain as a result of the impact of economic sanctions?

First, will the minister very clearly state in the House why it is that he believes that a new resolution of the United Nations is needed at this point when in fact the position that has been taken so far by the United States and others is that Saddam Hussein has been in breach of existing resolutions with respect to weapons inspection? Why is he echoing the call of George Bush for a new United Nations resolution instead of insisting on the observance of existing resolutions?

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Second, why is our government not doing far more in terms of regional justice in that area to insist on respect for security council resolutions not just by Iraq but by Israel as well?

Hon. Bill Graham: Mr. Speaker, I hope to make it clear in my remarks that the reason for our support for the British and American initiative to have a new Security Council resolution is based in a history and an understanding of what has taken place in the past.

I do not believe that we can go into this situation naively believing that Saddam Hussein is somebody who intends necessarily to conform to international legal norms. Our experience is the reverse.

It would be the triumph of hope over experience to expect that he would now allow the inspectors in without some clear indication from the United Nations itself that his ability to put it off, to change it to move around is at an end. I think it is in his interest, it is in the interest of Iraqi people at this time that the United Nations act clearly to indicate that there is no wiggle room, if I may put it that way, for Saddam Hussein.

It is in his interests. It is in the interest of his country because if he believes that there is a chance that he could slip out he might try and do what he has done in the past and then force would be used. Then the terrible consequences which I described in my speech are there.

The reason for clarity is twofold. Clarity gives us an opportunity to deal with someone who we recognize has been a menace to world order in the past and has a capacity to be so in the future. It also gives us an opportunity to ensure that no force will be used outside of the constraints applied by the United Nations itself. That is why we seek the clarity of another resolution. We congratulate the parties who are proposing such a resolution on moving in this direction.

As for how resolutions should be obeyed in other parts of the Middle East or in other parts of the world, indeed Canada has always urged that the resolutions of the United Nations be respected.

As the hon. member knows as a scholar of international law, there are times in the times of nations when in fact peace and war are at stake and adherence to certain resolutions is absolutely essential.

It is true that we are taking steps on this case which may be different than they are in the case of other resolutions. We will continue always to urge that all resolutions be obeyed by the United Nations. Let us not lose sight of the fact that we are facing the fact of a possible loss of peace in the world with escalation possibilities that are truly frightening when we conclude it.

Therefore, it is most important that these resolutions not only be adhered to but obeyed.

•(1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, the minister said that one of the major reasons that would justify an intervention in Iraq is the fact that, historically, it has not complied with UN resolutions.

In the current context, how is it that we can justify the severity with which Iraq is being treated, when at the same time, Israel is not respecting recent UN resolutions? How can Canada be so comfortable with this?

We know that, today, there was an agreement to the effect that within fifteen days, there could be an intervention by duly mandated UN inspectors to visit Iraq and verify the situation. Why is Canada, like the United States...

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Bill Graham: Mr. Speaker, under the circumstances, I do not believe that an analogy with Israel's behaviour is useful in helping us decide what we should do to bring peace to the region.

Saddam Hussein's past behaviour toward his own people and toward his neighbours cannot be compared to the conduct of a democratic society, a society that respects its people, like Israel. Canada has always insisted that Israel comply with the United Nations' resolutions, and we continue to do so. However, we do not believe that Israel is in the same flagrant violation as Iraq is at the time being. Nor does the situation represent a threat to global security, as is the case with Iraq currently.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Considering the seriousness of the debate and the subject, I wonder if we could seek unanimous consent to have a little more time with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ask questions on this very serious issue. We all have many questions. We need to know.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent to have more time?

Could I ask the member how much more time he would like?

Mr. Bill Casey: I would like about an hour, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps five minutes would be good.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I think you have just lost your unanimous consent.

Seriously, there is a request for having the minister answer more questions. Is there unanimous consent? Is five minutes agreeable?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): There is no consent. Resuming debate.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the motion today. I am honoured that my esteemed colleague and friend, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has seen fit to share his time with me. In doing so, I reiterate the government's commitment to foster open debate and consultation on foreign and defence policy issues.

There is absolutely no question that each one of us is very concerned about the situation in Iraq. I see this among my constituents. I see this in my family. I know that all of us are very concerned about what unpredictable forces could be unleashed should there be military action, as my colleague has described very well.

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We were certainly encouraged by the recent announcement that the Government of Iraq would allow the return of UN weapons inspectors, but we must remain vigilant in demanding their full and unfettered access. Anything less would be gambling with the safety of the Iraqi people, the stability of the region and the security of the international community.

•(1850)

[*Translation*]

Within the United Nations, Canada has played an active role on this issue. On several occasions, we have required that the Iraqi regime meet all its international obligations. In fact, we have constantly supported the UN's multilateral actions with respect to Iraq.

[*English*]

Canada's commitment to a multilateral, rules-based international system is long and deep, going back at least to Lester Pearson, rooted in our commitment to international law and extending not only to the United Nations but to the WTO, to NATO and to other international institutions. I think perhaps as an economist I could pose the question: Why are we so committed to this multilateral, rules-based system? I would say because the alternative is a unilateral, power-based system, which kind of means the law of the jungle. If we look at it in a trade situation, given that our neighbour is so large, when it is a unilateral, power-based system we will strike out every time. On a multilateral, rules-based system we at least have a fighting chance.

In that vein, I was in NATO last week at the NATO defence ministers meeting when Mr. Rumsfeld proposed the NATO rapid deployment force. While Canada's position will not be official until the Prague summit in November, I welcome that because that is a multilateral, NATO-based system which would still have to go to the UN for approval. What is the alternative to that? It is a unilateral, U. S.-led system of coalitions. We have a long history of favouring a multilateral, rules-based system. In many respects, that is what this debate is all about.

Fundamentally, as of now the ball is in the court of the UN and that is exactly where the ball ought to be, but I would like to add to what my colleague has said a few words about how Canada has deployed the Canadian Forces when necessary to help thwart Iraq's contravention of the international institutions. I will give just a few examples.

Even before the outbreak of the gulf war, Canada was helping ensure stability between Iran and Iraq. Between 1988 and 1991, 525 members of the Canadian Forces were deployed as part of the UN Iran-Iraq military observer group. A more significant military contribution would come only months later, when Canada acted with many other nations in a coalition to liberate Kuwait. As part of our contribution, naval and air capabilities, including 24 CF-18s, a field hospital and an infantry unit, were deployed to the Arabian gulf. In all, 6,000 Canadian Forces members took part in operations before, during and after hostilities, operating under the authority of several UN security council resolutions.

[*Translation*]

But our commitment did not end there because, during the following ten years, Canada put military equipment at the disposal of the UN for the enforcement of the sanctions.

Many Canadian warships have carried out maritime interdiction operations to enforce the UN embargo and force Iraq to respect the resolutions of the UN security council, and this has continued until the present.

[*English*]

During the same period, Canadian Forces specialists participated in the UN special commission charged with the inspection and destruction of Iraq's ballistic missiles as well as its chemical, nuclear and biological facilities, but as we all know this participation was brought to a sudden and unfortunate end when inspectors were forced to leave Iraq in 1998.

In the examples I have referred to today, Canada's first and foremost response was to seek resolution through diplomatic channels. That will continue to be the case. At the same time, it is clear that diplomatic efforts sometimes fail to yield results and military action becomes necessary.

Let no one think that Canada will hesitate to provide military support if the government deems it necessary. Canada is sometimes known as a peaceable kingdom but never as a pacifist kingdom. This has been demonstrated through generations and around the world. From World War I and World War II to Korea and most recently Afghanistan, where we were at one point the fourth largest contributor, we have consistently in our history done our part militarily when necessary in pursuit of democracy and freedom around the world. We will do the same if necessary, as we have done already in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

In the case before us today, Canada has made clear our commitment to search for a diplomatic solution. We call again on the Government of Iraq to live up to its international obligations and allow full and unfettered access by UN inspectors. This has been stated by my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as by the Prime Minister. But Iraq must know that if it fails to comply there will be serious repercussions. We cannot let this regime flout the will of the international community any longer.

At this point, in case someone asks me a question about it, let me make it clear that Canada has not been asked to participate in any military action against Iraq. Therefore, any discussion of military action would be premature at this stage. Only by forcing the Iraqi government to allow full and unfettered access by weapons inspectors can we be sure that it will not be able to possess and use weapons of mass destruction against its own people, its neighbours or any other country.

•(1855)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have three quick questions for the minister.

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First, he commented in his speech that if the NATO rapid reaction force which is being established were to take action, it would need United Nations approval for a mission. That is something different that is not normally required for NATO. I would like the minister to clarify that.

Second, he said that Canada would not hesitate to provide military support in Iraq if needed. I would like to ask the minister, with what has happened, with not being able to sustain a mission beyond six months in Afghanistan, with pulling navy and air force personnel out of the area, with reducing the size of the mission into the Balkans just because we simply do not have the people, who are worn out, what type of commitment could we realistically make in Iraq?

Third, for the minister, when asked by the media about a week or so ago to comment on his not having read Mr. Blair's evidence on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, I refused to comment but I would like to ask him if he has read that yet.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, it is desirable if NATO interventions have UN sanction. This has not always been the case. I would acknowledge that.

In terms of a realistic intervention, we have to balance the stresses on the people versus the urgency of the action. The Canadian Forces has a significant, substantial surge capacity. Were there to be a very major incident where the government attached a very high priority to taking action, we would be able to mobilize significant forces but at some human cost. I might remind the hon. member that we have a number of ships and other assets in the region in the Afghanistan area already.

I am saying that we are by no means suggesting any military commitment at this moment, as I said in my speech, but the hon. member can rest assured that if the government were to decide to take action a significant contribution would be available.

An hon. member: Like what?

Hon. John McCallum: I am not going to get into exactly what that contribution would be because it is, so far, hypothetical, but the member can rest assured that the people at National Defence headquarters are always working on contingency plans and possible contributions to possible situations depending on what the government should require.

Also, I have been fully briefed on the British document.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, personally, I am delighted that a debate is being held here this evening on this important issue, which is of concern to many people. At the same time, I note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs shared his time with the Minister of National Defence. This puts me in mind of the dove, the weapon and the sword. In his speech, the Minister of National Defence seems to be saying that our sword will be mighty, that it is ready, and so forth.

I have a question for him about this kind of verbal offensive. We know that Canada does not even have a ship with which to transport its equipment and men. It is leasing equipment from other countries and private ships for this purpose.

Finally, since the minister appears to be moving towards an offensive, can he assure the House that he will raise the debate here, and that it will be the subject of a parliamentary vote before troops are authorized to be sent to Iraq?

• (1900)

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the second part of the question, I cannot give the member this assurance, because it is not up to the Minister of National Defence to take such a decision.

I can, however, tell the member that we have not contradicted one another. We said that diplomacy was the first choice. But, in the event of UN authorization, we have the capacity, if the government so decides, to send troops. It is simple.

[*English*]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to debate the issue of Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. I will lay out to the government the advice of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

I want to get to the immediate question. The question is whether Canada would support a multilateral allied action to neutralize the capacity of Iraq to manufacture and deploy weapons of mass destruction should, and I repeat should, Saddam Hussein fail to comply with new or existing resolutions of the United Nations.

When asked that question yesterday, the foreign minister said that the government "would judge that when it comes". For three reasons, those being international law, the threat of weapons of mass destruction and the integrity of Canadian foreign policy, the government's approach is inadequate.

Let me be very clear here. The Canadian Alliance position is that it does not want to encourage or urge war. We hope that war may be avoided. Our position states the following: The time has come for Canada to pledge support to the developing coalition of nations, including Britain, Australia and the United States, determined to send a clear signal to Saddam Hussein that failure to comply with an unconditional program of inspection, as spelled out in either new or existing UN resolutions, would justify action to ensure the safety of millions of people in the region from Iraq's suspected weapons of mass destruction.

[*Translation*]

The time has come for Canada to join this growing coalition, including Great Britain, Australia and the United States, that is determined to make Saddam Hussein understand that any refusal to comply with an unconditional inspection program, as prescribed in new or existing UN resolutions, would justify action aimed at ensuring the safety of millions of people in the region and protecting them against any weapons of mass destruction that Iraq may have in its possession.

[*English*]

Let me recap where matters stand and the events of today.

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Last weekend Britain and the United States submitted to the permanent five members of the Security Council of the United Nations a draft resolution. In that resolution Iraq would have seven days to accept without conditions a rigorous program of inspection. Upon acceptance Iraq would have 23 days to open all sites, including Saddam Hussein's eight palaces, to full inspection. Last week the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, said that the UN cannot return to the past cat and mouse game of Iraqi resistance to inspection. By all accounts, all members of the Security Council hold that view, though some may differ on issues of timing.

Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector, entered into negotiations with an Iraqi delegation on the modalities of an inspection program. Those very negotiations themselves did not bode well for future compliance. If Iraq were sincere, then the terms of the UN inspection should not have been an issue.

Today in Vienna, Blix and the Iraqi delegation reached an agreement on the inspection modalities. The agreement nonetheless does not yet adequately deal with the access of UN inspectors to the eight presidential sites. These sites are not quaint towers. They contain approximately 1,500 buildings covering some 32 square kilometres. More importantly, the inspection modalities agreement does not take the British-U.S. 30 day access resolution out of the Security Council. If anything the inspection agreement makes passage of the resolution ever more pressing, and I gather that Mr. Powell has indicated that he will pursue that.

Whether or not the Security Council passes a new resolution, a clear and unmistakable message must be sent to Saddam Hussein that his failure to comply completely with not only the UN weapons inspection, but also with the removal of any and all weapons of mass destruction and their components constitutes legitimate ground for direct action to remove the threat of those weapons. A resolution from the Security Council may come this week. It may come just before the UN inspectors return to Baghdad, now scheduled for October 15.

Let me present the reasons why Canada should make clear its own position, and clear immediately, in order to continue building the pressure to reduce the Iraqi threat of weapons of mass destruction.

First, there is justification in international law. In 1991 the Gulf War in which Canada participated as a full coalition partner did not end in an armistice. It ended in a ceasefire agreement in which Iraq agreed to a series of UN resolutions requiring the unconditional and unrestricted inspection of any and all Iraqi sites. The Gulf War itself made clear the necessity and urgency of such inspections. The conflict exposed for the first time the full extent of Saddam's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs. Shortly after Iraq agreed to the conditions of the ceasefire agreement it began to block the UN inspectors and place sites off-limits. The work of the inspectors continued despite the realization that Iraq intended to violate not only the spirit of the ceasefire agreement, but also the letter of the UN inspection resolutions.

By 1997 UN inspectors had declared they could not work effectively and by late 1998 the UN team withdrew. In 1999 a new UN resolution demanded their re-entry. Nothing happened. In July 2002 Kofi Annan concluded that Saddam Hussein had no intention

of complying with its ceasefire commitments and ended negotiations.

As matters stand now, Iraq has defied 14 UN resolutions over 11 years. That fact alone would provide sufficient justification to consider the 1991 ceasefire agreement as no longer in force. The leaders of the Gulf War coalition could therefore be justified in resuming their original action. Britain and the United States chose instead, and chose correctly and wisely in my view, to seek new domestic consensus and to return to the UN one more time to secure an unambiguous resolution on an unconditional and unrestricted program of inspection. Even in the event a new resolution is not forthcoming, justification for action exists both in terms of the original ceasefire and subsequent UN resolutions.

Second, there is justification by the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Some individuals question whether Saddam Hussein does possess weapons of mass destruction sufficient to justify an action to remove the threat of their deployment in a hostile Iraqi action. Let me say first that no doubt exists that Saddam Hussein operates programs to produce weapons of mass destruction.

● (1905)

The relevant question is: in the four years since UN weapons inspectors left Iraq in 1998 how much further has Saddam Hussein progressed in securing these weapons?

One week ago British Prime Minister Tony Blair laid out before the British House of Commons the contents of a special dossier prepared by his country's joint intelligence committee. That dossier laid out in great detail the efforts of Saddam Hussein to acquire new weapons of mass destruction and to conceal existing ones unaccounted for at the end of the Gulf War.

The weapons program of Saddam fall into the following categories: chemical, biological, nuclear and delivery missile systems. I will not review all the evidence in the JIC dossier. The material is in the public domain. I will as an example, however, review the evidence on Iraq's progress toward constructing a nuclear bomb and securing the capacity to deliver one or more such bombs.

I choose to highlight Iraq's nuclear threat because our own intelligence service, CSIS, released in February a report providing strong evidence both of Iraq's intent to construct a nuclear device and its success. It reported that:

During the inspections of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) after the 1991 Gulf War, it was discovered that Iraq had been engaged since the early 1980s in a broad-based and massive, multi-billion dollar program to acquire nuclear weapons, in violation of its pledges under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The UN inspectors learned that the Iraqis had replaced their original bomb design with one small enough to fit on a Scud-type missile. We now know that Iraq may still possess Scud missiles as nine of them still remain unaccounted for since the Gulf War. Additional information has come from a top Iraqi nuclear scientist who defected in 1994. The inspectors determined that Iraq's bomb design will work. The Iraqis have mastered the key technique of creating an implosive shock wave which squeezes a bomb's nuclear material enough to trigger a chain reaction.

The dossier also revealed that Iraq tried to buy the special equipment including 60,000 specialized aluminum tubes necessary to process natural uranium into weapons grade uranium. The dossier identified all of these procurement attempts as having occurred since 1998, since the end of UN inspections.

Today Iraq may possess a nuclear bomb and the ability to launch it at targets in an arc ranging from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Some respond that this information does not constitute proof. To that I reply, not only does the risk exist but Saddam Hussein's possession of a launchable nuclear bomb is also a risk that is a fairly quantifiable one.

In time the odds will only increase that he will possess one. The question we must now consider is: what is the risk Saddam Hussein may launch a nuclear attack should he decide to project his power over the Middle East, feel threatened by other countries or attempt to gain support by launching an attack against Israel or another country?

In 1991 he repeatedly launched Scud missiles against Israel. Let us make no mistake. The prospect of mass death does not deter Saddam Hussein. Members will recall his use of mustard gas on the Kurdish village of Halabja in 1998. It was the largest chemical attack in history in which 5,000 people died and another 10,000 people were injured.

I will recap to make clear the argument. For two decades Saddam Hussein has pursued weapons of mass destruction. The Gulf War only slowed his effort, it did not change his intent. New evidence suggests he has made advances toward acquiring hideous weapons since the departure of UN inspectors in 1998. He has used weapons of mass destruction before. Should he fail to fully comply with either new or existing UN declarations he poses a significant risk to millions of innocent people in the region.

● (1910)

[*Translation*]

The UN failed in Rwanda to respond to evidence of an impending massacre. Should the UN fail again, the very credibility of the organization is at stake. All indications are clear the UN will uphold its resolutions. In any event, a coalition of countries have indicated that the threat posed by such weapons could lead to action aimed at removing that threat. Canada, a country where soldiers did try valiantly to avert the Rwandan massacre, cannot sit idly by in the face of such a threat.

[*English*]

Canada has simply to tell Saddam Hussein that responsible nations including this country will hold him accountable should he

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fail to disclose and dismantle his programs to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Let me move thirdly to justification in Canadian foreign policy. Canadians rightfully and sensibly do not seek war for war's sake. Canadians do not want to see war waged on the basis of propaganda. Canadians do want to see Canada's national security interests and long held values in international diplomacy upheld. The position taken by the Canadian Alliance reflects all three of these conditions.

I note in passing that yesterday the British Labour Party at its conference in Blackpool passed a resolution similar to the position the Canadian Alliance has proposed here tonight.

Any action following Saddam Hussein's failure to allow honest inspections if and when the UN inspection team returns to Iraq must be consistent with international law and should, but not necessarily must, follow from a new UN resolution.

The limits of UN declarations are not the limits of Canadian foreign policy or our security needs. While Canada has always strived to work with the United Nations and other multilateral bodies we have also pursued independent policies with our allies. A case in point is our commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Our NATO commitments have never been subjected to review let alone conditioned by our commitments to the UN. More specifically, we share with the United States a broader commitment to continental and international security. Our commitment to the United Nations should complement our long standing commitment to international security.

The United Nations itself now faces a challenge not unlike Canada's own of committing to a cautious yet responsible approach to the real and emerging threats to global security. Canadians want to uphold the credibility of the United Nations, but the most pressing challenge to the credibility of the United Nations remains Saddam Hussein's continued defiance of the UN resolutions requiring him to disclose and dispose of his programs to acquire chemical, biological and particularly nuclear weapons.

Canada can most assist the United Nations by standing with countries willing to defend the credibility of that body by removing the threat of Saddam Hussein's weapons. Now is not the time to dither but to send a clear signal to Saddam Hussein.

In 1991 the current Prime Minister when he was Leader of the Opposition dithered. He dithered as Iraq first conquered, then terrorized Kuwait. On the night before Desert Storm began the Prime Minister said in this House:

If faced with an act of war, we say on this side of the House that it is premature and that our troops should not be involved in a war at this moment and our troops should be called back if there is a war, unless we decide to be in a war. But we have to have the time—

The official opposition, the Liberal Party, at that time did not take a decisive stand in 1991, but Canada did. It should do no less if necessary in the current situation. If Canada were to remain undecided on the fundamental question now before the international community, it would appear uncertain and hollow in its commitment to international security.

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I am delivering today the clear advice to the government that the then Leader of the Opposition failed to provide in 1991. That advice consists of three statements. Should Saddam Hussein not agree or fulfil an agreement to unconditional and unrestricted access to UN weapon inspectors, Canada should stand with its allies in spelling out clearly to Saddam failure to comply will bring consequences. Should the UN Security Council issue a declaration to demand Iraqi compliance and should Iraq fail to meet those conditions, Canada should stand with its allies in telling Saddam once again failure to comply will bring consequences. Should some UN Security Council members falter in re-emphasizing their own past declarations, Canada should stand with its allies in ensuring that Saddam understands once again failure to comply will bring consequences.

Our position is clear. We do not want to see war in Iraq, but we do want Saddam Hussein stripped of weapons of mass destruction consistent with resolutions of the United Nations.

The government undermines Canada's reputation with its allies and does nothing to uphold the credibility of the United Nations by not joining in sending a clear message to Hussein that failure to comply will bring consequences. Recent events even of today require that Canada send that message now.

• (1915)

It is a great shame of course that while Canada may eventually help to send that message to Saddam Hussein, Canada's forces lack the basic capacities to contribute to any meaningful solution in a significant way.

That failure to ensure that Canadian Forces can uphold Canada's commitment to continental security and to our foreign commitments is a topic for another discussion.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened well to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and he makes several very valid points.

However, in his insistence that the reputation of Canada and the objectives of our foreign policy should be to ensure international security, I have some reservations that he would, if certain steps were not taken in the manner in which he would have them taken, move in a direction that would undermine that very vital institution, the United Nations, that exists to enable us to have international security under which he says we should work.

I would add that if we do move in a manner outside of the United Nations, I think he should have some concern for the precedent he would be recommending for other international settings.

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, I repeat once again that our position is that current United Nations resolutions provide sufficient international justification for action.

In any case, I think the hon. member misunderstands the equation here. The credibility of the United Nations is at stake if the United Nations Security Council members, and, in particular, our allies, do not achieve the objective that is sought here, which is the complete removal of Saddam Hussein's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and all capacity to pursue those programs in the future.

There can be nothing short of that achievement. If we do not achieve that then the credibility of the United Nations will be permanently damaged, as was the League of Nations in a previous incarnation when it failed to take the necessary steps to back the necessary action to ensure international security.

The question here is not whether Canada or our allies would endanger the credibility of the United Nations. The fact is that action will be required on some front, we hope well short of war, to ensure that United Nations resolutions are fulfilled if the credibility of that organization is to be sustained.

• (1920)

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's comments. It sounded like he was challenging the government to participate in military action with or without clarity from the United Nations in further resolutions.

I was surprised that he did not spend equal time in challenging the government to use diplomatic and political measures to try to resolve these differences. However, seeing as the Alliance is always asking and demanding accountability and predicting cost, has the Leader of the Opposition predicted what the costs would be in dollars and, even worse, in lives if Canada were to enter into military conflict in Iraq?

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, obviously, with or without war, we are talking about extremely high and almost incalculable risks and cost. None of us should be fooled by that.

The hon. member did not listen carefully to my speech. I said in my speech that Canada should be party. I praised Britain and the United States for pursuing further diplomatic resolutions through the United Nations. I complimented the government for supporting those diplomatic actions.

What I am suggesting is that these steps and, frankly, the efficacy of these steps cannot end in mere diplomacy. There must be a willingness to apply real capabilities to ensure and to make sure Saddam Hussein understands that our desires and the resolutions previously adopted by the United Nations will be adopted.

I will also scold the hon. member. As I said in my remarks, the situation we have today is a continuation of the gulf war and the ceasefire situation that was left over from that war.

Brian Mulroney, the then Prime Minister and leader of his party, did not hesitate to do the right thing. He did not quibble about cost. He did not quibble about diplomacy. He did not quibble with these intermediate positions the member is now taking. The position Mr. Mulroney took in 1991 was correct. This party is prepared to pursue and fulfil the conditions of that position through today.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me bring just a little bit of clarity at the very beginning to this debate.

Biological warfare weapons will not be confined to the Middle East or Iraq. These are the weapons that are easily portable, easily produced and can be used anywhere by anyone.

Government Orders

In advocating this very strong stand on the part of Canada toward Iraq and possible unilateral action with our allies, is the member prepared to pay the cost in tens of thousands of casualties by a retaliatory biological warfare attack on a Canadian city?

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, doing nothing will not exempt us from the possibility of those kinds of actions in the future. It always amazes me that the Liberals fail to see these kinds of problems.

One of the reasons our party insists that we work closely with our allies on these kinds of matters, particularly the United States, is that we share, not just an economy, a continent, a history and geography with the United States, but in particular that we do share geography. An attack on the United States of a biological, chemical or nuclear nature, particularly if that nature is widespread, would be an attack on this country. We cannot, through the morally neutralist positions of the Liberal Party, exempt ourselves from potentially being hit with those kinds of attacks. Therefore I would urge the hon. member against that kind of thinking.

Obviously I would repeat that we should pursue every means possible with obviously minimal violence to achieve our objectives but we cannot rule out any measures necessary to achieve what was sought in the gulf war and what is being sought in existing United Nations resolutions.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition, and I must say that I was struck to hear him use exactly the same arguments that were used in the United States regarding the fact the UN would lose all credibility, should Saddam Hussein be allowed to ignore the resolutions that were adopted.

I have two questions with regard to that. First, how can one lend credence to a statement hoping that the United Nations will have credibility as an organization when late contribution payments—and I am referring here to the United States—have been accumulating for years?

Second, how could one seriously question the credibility of the UN because one country refuses to comply with 16 resolutions, when Israel has consistently refused to comply with 28 UN resolutions so far?

Can a loss of credibility also result from the United Nations not taking action and letting Israel get away with violating the decisions made by the international community?

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, in answer to that question, I would like to quote, if I may, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

True, there are issues with the resolutions dealing with Israel and with the money owed by the United States and other countries.

I think such comments are not useful to the much more serious debate we are having here. I also think it is important, in particular, not to make any comparison with Israel and the United States, which are our allies, our friends, but also members of the democratic family of nations. It is totally pointless to make any comparison between these countries and Iraq under the regime of Mr. Hussein.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one of the reasons we are in this situation is the lack of development of a credible opposition in Iraq. I think the Kurds are a very special case.

Let us assume that we can settle the matter of the weapons of mass destruction in some reasonable way. What should we do next? Would the member support, for example, a removal of the sanctions so that the people of Iraq could build up their confidence and strength and develop a reasonable opposition, or does he have other suggestions as to how the sanctions could be changed in order that Saddam Hussein, following this crisis, could be challenged in his own—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. Leader of the Opposition has a final word.

Mr. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, in the few moments I have left it is probably too difficult to deal with all the questions that have been raised by the hon. member. Let us just say that we have an immediate problem in front of us and that problem must be resolved obviously through, I think, a wide range of means.

All of us here in all parties would agree that we would like to see Iraq return to the family of nations and we would like to see the people of that country enjoy all of the benefits of the international community.

This obviously goes far beyond. It raises many hypothetical questions about how that could be achieved and whether it could ever in fact be achieved under the current regime. Some of us here are very skeptical about that but I do not think we can answer all those questions today. I think the task before us is to make absolutely clear that we have some security objectives that must be attained if any of this is to move forward in a positive manner.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that it is important for the Bloc and for myself to indicate right at the onset of tonight's debate that any action or position that would entail anything but a diplomatic involvement in Iraq would first have to be debated and voted on in the House of Commons.

Not only must we debate and vote if we are to take part in any military action, but even if we were to get involved under the aegis of the United Nations, we would still need to debate and vote on the issue.

Let me quote something Henri Bourassa said during the debate on Canada's involvement in the South African War and which is well worth its weight in gold. About a century ago, he said:

The government cannot levy a tax without the approval of the House of Commons. But is there a price higher than the blood of our children?

Government Orders

This is unquestionably a fundamental democratic requirement. People have the right to know why, when and who supports Canada's military or other involvement in a conflict like the one with Iraq. I would add that the government should remember that, by failing to have such a debate and a vote before making the decision to send troops in Afghanistan as part of a UN task force led by the Americans, it violated the laws of our country, which provide that a prisoner taken by a Canadian soldier cannot be transferred to a country where the death penalty is in effect. This is against Canadian laws. Canada paid the price for not having listened to the many people who spoke up at the time.

As members know, even in London there was a debate and a vote last week. Another debate and another vote will take place later on. Even though 54 members of the Prime Minister's party have already opposed his policy regarding Iraq, as soon as a decision is made by the security council regarding a possible intervention, British members of Parliament will have to meet and vote again.

I just got back, along with other members of this House, from the Council of Europe. We have had a most interesting, useful, strong and tough debate on the conflict involving Iraq.

I would like to read excerpts from the resolution, because it helps us understand what officials of all political stripes in these 44 countries, officials who know more than we do about wars and solutions to conflicts, have to say on this issue. This was immediately after Iraq accepted the unconditional return of inspectors. I am quoting the parliamentarians from the 44 countries:

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly notes with satisfaction Iraq's acceptance of the unconditional return of the UN disarmament inspectors, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1284.

• (1930)

The resolution passed by the 44 countries goes on to say:

This is an essential first step towards ensuring that Iraq no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction. The Assembly notes, however, that Iraq has reneged on its commitments on several occasions in the past and expresses reservations about the intention of the Iraqi authorities to honour their promises.

Second, it states, and I quote:

The international community must continue to demand that the Iraqi authorities comply in full with the United Nations Security Council's resolutions concerning the prohibition of Iraqi programs to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations inspectors and disarmament experts must be permitted to resume their on-site work immediately, with unlimited access and with guarantees, in order to be able to report to the security council on whether or not Iraq complied with these resolutions.

To digress a little, I was very surprised at the debate that has gone on here in the House, because everyone neglected to say that, today, an agreement was reached between Hans Blix, the UN inspection coordinator, and the Iraqi authorities. There has been agreement, and from what I saw on television, the inspectors were expecting to be back in Iraq within two weeks. There has been an agreement on unlimited and unconditional access to the sites. This is in place.

When I heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs say that he supported the approach of Great Britain and the United States, which are demanding a new resolution before inspectors return to Iraq, I wanted to ask him the following: is he not aware that instead of promoting peace, instead of letting inspectors do their job—which is to detect and destroy any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—such

a resolution only sours the climate, delays deadlines and threatens to push the world closer to a war that is not necessary at this time?

However, allow me to continue with the resolution from the Council of Europe, which reads:

The Assembly emphasizes its conviction that any armed conflict must be avoided prior to examination of this report by the Security Council.

Once again, I refer to the resolution that the Minister of Foreign Affairs wants to support. If the first UN resolution contained something along the lines of "if it fails to conform to the aforementioned rules, appropriate actions will be taken", thereby suggesting that there might then be military action, then it would no longer be up to the security council to make a unilateral decision to use force against a country that appears to be a threat to peace. It would be up to either the United States or to Great Britain, or both, or else to other countries, but not to the security council.

Let the inspectors get in there. Now that the co-ordinator has negotiated an agreement to his satisfaction, it seems to me that it would make sense to help advance peace, that there is a will to drive Saddam Hussein up against a wall.

The Assembly is deeply concerned at the rift that could open between the West and the Islamic world in the event of an armed conflict. In this respect the Assembly welcomes the stance taken by the Arab countries which have put pressure on the Iraqi authorities to accept the UN's demands.

Accordingly, the Assembly disapproves that the United States is indicating a willingness to move towards armed conflict without a mandate from the Security Council.

• (1935)

The proposed resolution continues as follows:

Such an attitude is in accordance neither with the principles of international law nor with the objectives of the Council of Europe, to which, as an Observer State, the United States is expected to subscribe. The Assembly encourages the continued efforts by members of the Security Council to secure the adoption of a new resolution on Iraq.

It goes on:

In the absence of explicit approval by the Security Council, any unilateral action by the United States, even where supported by other countries, would be likely to destabilise peace severely and deal a serious blow to the authority of the United Nations. A unilateral approach could also lead to divisions within the democratic countries and compromise the international community's cohesion in the fight against terrorism.

I would remind the House that this resolution was adopted not just by parliamentarians from the left or the centre, but also from the right. The parliamentary assembly broadly supported this resolution.

I would merely add that the assembly also called on all Council of Europe member states to refrain from supporting any action not covered by a mandate of the United Nations Security Council. Many British colleagues are members of this assembly.

One question which troubles me too kept coming up during the debates. Can anyone tell me why Saddam Hussein suddenly became such a threat to world peace a few weeks ago? With respect to the fight against terrorism, we all said that it would require a broad coalition and the pooling of many resources. Ideologically, it would require trust and a change in mentalities, the use of all means of intelligence and defence. This fight against terrorism was the priority and, in this regard, we were going to have to try to bring all countries on side if possible. How is it that this priority has suddenly been replaced by the need to attack Saddam Hussein?

Government Orders

I say “attack” because I was extremely disappointed to see that, after his big speech to the United Nations, President Bush seemed nonplussed when Iraq agreed to the unconditional return of UN inspectors. It was as though this was not what he wanted and he later clarified. It was not what he wanted. What he wanted was a change of regime.

However, what is desirable in order to achieve peace? Which leads me to the following question: Why Saddam Hussein? Is it because he is a dictator? Yes, he is a dictator. How many are there in the world? Let us look at the issue from a different angle. Out of 191 countries, how many are democracies? Not the majority, as we know. There are numerous dictators. Do many of them have the means to flex their muscles? Yes.

Let me remind the House that Mr. Musharraf, who took over from a democratic government, was considered a threat because he had access to nuclear weapons. When he showed that he could help us in the war in Afghanistan, he became our ally and our friend. At such a time, nuclear weapons are quite useful. Part of his armed forces support the conflict in Kashmir, but he is still our friend.

● (1940)

Saddam Hussein is a cruel dictator, indeed. He has done awful things. He gassed at least 5,000 Kurds, and this has been documented. While he was doing that, the United States supported him in his war against Iran. They provided him with very useful information and with much more, according to some sources. At that time, there was no rush to act.

That dictator could very well have weapons of mass destruction. However, not everyone is on agreement on this. Just a couple of weeks ago, a CIA senior official said “We do not know”. The role of the inspectors is precisely to find out. What is the inspectors' job all about? They are not only to find out, but also to destroy.

I am very pleased that this agreement has been reached between Hans Blix and the Iraqi authorities. I am, however, very concerned when I read in *Le Monde* and hear on the news that the Americans have indicated that they would try to block the return of the UN disarmament inspectors if this were to be carried out without a new resolution from the security council. They have said, “We will take action to block this return until a new resolution is passed” according to an unidentified high ranking State Department official who spoke to the press. His response to a question as to how the U.S. might go about this was to say, “We have a certain influence in the security council”.

This worries me. I would like to remind hon. members, since statements to the contrary have been made on at least two occasions here in the House, that, when the inspectors left in 1998, it was not because the Iraqis chased them out, as has been said. When Scott Ritter, who was chief inspector from 1991 to 1998, appeared before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, he said that they had left was simply because the U.S. government given them orders to do so, the day before a planned unilateral military strike that had been mounted using intelligence gathered by the inspectors.

What lies behind the fear shared by many members of the public is, I believe—as hon. members are aware, the people of Quebec have

been telling us that war is not necessary—is this new concept of unilateral pre-emptive strikes.

In a document released last Friday, a new strategic doctrine, the United States has developed a program that has certain very positive aspects, but others that are a source of ongoing concern.

In closing, I would like to say that this notion of preventive strikes, which goes far beyond what is allowed in international law, which permits self-defence if there is imminent danger, this notion of pre-emptive strikes takes us well back into the 19th century, when states acknowledged the right to wage war. This was a century marked by terrible wars.

Then World War I led to the creation of an international institution, with a sizeable contribution by the American Thomas Woodrow Wilson, although it proved not to be up to the task.

In 1928, the Briand-Kellogg pact—the first the French minister of foreign affairs, the other American—was signed by all countries, acknowledging that the countries would no longer use war to accomplish national objectives.

● (1945)

Finally, we had World War II with, this time, the UN charter, which was signed by everyone. This set of institutions was just completed with the international criminal court.

A debate will have to take place. Clear positions will have to be defined. Some courageous people will have to stand up and say that we cannot go back to the 19th century. We are on the way to peace through diplomatic means, through means that are all related to the UN.

● (1950)

[*English*]

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member for Mercier. She and I frequently go to the venue she described, the Council of Europe. I am sure all of us benefited from her having been at the recent session wherein it was discussed.

However, it is very important to reinforce what the minister has said. There is no intent whatsoever on the part of the Government of Canada to support pre-emptive strikes but to operate through the very venerable institution she too applauds, and that is the United Nations.

We look back through history as she mentioned and indeed we see what the 19th century was with respect to pre-emptive strikes. It had another name at that time. We need to look back as well to 1938, to Chamberlain in Munich and to appeasement. There has to be consequences.

The minister has made it clear how we seek to make those consequences known to Mr. Hussein. That is through the United Nations. It is very important not to be selective in what historical precedents we reach for.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, this provides me with the opportunity to say that, even at the Council of Europe, in the text that I wrote, I was pleased with what the minister said about pre-emptive strikes. However, I want to repeat that by supporting a new UN security council resolution providing that, should Iraq fail to comply, action will be taken, the minister is allowing those who might want to do so to say “This should not be done”.

I think that he is doing himself, and the positions that he has taken, a lot of harm. This is the first point.

Second, as regards Chamberlain and 1938, a comparison is not possible. While Saddam Hussein may be a despicable dictator—and the idea is not to make comparisons—the situation is not at all the same. Saddam Hussein is the leader of a country with a population of 25 million. This country has been under an embargo for 12 years, and we know that its military capabilities are extremely limited. As regards pre-emptive strikes, I read everything I could. There are possibilities and capabilities, but that is all.

When one compares this to everything that is going on elsewhere, all the other dictators, all those other countries that have means that they could provide terrorists with, why is there such a rush now and why use this type of pre-emptive strike that would thrust us back into another era?

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, like all members in this place, I agree that the decision to use military force should not be taken lightly. War is serious. If we engage in one, we must understand in advance that no matter how many precautions we take, innocent lives will be lost. Canadian soldiers may be killed. We owe it to ourselves to try to make the peace process work. We also owe it to ourselves to stand up against tyranny in the world. It is not an easy balance.

The Iraqi government has a long history of subverting our good intentions and we cannot allow this to happen again. Less than a week after agreeing to the return of the weapons inspectors, Iraq sent signals to the contrary. The member talked about the weapons inspectors. They were not kicked out; they left. Exactly the opposite is happening now.

To expect the world will be a more secure place by appeasing Iraq by continuing to spin in diplomatic circles and by allowing Iraq to make a mockery of the UN security resolutions is just not plausible. We have to stand up to Iraq. At some point in time we have to say that enough is enough.

Does the member not agree that at some point we have to stand up to defend the people and join with our allies and that we may have to go to war? We cannot pretend that we can reach into a magic bottle and that peace will happen. If it is not there and Iraq continues to make a mockery of the UN, does she not agree that we should then stand with our allies?

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked a number of questions together. I would start by reminding him that

the people of Iraq have suffered enormously since 1990. The member is certainly aware of the UNICEF studies from several years ago already that estimated the death toll there at more than one million.

It really is an extremely serious situation. True, we must not let people ignore UN resolutions. However, Saddam Hussein is not the first to do so. Undeniably, he did not comply with all of the resolutions in the past, and it is important to point this out because our committee heard testimony to that effect. And indeed, there were spies in UNSCOM, this was so evident that they changed the structure of the committee of inspectors, who are now all hired by the UN and report to the UN since 1998. However, they have yet to get in. Now they have the opportunity to get in if they are let in. We must not prevent them from going in through a new resolution.

And now, dear colleagues, Saddam Hussein will have to comply. The agreement is that these inspectors have the right to go everywhere, unconditionally. Let them go in. If they are stopped, they will come back to the security council. Then, there will be another debate under completely different circumstances.

However, right now there is no evidence. Let the inspectors go in now, without trying to prevent them, as some are trying to do.

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party I am very pleased this evening to participate in this important debate on Iraq, focusing specifically on the crucial role which Canada can and must play in avoiding any possible disastrous war in Iraq.

I am greatly relieved that this debate is taking place on the very day that an agreement has been reached assuring the return of the UN weapons inspection team into Iraq. This resumption of inspections to detect and destroy any illegal nuclear, chemical or biological weapons in full compliance with existing UN Security Council rules is a critically important step toward easing the terrifying tension that has been escalating between Iraq and the U.S., tensions which potentially could threaten to destabilize all the Middle East.

Members are aware that the foreign affairs committee met recently at the urging of both the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois to encourage our own federal government to play a more proactive role in facilitating re-entry of the weapons inspectors into Iraq. With the exception of the Alliance always more interested in supporting the Bush administration's sabre rattling, all MPs participating on that foreign affairs committee were of one accord about the importance of Canada being more proactive in helping to facilitate the return of the weapons inspectors to Iraq and averting any war in Iraq.

Government Orders

The agreement reached today to ensure resumption of inspections for any weapons of mass destruction has been welcomed by the entire international community with the exception sadly, but predictably, of the United States. Instead of applauding this important step on the path to peace, what did we hear from White House officials this afternoon? We heard more talk threatening pre-emptive military strikes and unprecedented measures to force regime change in defiance of international law and even in defiance of its own 1976 directive forbidding assassination as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy.

Happily these dangerous provocations by the U.S. administration have not been mimicked on this occasion by the British prime minister. It was a relief for all of those who have been working to diffuse U.S.-Iraqi tensions to learn that Prime Minister Tony Blair had supported a labour party resolution at its annual convention in Blackpool yesterday declaring that British troops would participate in any action against Iraq only “after the exhaustion of all other political and diplomatic measures”.

We should welcome that moderation on the part of the British prime minister, and at the same time congratulate those within his own party and within Great Britain who have worked very hard to try to persuade the British prime minister not to act in accordance with George Bush in the kind of sabre rattling toward Iraq that we have seen all too frequently in recent weeks and months.

That brings me to Canada's current position. The New Democratic Party on several occasions has congratulated the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for their strong assertions and strong declarations urging multilateralism, insisting upon international law. It was reassuring earlier this evening to hear the foreign affairs minister give assurances that he would continue to advocate international law and multilateralism in our efforts to avert war in Iraq. However it is worrisome that both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in every other statement on alternate days it seems, sound far more like errand boys for the Bush administration as it continues to ratchet up its war threats.

Members will remember that just a couple of years ago very proudly in this Parliament, Canada conferred upon Nelson Mandela the award of honorary Canadian citizen. It was a proud moment.

● (2000)

We would do well on this occasion to heed the recent warnings of Nelson Mandela that the U.S. threats to attack Iraq are “introducing chaos in international affairs”. We can be sure that Nelson Mandela did not choose those words lightly when he described the United States as a threat to world peace for its campaign to overthrow the government of Iraq. For him to have said so clearly that it must be condemned in the strongest possible terms is something that we need to take very seriously.

Perhaps not quite as dramatic in his assertions, UN secretary general Kofi Annan has similarly warned for any state large or small choosing to follow or reject the multilateral path must not be a simple matter of political convenience.

This past week I was in Washington D.C. There is serious and mounting opposition in that American capital and throughout the United States to the advocacies of the U.S. president to act outside of

international law. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, much respected for her courageous opposition to the American war in Afghanistan, continues to speak out. She said:

Our nation is today on the verge of going to war against Iraq. In a rush to launch a first strike, we risk destabilizing the Middle East and setting an international precedent that could come back to haunt us all. President Bush's doctrine of pre-emption violates international law, the charter of the United Nations and our own long-term security interests. It forecloses alternatives to war before we have even tried to pursue them.

Senator Ted Kennedy is another of those who has been questioning the Bush approach to solving international crises, reminding us “There are realistic alternatives between doing nothing and declaring unilateral or immediate war”. He went on to say:

A largely unilateral American war that is widely perceived in the Muslim world as untimely or unjust could worsen not lessen the threat of terrorism. War with Iraq before a genuine attempt at inspection and disarmament, or without genuine international support—could swell the ranks of Al Qaeda sympathizers and trigger an escalation in terrorist acts.

Surely these warnings should be sufficient for Canada to ensure that the weapons inspection agreement reached today proceeds without putting that agreement at risk by introducing another Security Council resolution. It is worth reminding ourselves that in 1998, when the previous American administration called off UN weapons inspections in Iraq, 90% to 95% of Iraqi weapons and their production facilities had been destroyed.

With the United Nations inspections now resuming, providing solid hope that war can be averted, it is more important than ever that our own government get its act together. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister, his Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have been delivering different messages to different audiences on different occasions.

No other country is positioned as uniquely as Canada to pressure the U.S. to back off from further demanding new more militant Security Council resolutions threatening military aggression against Iraq if it fails to comply with existing Security Council resolutions. We are after all the largest trading partner and closest neighbour of the United States. While we took part in the gulf war, Canada continues to enjoy the respect of Iraq and, astonishingly perhaps, its seal of approval for the role of diplomatic intermediary. This is a unique opportunity for Canada and for our Prime Minister to step up their efforts to get the world on a path of lasting peace.

● (2005)

Critics who have forgotten our recent contribution on the world court in the international landmines treaty will cynically argue that negotiations are ongoing at the UN and members of its Security Council are currently already negotiating the contents of the next resolution on Iraq. Canada, after all, does not have the power to persuade the U.S. or others that the U.S. has pushed in supporting more militant, strident Security Council resolutions.

Government Orders

Canada should not bury its head in the sand and leave the difficult diplomatic work to other nations. We have a moral obligation to assert ourselves internationally in this debate in an even more aggressive way than we have done to date. We have a rich legacy of made in Canada solutions to challenges facing the global community and thousands of innocent Iraqis, already suffering from a decade of economic strangulation, are depending upon Canada to try to persuade the U.S. to seize the opportunity that has opened up for weapons inspections to resume. It is not naive. It is a fact that if we assume the very worst of any citizen or of any nation of the world, then we are likely to bring on the very worst.

As we participate in this evening's debate, the question has shifted dramatically to whether there is a need for another UN Security Council resolution. This is what we know. As we debate the issue in the House tonight the world is reacting with relief to the news that Iraq accepts all rights of inspections provided for in all existing relevant Security Council resolutions.

For years Canada joined the world in demanding that Iraq agree to the resumption of weapons inspections and that it meet all of the conditions outlined in the current Security Council resolutions. Today Iraq has officially complied. How does Canada react? It signals its support for another UN Security Council resolution.

I am astounded at the position of members of the official opposition. I do not know why I am astounded. Nothing should surprise us any more. Their gung ho approach to attacking Iraq, circumventing the legitimate role of the United Nations and the absolute necessity for a multilateral approach is downright scary. They seem prepared for the U.S., in fact they seem to want the U.S., flanked by Canada and the U.K., guns ablazing, to go right on in and attack Iraq. How absolutely irresponsible and absolutely insulting to all those nations that have worked so hard on the diplomatic front to bring about a non-violent solution. They probably regard the Bush administration's new foreign policy doctrine as too mild.

What we as a nation should be debating is what it is that Canada can do on the diplomatic front to ensure that Iraq does meet its obligations. That is the window of opportunity that has opened up to the world.

Tonight the New Democratic Party suggests that instead of the counterproductive approach of another UN security resolution, the global community offers the more positive reward of a return to the global community and the removal of economic sanctions that have strangled the Iraq population for over a decade. Let Canada live up to our proud diplomatic tradition. Let us live up to what the international community believes that we can achieve by staying the course for peace.

● (2010)

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have just a comment really. The member alluded to the fact that the unilateral actions taken in Iraq may prompt a terrorist response. I think she makes a very important point because the consequences of an attack on Iraq will not be confined to the Middle East. What it will do is legitimize a terrorist response all across the world and anywhere in the world may be a target.

Anyone that is perceived as having taken part in an illegal attack on Iraq will be seen as entitled to an illegal response or a response that is outside the norm. This is precisely what we are seeing in Israel and Palestine. The more one retaliates against suicide bombings, the more it legitimizes suicide bombing as a method of terrorist attack, of reprisal.

I think we should all hesitate and consider very carefully that a multilateral approach, a UN approach, is the appropriate way to go. If we do become a party of a unilateral approach, we will very much be a party of the retaliation that is likely to come not from Iraq but from the people like those in al-Qaeda that sympathize with, I should not say a terrorist regime, but the type of regime that exists in Iraq.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Madam Speaker, I welcome the member's comments. I have to say in the same way that moderation has been urged upon the British prime minister by backbenchers who understand the situation and the horrors of unilateral action, it would be very much welcomed. I want to congratulate those members on the government benches who have also been trying to counsel and persuade their own government not to go down that path of unilateralism.

One of the things that was very important that happened in May as it relates to the stability of the Middle East is that the Council of the Arab League worked very hard to reach out and bring Iraq back into the council and into the international community. Clearly the fact that today an agreement was reached between Iraq and the United Nations inspectors is a very promising, hopeful sign.

I hope that all members of the House will understand how important it is that we make that breakthrough. It is an important breakthrough. It is what we have all been working toward. We should make sure we reinforce it by not going off on a tangent to introduce a new, more militant, stringent Security Council resolution. It will put at risk the important agreement reached today and the fact that we are finally launched on that path toward resumption of weapons inspections in Iraq.

It will not take very much, and we know this to be true, to possibly tear that agreement to shreds by assuming that we cannot count on the Iraqi government to comply with the agreement reached today. We do not want to let that happen.

● (2015)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I really am astounded by the ability of the member to allow her ideology to triumph over reason, common sense and historical experience. I do not know where she has been for the past decade.

She said that the technical agreement on modalities today somehow represents a historic breakthrough and that Iraq has now officially complied with the UN resolutions. There are no inspectors testing Iraq's willingness to comply. It was a promise to comply, the same promise which the world has heard time and time again and which has been broken time and time again. What gives the member reason to believe that has changed? Does she not agree that only the very clear threat of military action has once again brought Iraq back to the table?

Government Orders

Further, in terms of her absolute blind belief in the ability of the United Nations to solve problems, would she not agree that sometimes responsible democratic countries must take action to save lives and to protect the peace and international order when international institutions fail to do so? Would she not agree that the international community would have been responsible to have intervened in Rwanda to save the 800,000 civilians who were slaughtered and who were not protected because of UN inaction?

Does she not agree that it was responsible for NATO and Canada to intervene in Kosovo and protect innocent Kosovars in the face of UN inaction because of a Russian veto? Would she not learn from the historical experience of the League of Nations in the 1930s and its failure to act to preserve the international peace where international institutions failed to do so?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Madam Speaker, I have two brief responses to the question put by the Alliance member. One is to remind him that it was his party tonight that interfered with the kind of free flow and exchange that could have happened here when the foreign affairs minister agreed to extend the time to allow more of an exchange. The member's party does not really seem interested in a full airing of the options for finding a peaceful solution to the situation in Iraq.

The member wants to know what gives me the right, or whatever the words were that he flung at me, to cite today's agreement between Iraq and the UN inspection team as being of important significance. Well I will tell you, Madam Speaker, what gives me the basis for doing that. It is that Hans Blix himself has said that the Iraqi representatives have accepted all the rights of inspections that have been laid down in previous resolutions authorizing UN inspections.

The basis for the U.S. warmongering toward Iraq has been that it has insisted Iraq would not agree to comply with the Security Council resolutions. Today through the United Nations weapons inspection team head, it has agreed to that. Let us build on that. Let us move toward a path of peace for which the world is desperately searching, and let Canada be part of achieving that peace.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the leader of the New Democratic Party on her speech, which parallels my views. Given her broad political experience, I would like her to explain to me why Canada is headed in this direction. I think that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is sincere when he talks about multilateral action. However, it must be emphasized that the Canadian government feels that it has to follow the United States in its rush toward war, which the member so eloquently described.

Given her political experience and her perception, what does she think has driven the Canadian government to this point?

• (2020)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Madam Speaker, far be it from me to try to explain the actions of the foreign affairs minister or the ambivalence that is demonstrated all too often in the Prime Minister's assertions, or the Deputy Prime Minister's assertions, toward Iraq.

I want to give the benefit of the doubt here. What I will say is that the Prime Minister and the foreign affairs minister have been correct in this respect to be supportive of recent U.S. actions. When we saw President Bush go to the United Nations to engage a round, seeking a solution in Iraq, if I understand correctly, the position of the Canadian government was to applaud that and try to reinforce it. That is not something with which I or my party disagree. We all agree that it was exceedingly important for President Bush to go to the United Nations. We want to do anything we can possibly do to reinforce the possibility of the United States acting within the rule of international law and acting in the spirit of multilateralism.

What is very disappointing is to see that there is not a kind of wholesale embracing by the government of the important opportunity that has opened up here in terms of making sure that the weapons inspection goes ahead undeterred, uninterrupted by new sabre rattling by the U.S., because we know that weapons inspections are not an end in themselves. Weapons inspections are about determining if in fact there are any weapons of mass destruction.

Let us be very clear here that the way to deal with that problem surely is not to unleash any possible illegal weapons that Iraq may have on the rest of the world. The objective is to make sure that those weapons of mass destruction, if they exist, are in fact destroyed to make the world a safer place.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Madam Speaker, this is the second time in recent weeks that the House of Commons has addressed issues relating to Iraq. The first, as mentioned by my colleague from Halifax, was at a meeting of the standing committee several days ago. In both cases, that meeting and tonight, it is fair to say that the initiative was taken by Parliament rather than by the government.

I commend the members of the committee and the House leaders of all parties, in particular my own who I think wrote the letter that was critical in this case, for taking that initiative. However, I want to recommend to the government that it become much more proactive in providing information to Parliament, and through Parliament to the public.

These are very difficult times, not at all ordinary. Canadians are increasingly uneasy about the prospects of terror or of attack or war. Canadians are aware that our country may have to make very difficult, literally life and death decisions. People in this country do not shrink from those decisions but they would take them more easily if they were involved and informed.

During the gulf war, which I acknowledge was a very different time, after the conflict had begun, the government in which I served as foreign affairs minister began the practice of regular public meetings with a committee of Parliament. Those meetings were televised live so citizens could see and learn. Ministers attended regularly as did senior officials. It is fair to say that those meetings were not adversarial; they were not particularly partisan as committee meetings sometimes are, but they did involve the exchange of information as well as the exchange of opinions.

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[Translation]

The government will undoubtedly benefit from the views expressed this evening by members of the House. However, we all know how easy it is to ignore take-note debates.

[English]

What would really be helpful would be for the government to make a determined effort to make information available, not only on this issue but on some of the issues relating to al-Qaeda. I continue to be shocked by the answer given by the Solicitor General some months ago when I asked about information on the al-Qaeda network. I was told that it would breach national security if the House were advised. Later that day I read on the website of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom the very information I had sought.

We need to know what evidence the Government of Canada has of any connection the Iraqi regime has to al-Qaeda or to other terrorist organizations. It would be very useful to know the most up to date information the minister and his officials have of the possibility of a nuclear capacity in Iraq.

We would be very much interested in knowing in some detail what it is that Canada is doing, not only diplomatically and not only in the United Nations but elsewhere in the world. There are a range of other questions on which it would be very helpful to have the government regularly inform parliament and be available for questioning. It would be in everybody's interest. I think it would help develop consensus in the country as to what the real issues are and what our options are.

My party and I very much welcome the decision by President Bush to go back to the United Nations. There was great concern that might not happen. I hope that the Government of Canada will do everything it can to encourage the Americans to continue to work through the United Nations system.

When the Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke he said that there was no need for mediation because Iraq was itself a member of the United Nations and that it had its own ways of determining its own interests and information.

We may not disagree on that but I want to make a point to him very strongly, again borne out of experience in a similar situation. There is an immense amount that Canada can do in terms of seeking to bring our influence to bear on countries and perhaps organizations or individuals who may have influence that we do not on the regime in Iraq.

There is no doubt that Russia is a critical player in terms of the attitude that the Saddam Hussein regime will ultimately take. There are extensive connections between the governments. They remain active. We should be using our influence with Russia. We should be doing the same with Iran. We should be doing the same with Turkey. There are other countries which the minister could identify.

I know from some experience that in an earlier situation with Saddam Hussein we literally did everything we could. We literally called everyone we could think of to try to bring some influence to bear on that regime. I will not pretend it worked but I do believe it

was worth the effort because there are few other countries in the world that have the capacity of Canada to do that kind of thing.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the position that Canada took during the gulf war. I want to make a couple of things clear to the House. One was that we became part of a coalition then in the United Nations but it was a coalition that was marked by its breadth and by its diversity. Its strength was that it was broad and that it was diverse. That is what made that coalition work.

The circumstances are very different now. Canadians in particular should not pretend that the extent of the coalition now is the same as it was before.

We were, as the Leader of the Opposition said, prepared to use force. We were prepared, however, to use force in the context of the United Nations. In case there is any misunderstanding, I simply want to make the record of Canada very clear, at that time we also used every diplomatic instrument we could find. We resorted to force as a last resort. That should be the practice that is followed I believe now by Canada.

We need of course to know and to contain the danger posed by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. He is an extremely dangerous man. It is an extremely dangerous regime. I do not think anyone disputes that.

• (2025)

We have to be very clear as to what our goal is here. I can do no better than quote the Foreign Minister of Sweden, Anna Lindh, who said a few days ago "Saddam Hussein is a terrible dictator, but it is not the objective of the United Nations to get rid of him. The objective of the United Nations is to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction".

I think that is very much worth our bearing in mind as Canadians. I share the satisfaction I think throughout the House that Hans Blix believes that he now has an agreement that will allow the return of weapons inspectors to Iraq. However it is very important to note that it is an agreement. There have been agreements before. It is not done yet. We must find every instrument at our disposal to ensure that the agreement announced today by Hans Blix is in fact given effect.

Personally, I think it is probably helpful in these circumstances that countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are indicating that there are options other than just the United Nations option that they would want to follow. That is their decision. I think it is not unhelpful in terms of trying to ensure that Saddam Hussein understands the seriousness of the position the world has taken.

In our circumstances, the position of Canada, at least at this time, is far better and more effectively exercised trying to make the authority of the United Nations as respected as possible. Whatever the Americans and the British do on their side, and whatever countries who have such credentials in the United Nations as we do, those avenues should be pursued.

I and I think others in the House are concerned that with the recent preoccupation with Iraq there has been less attention given to the danger of terror and to the al-Qaeda network and the al-Qaeda connection.

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We have to bear in mind that one of the grave dangers of any unilateral action taken outside the United Nations, or indeed an agitation for that kind of action, is that it will weaken the coalition that fights terror. We simply cannot afford to have that happen. We also must, as others in this debate have made clear, be conscious of the high tensions in the Arab and the Islamic world. We have to take great care not to trigger violence and disorder there. There has long been tension in the streets of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and of course in the Palestinian authority. It is a very delicate and dangerous time and we have to be careful that inadvertent actions are not taken that may have the consequences of lighting fires that are in tinder dry situations.

I want to make a couple of separate observations about the United Nations and about the United States of America. I will start with the U.S.A.

The Americans of course are a superpower. It is a country of confidence and accomplishment. They do not bother me as much as they bother my colleague from Halifax. It is a country, and this is the point I want to make, that I think is both unusually angered and threatened by the terrorist attacks of a year ago. Those attacks struck us too. They took Canadian lives. They shocked us out of our complacency. However, for better or for worse, those attacks gave even deeper offence to the United States. That is a factor that we cannot ignore as we consider how Canada can best contribute to both the campaign against terror and the urgent question of Iraq.

I believe the current Canadian government has mishandled its relations with the Bush administration. We can discuss that another time. The point I want to make tonight is that the bonds between these two North American democracies are deep enough to overcome tensions between administrations.

● (2030)

[*Translation*]

The bottom line is that we are still the country with the greatest capacity to influence the opinion of U.S. decision makers.

[*English*]

Again, in very different circumstances, my experience has been that Canada can influence Washington even though we disagree on serious issues. One reason for that is that although we have similar roots we see the world differently. The United States is a superpower and we are not. It understands that we sometimes see things, hear things and understand things that it does not.

As was the case in the gulf war, we should be doing everything possible to encourage the Americans to continue, as I said before, to work within the context of the United Nations but there are other things we should be doing with them.

It is very important for the Government of Canada at whatever level to be making the case to the United States of how contagious and dangerous the idea of regime change can be. If one starts with Iraq, where does one stop? Does one then go to North Korea? Does one go to Burma? Does one go to Zimbabwe? Does one go to Cuba? It is a very dangerous precedent and it is very important for a country like Canada to use our influence with the United States and make that case calmly but emphatically and consistently.

With our interest in international development and our roots around the world, I think Canada has a heavy obligation to make the case about just how difficult it is to rebuild societies once they have become destabilized. The experience in Afghanistan is not encouraging. The experience in other places where regimes have been displaced is not encouraging. That is not, of course, to express support for the regime of Saddam Hussein. On the contrary, it is to say that no one should assume that society building is simple. When one computes the costs, and the costs here are immense, not simply the financial costs but the costs in terms of potential violence and the cost in human lives, we must recognize that it is not at all simple to reconstruct societies that come undone.

I thought it might be appropriate tonight to say something about the United Nations. I think that in some quarters the UN is seen as just a talk shop. There is no doubt that caution, delay and compromise are part of the UN culture. In a sense that is natural. It reflects the diverse and difficult world in which the UN functions. However what we need to remember is that the United Nations is the organization that always gets the tough jobs and which, quite often, despite its failures, gets those jobs done.

Countries do not take easy issues to the United Nations. The easy issues get settled at home. The UN is called in when normal procedures fail. What is unique about the United Nations is that it can confer a legitimacy on actions which would otherwise be unpopular, extremely dangerous or indeed impossible.

Most people think of the United Nations, I think, in humanitarian terms. Of course it does wonderful humanitarian work, but it was not set up for humanitarian purposes. It was set up for political purposes, political in the best sense of that word: to resolve disputes peacefully, to encourage order and to try to make hard decisions.

There have been references to the League of Nations and its failures. We should remember some history of how the United Nations came into being. We should remember the chaos and international disorder that engulfed the globe in two world wars. The men and women who designed the United Nations were not idealists in the weak or pejorative sense of that word. They were realists, worn by war, steeped in suffering. They had seen in that very League of Nations the futility of rules without a capacity to enforce them. They knew that, as in societies everywhere, rules will only be obeyed if they are enforced and if they are not enforced, then the rules become meaningless and societies themselves cease to be peaceful for anyone. So they built into the charter of the United Nations the right and the capacity to deter aggression and to reverse it by force if necessary when it occurred.

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• (2035)

There is often talk of soft power. The United Nations can be hard power, capable of exercising both physical force and moral force. I make this point to emphasize that the United Nations option is not an option of either weakness or inaction. It is an option of strong action based on rules, action with the weight of international legitimacy. In this case it is the capacity to identify and deal with deadly weapons of mass destruction and to do that in a way which might prevent widespread movements of mass protest that could themselves have violent, unpredictable and uncontrollable consequences.

I am pleased that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is in the House tonight. I would hope that he might make this debate tonight a beginning of a much more open relationship between Parliament and the government on this issue.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I have two questions for my right hon. colleague and former Prime Minister, and for the purposes of this debate, former Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time of the Gulf War.

First, as a decision maker of one of the coalition partners in that Gulf War can he tell the House, given that this is an important conversation looking back and looking ahead, whether or not he thinks it was a mistake for the coalition forces not to have gone up the road to Baghdad, taken out the republican guard and taken care of Saddam Hussein then? My second question reflects the debate beyond the House right now about whether or not the United Nations requires another resolution to authorize force. UN inspectors are on their way and if those UN inspectors are not allowed full and unfettered access to all the sites that they seek, should Canada consider that a violation, not of a UN resolution but a violation of a ceasefire agreement, and therefore in itself authorizes the use of force?

• (2040)

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Madam Speaker, I know there are age differences in the House. I think I heard the hon. member say that he thought I was minister of external affairs only 10 years ago or whatever it was. He truly is a youthful member of the House. *Sic transit gloria*, if I may say so to the minister.

I am not sure there is much point in going back to whether that decision was a mistake or not. Going up the road to Baghdad was not as easy as it might seem in retrospect.

On the other issue, I am quite worried that the existing resolutions are limited in the scope that the inspectors can undertake. It is important, particularly dealing with a regime like that of Saddam Hussein, to find some way in which that mandate can be extended. I would not however want to put at risk the accomplishment today reported by Hans Blix. We take these things a step at a time.

The first step obviously is that we do everything we can to ensure that the Iraqis comply with the agreement that they have made. If they do, then we have to look at other means, whatever they are, to try to widen the mandate of the inspectors in Iraq.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Madam Speaker, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party

touched on something which, to my knowledge, has not been raised so far. He referred to the absence of information regarding Iraq's collaboration with terrorist groups. This continues to be an important point. He is right about this, because what is new with respect to the situation since 1998 is largely what happened on September 11 of last year and the declaration of war against the terrorists.

I would like to give him an opportunity to expand a bit on this. It is true that relatively confidential or secret situations may be involved. But still, before launching into action as far-reaching as the United States is proposing in connection with Iraq, we are entitled to wonder just how far we may go in the search for information or evidence regarding the existence of Iraq's collaboration with terrorist organizations.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Madam Speaker, unless I am mistaken, I believe that the U.S. Director of National Security has stated that there is clearly a link between al-Qaeda and the regime of Saddam Hussein. From what I understand, the U.S. is concerned about two threats: the terrorist threat and the threat coming from the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

What I want to point out tonight is that it is very important for us to continue to pursue both these objectives. Al-Qaeda is very important. Al-Qaeda and other similar networks have gone after not only the United States, but also our fellow citizens. They are a threat.

The issue of Iraq can be dealt with according to its own merit. There are encouraging signs. Hans Blix thinks that an agreement might have been reached today to resume the inspections under the aegis of the United Nations.

• (2045)

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the right hon. member for his comment about the readiness for us to have an exchange. I hope that the presence of all of us here tonight in the House indicates that these debates are taken note of precisely because we have an honest desire to exchange with one another our best experiences.

To the right hon. member I say that while we may not always agree on policy, we do respect his experience and respect what he brings to the House in terms of that experience. We respect the positions of all members and the experiences they bring to the House.

I would be particularly interested if the right hon. member could expand somewhat on his comments about the need to assure an international order governed by international law going back to his experience. This for many of us is the most troubling dimension of what we are doing here. It seems to me that this is what we are troubled by.

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I listened attentively to the Leader of the Opposition and he was very careful to frame it in saying that we do not wish to rush off and create disequilibrium in the world order. However there is a trade off here. If we act precipitously or if we act without the United Nations, we risk destabilizing the world order and creating a situation where others will do the same. It has been indicated to me for example that already Russia is putting pressure on Georgia using terminology very similar to what the United States is using in respect of Iraq. Others may well start to use the same language in similar circumstances justifying the same way.

Any words from the right hon. member about what we can do to assure a guarantee of the world order as we go ahead will be helpful for all of us.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Madam Speaker, I want to quote fairly precisely the minister's colleague, the Minister of National Defence, who speaking as an economist talked about the interest that Canada has in order because we are a smaller country. I believe that was his argument.

We have a particular interest in an orderly world. Put against that the historic reality that among the most persuasive proponents of organizations achieving international order in the last 60 or 70 years has been the United States of America. It is important for us to make the point that when we speak of the American tradition, building international regimes that are rules based is also very much a part of the American tradition.

When it looks at questions of regime change and thinks of consecrating that with congressional authority, it would be well to remind the Americans of the reasons that led them to encourage international arrangements not only in trade, not only in the commercial side, but again very much even in the establishment of the United Nations, certainly in the establishment of NATO and other multilateral organizations. There is a strong multilateralist tradition in the United States that those of us in other countries which share that tradition should emphasize perhaps more than we do.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was beginning to wonder if you forgot me being down this side.

I recall the debate that took place back in 1988. I was just elected. We had come to the House and the government of the day took us into war with Iraq. At that time there was clear evidence that Iraq had invaded Kuwait. Iraq was acting in a manner which required a drastic response by the nations of the world. However, there is a difference at this time.

Indications from a wide variety of sources have stated that Iraq's military infrastructure has not recovered from the devastating punishment it suffered during the Gulf War. The allegations by the American government that Iraq has been developing nuclear and biological weapons capable of mass destruction has not been substantiated by any valid sources. The latest allegation that somehow Iraq was behind—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say that it is a very interesting night listening to

the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a former minister of external affairs and former prime minister debate the issue of Iraq.

When we talk about Iraq we are talking about a regime that is ruled by a brutal dictator. There is no question about that. He has victimized his people for all too many years. He is not alone in the world, unfortunately. There are quite a few of them. We can find them in North Korea and Libya. There can be questionable regimes in Syria and all over the world.

If that became the reason why we could take unilateral action against any member state, then the whole rationale for the United Nations would be undone. I agree with the position of our government that we want the legitimacy of the United Nations in taking any action against Iraq. Any unilateral action or action by just a couple of nations could be quite destructive to world order and quite destructive to the future.

It was about a year ago that we in the House debated the events of 9/11, which really shook everybody on the North American continent, particularly our friends in the United States. One of the remarkable things to come out of 9/11 was an unprecedented coalition that came together to fight terrorism.

It seems to me that by beating the drums of war Saddam Hussein replaces Osama bin Laden as world enemy number one. The more there is talk about the Americans taking unilateral action, the more the coalition, which has really been unprecedented, has been squandered.

Not until very recently have we seen the debate in the United States starting to take shape at the political level in the U.S. Congress and U.S. Senate. Questions are being raised about the wisdom of pursuing the policy of "either you are with us or you are against us." I, for one, like many of my constituents, am very concerned that we have to make a black and white choice.

Unfortunately the world is not that simple. There are conditions that create people like Saddam Hussein. There are conditions that create people like Osama bin Laden. Saddam Hussein was a former ally of the United States in its war against Iran. Osama bin Laden was armed with weapons by the United States in terms of having him fight Soviet aggressions in Afghanistan.

The point I am making is that the United States took unilateral action in those cases. It made those decisions, but in the long term that did not serve their own security or our collective security very well.

• (2050)

When President George Bush Sr. engaged in Desert Storm, he did so with a coalition, and the former prime minister mentioned that. When I look at the present leadership in the United States, it is ironic that it is Colin Powell, the man with the military experience, the man who was a professional soldier, who is the one who is calling for multilateral action. He is calling for caution.

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One of the issues that has disturbed many people in this modern warfare and the way we fight it is the incredible damage done to civilians. It is almost like war has become antiseptic. We fight from 50,000 feet up in the sky. Unfortunately the vast majority of victims are women and children. It was almost like when we were in the war in Kosovo. President Clinton stated, and it was his policy, that he could not stand to have any of the soldiers coming back in body bags the way that tens of thousands of body bags came back from Vietnam. It made it necessary that they could accept great losses on the ground but they could not accept significant losses of the military.

The people of Iraq have suffered greatly since Desert Storm. We all know that Saddam Hussein is not hurt by the sanctions. The people who are hurt by the sanctions are the women, the children, the people, the civilian population of Iraq. I think that is important to keep in mind.

I will go back to the Kosovo example. We could have reduced the amount of civilian casualties if we had been willing to engage the enemy on the ground, if we had been willing to roll in the tanks. We found the prospects of losses to the military totally unacceptable.

As we engage in peacekeeping, in peacemaking, now and in the future, I think we will have to place some value on the lives that are destroyed by the new age of antiseptic war that has been waged.

It is important for us as a country. We are a soft power. We are not like the Americans, who are very powerful. I think the Minister of National Defence put it very well when he said that unilateral power is a power-based system, whereas a multilateral, rules-based system is for those countries that are collectively, not individually, strong.

As we face the challenge before us, we have to look down the road and take note. How do we conduct a regime change so we do not unsettle a whole region? One way to do it is to make sure that the people of the region are onside, that the other countries of the region are onside. I submit that we have a much better chance of doing that if we look to a multilateral resolution versus unilateral, trilateral or bilateral action on this issue.

• (2055)

I hope that the debate going on in the United States right now is going to lead to a multilateral approach under the umbrella and the legitimacy of the United Nations.

• (2100)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, this member's speech and some of those of his colleagues sets my mind back to last September when we debated in this place the tragic events of September 11 last year. I was quite astonished that night to hear, repeatedly, comments directed not so much at the threat posed by international terrorist networks but rather at the concern about the American response to international terrorism. There were all sorts of dire predictions about the unleashed American military monster that was going to create international havoc and invade Afghanistan without international support and so on. Of course none of this came to pass. An international coalition led by the United States removed the tyrannical regime there and I think all of us, particularly the people of Afghanistan, are glad that it did.

My question for the member is this. When he speaks about multilateralism does he not accept that from time to time cumbersome multilateral institutions such as the United Nations do not function? Apparently his government believes this was the case in Kosovo when, for instance, one country, Russia, arguably for its own domestic political purposes, vetoed UN joint action to protect the citizens of Kosovo and consequently a different non-UN coalition of democracies had to intervene, as they did in that instance. Would he not agree with me, at least theoretically, that should the United Nations not live up to its promise and fail to act jointly other responsible democratic nations could work jointly together to ensure that international law in the form of UN resolutions is enforced, that international order and peace are kept and that weapons of mass destruction stay out the hands of this dangerous dictator?

Mr. Andrew Telegdi: Madam Speaker, I spoke in the House on Afghanistan. I spoke on what we were doing in Afghanistan and why we had to fight there. I was one of the first people to speak in terms of engaging in Kosovo and being part of that, but if ultimately we are going to create the kind of world where we have multilateral force, we have to move in the direction of the legitimacy of the United Nations. Because one thing is clear: If we are going to fight terror and terrorism we can only fight it if it is broadly based. So to the extent that we can engage under that umbrella, and I think we can, then we are going to be successful.

Also, it is not good enough. Now we can look at Afghanistan and see how difficult it is to establish a working regime and how unstable that particular part of the world is. It does not come easily. We cannot go in there and wipe out and destroy a country and expect to have it functioning in a civilized fashion in short order. It will take a long time.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question for my colleague on this side of the House is this: Could he compare what happened to Kosovo with the NATO-led coalition to what happened in Afghanistan under the United Nations umbrella? Could he, in his own words, shed some light on how one was right and the other was wrong or on how both were right? If he could share those views I would greatly appreciate it.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi: Madam Speaker, I much would have preferred to have Kosovo under the UN. It could not be and we went with NATO, but it fell in the particular sphere of the alliance.

All I can say is that in both cases if we look at what happened when we went to the United Nations, we had much broader support. I think that is the kind of support we are looking for in trying to deal with a very sensitive region of the world, in trying to deal with the situation in Iraq. I think we have to work and do our best to have the legitimacy of the United Nations, because it is not just a battle against Iraq. The battle against terrorism still goes on and the more people we have in the coalition the more we are—

• (2105)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I apologize to the hon. member, but five minutes runs out very quickly.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, as the conflict between our closest allies and Saddam Hussein intensifies, Canada must take a position that is grounded in our national interests, in the interests of our allies and in the interests of peace and security everywhere, a peace which Saddam Hussein threatens daily.

The Canadian Alliance leader, the leader of Canada's official opposition, has presented a thoughtful, careful and meaningful basis for the necessary strategic and moral position relating to Iraq. It answers two important questions. First, what is Canada's own strategic interest in the conflict and its outcome? Second, what does our moral compass tell us? The answer to both these questions is clear.

Canada's only strategically wise and morally tenable position and course is to stand with our allies against Saddam Hussein, a ruthless dictator and an outspoken enemy of all we hold dear. He is a serial aggressor, a deceiver with a heart of hatred and he must not be allowed to unleash that hatred as he has in the past. Specifically this means Canada must do two things.

First and most immediately Canada must lobby the Security Council delegations to pass a resolution with definitive consequences for any Iraqi non-compliance with weapons inspections.

Iraq promised again today to grant UN weapons inspectors unfettered access. That is no reason to be complaisant. It was just two weeks ago that Saddam's forces were caught on tape firing missiles at British and U.S. pilots who were conducting flyovers that were mandated by the Security Council. Saddam has a proven record of deceit. If the Security Council's resolution is toothless the world may pay a terrible price.

Second, Canada must keep its options open. While the United Nations is the preferred route, Canada's decision to act should be predicated on our own national interest and moral sensibilities and not solely on the permission of an international body. The United Nations tragic failure to respond to clear warnings of the horrendous 1994 Rwandan genocide is a grim reminder that that international body is not infallible.

If Iraq fails to comply with weapons inspections or is shown to be threatening in other ways, Canada must join the growing multilateral coalition to make it clear that there will be consequences. Israel, Qatar, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia have all committed to play a role and Canada must not be left behind. In the event of a conflict between Saddam Hussein and our closest friends, it would be strategically unwise and morally untenable for Canada to remain neutral.

[*Translation*]

Our opinion is based on the strategic interests of Canada, also on the interests of our allies and on the interests of peace and public safety.

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The United States and Great Britain are our allies. We share an historic border with the United States and an historic Commonwealth with Great Britain.

[*English*]

That means we have to carry our weight with our allies in confronting international threats and a menace to peace like Saddam Hussein. It is in Canada's security interest to support our allies. A threat to our democratic allies around the world is indeed a threat to Canada.

Just consider Iraq's desire and its capacity to threaten Canada and our friends. We need to look no further than Canada's own intelligence reports. On February 25, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service reported that the threat was clear and imminent. I quote:

In February 1999, the [International Atomic Energy Agency] had charged Iraq with denying...evidence that Iraq had terminated its nuclear weapon program. It had added that it was prudent to assume that Iraq "has retained documents of its clandestine nuclear program, specimens of important components and possibly amounts of nonenriched uranium," and "retains the capability to explore, for nuclear weapons purposes, any relevant material or technology to which it may gain access in the future".

Weapons inspectors have not visited Iraq since this grave warning was issued. It gets worse. I quote again from another CSIS document:

Independent experts, including former Iraqi nuclear scientist Khidir Hamza (who defected in 1994), have asserted that "Since the war, Iraq is suspected of having made progress on a number of bottlenecks in its weapon program," including "design work, laboratory efforts, subcomponent production..."

Even if weapons inspectors are granted access, the report indicates that Saddam may still be able to hide his toys of terror. The CSIS report quotes independent experts related to biological terror, and we need to be mindful of these. I quote:

The Iraqi government in August 1995 admitted to having produced 19,000 litres of botulinum toxin (BTX), 8,500 litres of anthrax, and 2,400 litres of the cancer-producing agent aflatoxin; to have loaded BTX and anthrax on Scud missile warheads and aerial bombs; and to have conducted research on mycotoxins and infectious viruses.

These reports are corroborated by similar analyses done by the German intelligence service along with the recent exhaustive report from Great Britain on this area, a report which our Minister of National Defence admitted to not having read.

The danger is undeniable. We are aware of Saddam's aggressive designs for his neighbours, particularly our democratic ally, Israel, and we know of his hatred for our neighbours. Indeed we know it is not beyond him to share his weapon stockpiles with terrorists who would gladly attack our neighbours or us. Our own intelligence proves all of this. The threat he poses to our closest economic, political and military allies, and possibly to ourselves, makes Saddam a strategic enemy of ours.

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Some argue that even though Saddam poses a major security threat, international norms prohibit pre-emptive action against him. That is something we have heard tonight. This thinking is not based upon historic reality and in fact is reckless. Imagine if Israel had not taken the courageous step to pre-emptively strike Iraq's nuclear program in the early 1980s. Where would the world be today if Israel had wavered and Saddam had triumphed in developing and using those nuclear weapons? Where would the world be if the multilateral coalition of 1998 had not intervened to strike Saddam's key weapons facilities?

The Prime Minister of Canada at that time rightly agreed to support our allies in that pre-emptive strike without an additional Security Council mandate. The only thing that has changed between 1998 and now is that Saddam Hussein has had more years without inspection to cultivate his weapons program.

Again, Saddam Hussein is a serial aggressor with a heart of hatred even against his own people. That was exposed when he gassed to death 5,000 of his own citizens. He is against millions of his own citizens who live in odious poverty while he, a \$6 billion dictator, rates as one of the richest men on earth.

• (2110)

The noted historian, A.J. Taylor, in his intellectually formidable and universally acclaimed *The Origins of the Second World War*, makes a sobering observation. He says, and I quote, "Hitler, an alert opportunist... Would not have rearmed if he had believed that the allies would have forcibly prevented him..."

The words of Edmund Burke are appropriate at this time, "All that has to happen for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing". We do not want war, but we also do not want the unthinkable tragedy of Saddam Hussein realizing his evil dreams and unleashing a nightmare upon us or our allies.

Our government must urge Security Council members to pass and enforce a resolution with teeth. If the United Nations fails and Saddam persists, Canada must join the growing allied coalition to make it clear to Saddam Hussein that non-compliance is a direct threat to peace and security and it will have consequences. It is our political and strategic interest to do this. It is also our moral imperative.

• (2115)

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, would the hon. member clarify for me how he sees the function of the United Nations? The United Nations has passed thousands of resolutions against this regime or that regime, yet they are not being enforced or even acted upon.

I want to make clear in my mind. Which regimes do we move against? Which regimes do we not move against? How do we pick or choose and if we cannot pick or choose, do we go with another coalition as we did in Kosovo?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Madam Speaker, we are making a clear case for a particular circumstance. We know that Saddam Hussein has violated some 14 UN resolutions. I do not know about the thousands of other UN resolutions that my hon. friend is referring to that have been violated. If he wants to make a case for those, then maybe he

should bring them forward. We are talking specifically about Saddam Hussein.

He referenced other nations. We are not talking about other nations. I want to reiterate again that we are not talking against the Iraqi people, people who would benefit from the values of democracy and freedom of trade. We are talking about Saddam Hussein and a stated intent. This is what separates him from a leader of other nations that have the capability to launch weapons of mass destruction.

These other leaders, to whomever he is referring, are not publicly stating their intent and their desire to destroy other nations. That makes him a very unique case and that is why we are making our position based on this case and based on Saddam Hussein. If he has other leaders and other perpetrators violating UN resolutions that he thinks are important and need to be brought to the House, then he should do that.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague whether he agrees with the Minister of National Defence when he characterized the United States in taking multilateral action outside the bounds of the United Nations as taking advantage of the laws of the jungle?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Madam Speaker, in response to my hon. colleague I will admit I was somewhat alarmed at his reference to the concern of the United States for their own security and its desire to take action, if necessary. That has even been recognized by the Minister of Foreign Affairs here today. He characterized that as some kind of law of the jungle. I do hope that he reviews his comments so that in the future he will not make statements that are as provocative as that.

In answer to her question, I do not agree with that characterization.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just want to add some clarity in the debate where we are talking about weapons of mass destruction and an attack on Iraq under any circumstance, UN sanctioned or unilateral or pre-emptive or whatever. I think we must bear in mind that when we talk about chemical weapons and particularly biological weapons, the reaction will not be confined to Iraq and it may not be necessarily confined to the Middle East. What we are debating here tonight is an action that could result in civilian lives lost in this country. I wanted to make that point to the member.

Mr. Stockwell Day: Madam Speaker, I am not sure what the member's precise point is because the very thing about which we are concerned is that a biological attack against the United States, a nuclear attack against the United States, clearly is going to have repercussions on Canada. I do not think there is any debate about that. If Saddam Hussein launches nuclear capability, which he has against Israel, it is clearly going to have devastating effects on surrounding countries. We apparently share the same concern.

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Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the president of the country which is our closest neighbour, our largest trading partner and whose people have been our best friends in the world is trying to convince us to join him in an attack and invasion of Iraq. The president claims that Iraq is a rogue state, part of an axis of evil that threatens the world; that it harbours terrorists and may be linked to September 11; that it builds and amasses weapons of mass destruction and uses them against its own people; and reminds us that Iraq tried to expand its territory when it invaded Kuwait.

To deal with the president of Iraq and this list of crimes, the U.S. president is aggressively selling the idea of a pre-emptive strike against Iraq. I am here tonight to speak in opposition to this idea and to undermine the reasons which underpin the idea.

First, I oppose the idea of one person or one state dividing the world into good countries and evil countries. I ask you Madam Speaker, is George Bush known as such a world expert on history, geography, moral theology or any other academic discipline for that matter, that would suggest he has the right to identify—

An hon. member: What about Jean Chrétien?

• (2120)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I apologize to the hon. member but we will show the same respect for the hon. member as we showed for the other members in the House of Commons.

Ms. Bonnie Brown: Madam Speaker, I think not. I do not think he is that kind of an expert so why should his own citizens, not to mention Canadians and the rest of the world, accept his simple black and white view of today's world?

For those of us who are regularly exposed to American culture, his opinions seem to be more reflective of an American movie plot than the real complex world in which we live. I agree that there are certainly many rogues in this world but it is deceptively simple to paint one as a demon worth destabilizing the whole world.

In the same vein I question the idea of an axis of evil, three states that are evil and threaten our peace. From the perspective of a western democrat, there are many nations whose values and practices conflict with our ideals. Are we to go to war with them all? How ridiculous. President Bush has tried to link Iraq with September 11 and al-Qaeda but has failed to produce any evidence of such a link. This is sowing the seeds of a dangerous confusion about the relationship between al-Qaeda and the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Attacking Iraq would not be a continuation of the war against terror, but a deviation from it. Why? Because Iraq and al-Qaeda are natural enemies. A central tenet of al-Qaeda's jihadist ideology is that secular Muslim rulers like Saddam and their regimes have oppressed the true believers and plunged Islam into a historic crisis. To contemporary jihadists, Saddam Hussein is another in a line of dangerous secularists, an enemy of their faith. Saddam Hussein himself has long recognized that al-Qaeda represents a threat to his regime.

In 1998 the National Security Council concluded and found no evidence of a noteworthy relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda.

Now does Iraq have weapons of mass destruction? There is no evidence of this.

Scott Ritter, former senior UN weapons inspector in Iraq and ex-marine, who testified in front of one of our standing committees, has stated repeatedly that as of December 1998 Iraq had been fundamentally disarmed and possessed no meaningful weapons of mass destruction. In 1998 the International Atomic Energy Agency certified that Iraq no longer had a viable nuclear weapons program.

In my view our minister and the international community are on the right track by reinstating the weapons inspection process and Iraq has agreed. We have a plan; let us follow it.

It is true that Saddam Hussein killed his own people in 1988. Did members know that in that same year the U.S. government provided him with \$500 million in subsidies to buy American products? The next year after his campaign against the Kurds, the American government doubled its subsidy to \$1 billion. Is it not a little late to pass moral judgments 14 years and \$1.5 billion later?

It is also hypocritical when the western world did not prevent a subsequent genocide that killed 800,000 people in Rwanda in 1994. It is also true that Iraq invaded Kuwait. The world rightly condemned that aggression and drove the Iraqi army back within its own borders. Since then Iraq has stayed there.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

• (2125)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I apologize again to the hon. member but the Chair is finding it very difficult to hear the hon. member's remarks.

Ms. Bonnie Brown: How can one condemn and punish aggressive behaviour on the one hand and then in later years advance it for one's own purposes? It is illogical.

In summary, all the arguments so far put forward to attack Iraq seem to be without solid foundation and to be rather illogical, not to mention dangerous to international stability.

I would also say that such a sortie is insulting to Canadian and American veterans of World War II. At that time the principle underpinning Canadian participation was that the world would not allow one nation to attack, invade and take over another nation. Our victory at that time established that principle, which then became a tenet of the United Nations.

A second principle emerged from the Pacific in World War II. When Japan launched a bombing raid designed to cripple the American navy in the Pacific, Japan was using a pre-emptive strike. Pearl Harbor has gone down in history as a day of infamy and in the end resulted in the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. From that day forward pre-emptive strikes by nation states were seen as unacceptable and most likely to turn out to be counterproductive.

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Today George Bush is trying to justify the concept and the use of the pre-emptive strike. A pre-emptive attack against Iraq is not self-defence. It is an act that is against international law, including the United Nations charter.

Now that the U.S. is the world's only superpower, if the Bush administration negates or ignores international laws and agreements, the United States then contributes to the undermining of the foundations of global stability. By suggesting an invasion of another country and by pushing the idea of a pre-emptive strike, George Bush is insulting the memory of World War II soldiers who lost their lives to establish these principles.

Today the drums of war are throbbing again. America, which has not yet caught last year's villain, is arranging a comeback for the villain of 1990. Is this because of the United States' faltering economy? Is it to distract from the scandals of corporate corruption and falling stock markets? Is it to ignite fires of patriotism and support the President just before a November election so he can gain a majority of seats in the Senate? Is it about a secure supply of oil or more business for the arms manufacturers?

If he does go ahead and strikes Iraq, will he have to rewrite history so that the other pre-emptive strike, Pearl Harbor, is no longer described as an atrocity? And will he be able to cope with the unintended results which the last time included the detonation of nuclear weapons?

Violence still begets more violence. Canadians stand for peace, pluralism and multilateralism. We can choose to destroy in violence or to build in peace.

I ask my colleagues and indeed all Canadians to apply critical thinking to the exhortations of the American President. I do want to be best friends with our American brothers and sisters, but I do not want to be part of this march of folly that is being proposed by the Bush administration today.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I note for the record the generous applause from her colleagues in the government for that bizarre, paranoid, anti-American rant. If the member would apply the same principles in terms of the second world war, we would still be waiting for a League of Nations resolution to endorse military action against the Nazi regime. This is bizarre.

The hon. member said that an attack against Iraq would be against international law. Is she not aware that her own government and her own Prime Minister in this House in 1998 supported American and British air attacks on Iraq without specific authorization from a United Nations resolution? What is the difference between the action taken at that time with the vigorous support of her party, government and Prime Minister, and the action being contemplated in the absence of a specific United Nations resolution authorizing the use of force to enforce some 14 outstanding United Nations resolutions vis-à-vis Iraq?

Could she please explain to us why she did not raise her voice of objection, so far as I know, publicly at least, to her government's support for the use of force in that instance, but she is quite vigorously opposed to it in this instance?

Does she really believe that the President of the United States, the vast majority of the Congress of the United States, and the Parliament of the United Kingdom are insulting the memories of those who died in the second world war as allies by seeking to enforce United Nations resolutions to prevent a dictator from obtaining weapons of mass destruction?

Finally, is she aware and does she not take Mr. Hussein at his own word when he says that he hopes to be able to eliminate half of Israel should he obtain a nuclear weapon?

● (2130)

Ms. Bonnie Brown: Madam Speaker, an earlier speaker on the opposition side suggested that some of our members are rather youthful, but the misunderstanding of World War II is very clear in the previous speaker's remarks.

When we moved in World War II as Allies, we were moving against the idea of one nation aggressively invading and taking over another. This is exactly what George Bush is now proposing. So the veterans of World War II fought to say, "You can't do that, single nation", being a different nation at that time.

I am saying that we should respect their memory by reiterating that no single nation, no matter how powerful, no matter how much the world's only superpower, should be allowed to do that when the world has established certain peaceful relations based upon that principle. Nobody should be allowed to break it with impunity. That is what I am saying.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did not answer the question of my hon. colleague from Calgary Southeast about the principle of 1998 which that member did not stand up and speak against.

I understand her point very well about not making lists of good and evil nations, but there are some questions and there are some people that can clearly be categorized as being evil. I am going to ask the hon. member straight up, does she believe, yes or no, that Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein are evil?

Ms. Bonnie Brown: Mr. Speaker, I said in my speech that there are many rogues and many evil people in this world. I do not give over to George Bush the right to designate one or two of them and decide that they are the ones that the great strength of western powers should go after at any given moment.

Certainly Osama bin Laden offended us terribly. He has done some very destructive things. I also would contend that it is perhaps a lack of ability to catch him which George Bush could then hold up as a big success for his war against Afghanistan. Even though it was supposed to be a war against terrorism, it turned out to be bombing Afghanistan and its innocent civilians. He was really after terrorists who were born in Saudi Arabia, but he would not think of bombing Saudi Arabia because that might destroy his supply of cheap oil.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak this evening. There have been a number of developments today in the matter we are discussing this evening.

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Even if I support the necessity, often if not always, of intervening within the framework of UN resolutions, I am asked, "Do you think that Saddam Hussein is a nice guy?" I will tell anyone at any time that I do not think he is a nice guy, nor is he a respecter of rights. He is not a leader I admire much. People who have grown up in a very open society, people with minds as open as ours, find dictatorships hard to stomach.

I am also asked, "If you had the military and political clout to topple this man from his position, would you do so?" My answer to that is always no. I would want to consult people. I cannot assume the right on my own to say that, just because this man does not conform to my value system, I am going to wipe him off the face of the earth. This is not how things should be done.

When a criminal is captured, is he immediately dragged off to a scaffold to be hanged? This is a lawful society. People are entitled to a fair trial. It is sometimes difficult to do that, of course. In the case of Saddam Hussein, it is. Justice and a fair trial for Saddam Hussein will come from the international community. It has become the jury, an international jury that will have the responsibility for deciding what is to be done with Saddam Hussein. According to this international court and to international law, it is up to the UN to make these decisions.

We might be tempted at first to say that, if he were got rid of, that would be the end of it. But that is not what will happen. That is exactly why there are international coalitions. It seems to me that is also why there is a UN. Thus when the UN and the body of nations comprising it decide to take action against an individual, they all have legitimacy to act, which is not the case if a single nation moves against another.

For the Bloc Québécois, complying with resolutions is of the utmost importance. As today went on, we gradually learned that agreement has finally been reached in Vienna between the negotiators and the Iraqi regime.

People started saying "Wait a minute. Saddam Hussein has several presidential palaces, while his people are starving". The fact that he has several palaces does not make him more likeable. It was reported that he was likely to hide things in his palaces. As it happens, the negotiators said that was not on the negotiating agenda because it was already covered by UN resolution 1154 from 1998.

As far as we are concerned, there is no problem. Negotiators and inspectors will be allowed to go anywhere on the Iraqi territory. This is extremely important. However, it is sad that the British and the Americans are now trying to kill this embryonic agreement, arguing that, until the UN adopts a new resolution, they will object to inspectors going in the field because they want their mandate to be clarified.

This approach does not seem to fly at the Security Council at this time. China appears to be opposed, as is Germany. Of course, Great Britain is siding with the Americans. France does not seem to agree with such a resolution or such an approach by the Americans, or with any other resolution that would have to go before the UN to add further requirements. It seems to me that we have obtained what we wanted.

Inspectors will go in the field. If something happens, they can go back to the UN to explain that problems were encountered and to try to solve these problems, but military action would not be excluded in that case.

We believe that a unilateral intervention by the Americans at this time is unacceptable. For one thing, we think that it will ignite the whole region.

• (2135)

The governments of countries near Iraq are already having problems with certain Islamic movements. I am referring to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. When these people see images of unilateral or bilateral action by the United States and Great Britain, and when they see the devastation wrought by the western world in Iraq, they will say to themselves, "We cannot agree to this anymore". Then there will be problems. We run the risk of having much more extreme Islamic governments than the governments that are currently in place in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

These famous pre-emptive strikes pose a problem. It is a new military and international relations doctrine, and we cannot agree to it. If we allow the United States to strike Iraq, because it allegedly has evidence, which is far from convincing as far as we are concerned, we could never oppose China striking Taiwan, as an example. Nor could we object in a number of other examples. I am thinking of India and Pakistan. We could not object to India, on its own and through its secret service, invoking something against Pakistan and striking it. This cannot be, under international law. It is a very slippery slope and the Bloc Québécois objects to it strongly.

If we allow the United States to do this, others could do likewise at any time, by saying that they have evidence and believe that they are going to be attacked, then attacking their opponent without first consulting the international community.

The United States and Great Britain should know that they cannot act alone. The resolutions are clear. Let us stand by them and send in the inspectors. If they have problems, then let them return. Military force, the imposition of force is hardly being excluded, but we need to give inspectors a chance to do their job first.

When it comes to this, I think that what happened today really will help them go in and do their job. For us, it is clear. Let the inspectors do their job and if it does not work out, let them come back.

This same debate is taking place in several parliaments. It already took place in Great Britain and it will take place in France next week, I believe.

We would very much like the federal government to finally make up its mind about its new policies concerning international relations, foreign affairs and national defence. They always react on a case by case basis. There is no clear policy. The national defence policy has not been reviewed since 1994. I do not know when the foreign policy was reviewed last, but it has been a while.

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Ever since 9-11, international relations throughout the world and the planet have gone into overdrive. So, the time has come for Canada to sit down and say “This is our foreign policy on which the demands on and the needs of the Canadian armed forces will be based”.

Right now, we do not know where we stand. I think it is important to clarify our position in the very near future. In the throne speech yesterday, the government indicated that it would be doing so over the next two years. This means that National Defence and Foreign Affairs could well be forgotten in the next budget, in February. They might even miss out on the 2003-04 budget.

Therefore, I think it is urgent that Canada sit down and say, “Here is our new policy”. This would help establish a framework for the type of discussion that we are having this evening.

In conclusion, I hope that the government will have the decency to propose a debate during which we will have to make a decision as to whether we are going to Iraq with the Americans or with a coalition. Personally, I hope that the government will have the decency to propose a vote in Parliament. I am tired of being told that there is a provision in the Constitution that allows the executive branch to decide alone.

We have reached the point where the Prime Minister decides alone. The Minister of the Environment discovered that the Kyoto protocol would be ratified. He did not even know; imagine, he found out about it in the newspapers the next day.

It is also up to us, the elected representatives of the public here, to discuss this issue; it is up to Parliament to decide what we will get into. This is very important. The future of our armed forces, of our young Quebeckers and Canadians who want to do their duty, is at stake. We do not accept that a single person or a small group of people around the Prime Minister should make this decision on our behalf.

This is the message that we are sending and I hope that the government will listen and come before Parliament to get its mandate, because it would make it a lot more legitimate.

● (2140)

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate our colleague from Saint-Jean for a very clear and eloquent speech, as usual.

I would like to ask him a question that is relevant to this debate, albeit indirectly, since he is defence critic.

We heard the Minister of Defence talk tonight as if Canada could brag about having extraordinary military equipment.

I read recently in the newspapers that other countries have expressed concerns about the lack of equipment, particularly for transporting troops and military equipment. We know that, last year, a particular piece of transportation equipment was rented and that, in the end, the shipment was not delivered like it should have been.

In that regard, what does the member think of this type of equipment and resources, when some people are full of themselves and say that they are ready to attack just anybody, as the Minister of Defence did tonight?

● (2145)

Mr. Claude Bachand: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. In fact, the minister cannot brag about the present state of the Canadian forces.

Globally, we are still seen as pygmies as far as our army goes, compared to the international force. There is no doubt that all the equipment is obsolete. Our forces have dropped from 87,000 to 57,000. We were unable to continue our action in Afghanistan because we did not have the human and materiel resources to do so.

Clearly, some things will have to change. But I would like to take advantage of the question from my colleague to remind the House that the Bloc Québécois does not necessarily oppose an increase in funding for National Defence. However, we would like to have what I was calling for earlier, which is a clear national defence policy.

Taxpayers, the ones footing the bill, must decide what kind of army they now want. Will we put more money into ground forces, the navy, or the air force? These are things we must look at closely. There is an order of priority and we agree that funding will eventually have to be made available, but a clear policy will be needed.

In the meantime, I urge the minister, much as my colleague did, not to brag too much. As for the contribution of Canadian forces in international conflicts, even though we are recognized as having expertise in peacekeeping missions, the things our forces can do right now are very limited.

He must release his national defence policy as soon as possible and the Minister of Foreign Affairs should do likewise with his foreign affairs policy, so that they can be linked together and a clear policy produced on the type of actions we now wish to undertake in international peacekeeping missions and in missions that are perhaps a bit more aggressive. It is up to taxpayers to decide. The government must consult the public in order to come up with a clear defence and foreign affairs policy.

[English]

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first victim in war is the truth. How long do we sit around and watch people rewrite history, history that we have all experienced and seen, in order to justify what is happening in the Middle East, to justify the actions of Israel and to justify the impending actions of the United States?

The “let’s bomb Iraq” press is becoming like the *National Enquirer*. Propagandists are busy winning the war on words. We are dreaming up scenarios to portray the white hats and the black hats. Of course the black hats are the scuds and the axis of evil, short of Darth Vader, while we white hats, when we kill people, we call it collateral damage. We use patriot missiles and we have smart bombs. Better that we had smart politicians with smart advisers.

Books written recently on Islam and Jihad are so vile with misinformation that had the authors written them about any other sect they would be subjected to serious legal action. Yet those of us who know better are reluctant to speak out lest we be accused of supporting terrorism.

May I point out to the House that the only two countries that have consistently fought al-Qaeda are Iran and Russia. It appears that Iran will be the next target. Al-Qaeda was financed to fight the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Two years ago we really did not care much about how the Taliban treated its own people. The hypocrisy that the western world is going through today is a disgrace. Perhaps we in the western world should reread *Frankenstein*. When we create a monster it is sure to turn around and bite us.

But let us stick to Iraq. Prior to the star wars of 1991, Iraq was a country like all others in the Middle East under a dictatorship. However, it was a progressive country with health care for all and education and human rights for women, which is far more advanced than other friendly Middle Eastern countries. It was a secular state offering a relative degree of equality for all its citizens. That is not to say that I support Saddam Hussein.

We left Iraq completely destroyed. We took out its power facilities and its water purification plants and left its people in conditions which were far worse than conditions of 50 years ago. Reports of barefoot, unarmed returning Iraqi soldiers being killed have been published. Buried or not, these reports will return to shame us in the eyes of future generations. That was not enough. We imposed total sanctions against the people while a UN search team searched for six years for weapons of mass destruction and destroyed traces of those weapons.

We all stand and condemn human rights abuses around the world, but the human rights abuses that occurred as a result of UN sanctions were far more vile and hideous than they were anywhere else. We left one million children dead.

These sanctions were stringent. People were not allowed to have syringes or hardware to build water purification plants. They were allowed no shampoo for lice and no pencils that contained lead. UN workers quit in protest. In Canada, an all-party committee voted unanimously to take the position of promoting the de-linking of sanctions to allow the necessities for survival to be allowed into the country.

However, there were others in the world. Tony Blair and Madeleine Albright argued that these sanctions were working but were not sanctions against the people, that they were working and stopping Saddam Hussein. Today they say they did not work because, in spite of the sanctions, Tony Blair claims that weapons of mass destruction are being amassed as we speak here tonight.

• (2150)

Tony Blair's report is another non-proof document, yet if his speculation is correct then we have killed a million children for nothing. I am going to read from Robert Fisk. He states:

Here is one example of the dishonesty of this "dossier". On page 45, we are told—in a long chapter, about Saddam's human rights abuses—that "on March 1st, 1991, in the wake of the Gulf War, riots (sic) broke out in the southern city of Basra, spreading quickly to other cities in Shia-dominated southern Iraq. The regime responded by killing thousands". What's wrong with this paragraph is the lie...in the

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use of the word 'riots'. These were not riots. They were part of a mass rebellion specifically called for by President Bush Jnr's father and by a CIA radio station in Saudi Arabia. The Shia Muslims of Iraq obeyed Mr. Bush Snr's appeal. And were then left to their fate by the Americans and British, who they had been given every reason to believe would come to their help. No wonder they died in their thousands. But that's not what the Blair "dossier" tells us.

Americans are not unanimous in their lust for war. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark sent a letter to the UN. One point which he asserts, and which I believe our minister believes as well, is this:

2. George Bush is Leading the United States and Taking the UN and All Nations Toward a Lawless World of Endless Wars.

George Bush in his "War on Terrorism" has asserted his right to attack any country, organization, or people first, without warning in his sole discretion. He and members of his administration have proclaimed the old restraints that law sought to impose on aggression by governments and repression of their people, no longer consistent with national security.

This is a dangerous, dangerous precedent.

I was very proud of my Prime Minister at the United Nations. I am very proud of the position that our Minister of Foreign Affairs has taken. Canada has a role to play. I know that the minister believes that the UN is doing the negotiating with the United States. However, I believe that we are in a very special position because we are their friends, they are our friends, and I think that we have a position where we can be an honest broker in solving some of the problems.

I had heard tonight, just before coming, that the UN has not accepted the U.S. resolution. It says it will not work. I hope that early tomorrow morning our minister will be on the phone talking with Washington.

Finally, I would like to end tonight by telling everyone in this room that each and every one of us, before we come to any conclusions about going to war against any people, should have a jihad of our very own. A jihad is a religious or spiritual struggle in which we must conquer the evil and good within ourselves. Any other use of that word is incorrect.

My apologies go to all of our Muslim Canadians who have suffered under the propaganda that we are building up to justify this war. I say to them to hang in there, because I am sure that Canada will do right by them.

• (2155)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I detect a certain cognitive dissonance in what this member has to say. On the one hand, she lauds the United Nations as the font of virtue in international policy and yet she goes on to blame it for the most hideous human rights violations imaginable, in the form of its sanctions on Iraq to compel the regime there to comply with some 16 UN resolutions. I am wondering if she could perhaps square this contradiction. If she has so much faith in the United Nations, then why does she at the same time accuse it of hideous violations of human rights?

Further, is she not aware that the figure that she uses of a million children having died as a result of sanctions in fact has been exhaustively studied, including by independent Middle Eastern experts, and is found to have no basis in fact? It is a figment of the Iraqi regime.

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Finally, she says that she is very proud of the position taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Is she not aware, and perhaps she was not in the chamber, that her very minister this evening pointed out that any deaths or any suffering as a result of those sanctions are the fault of the Iraqi regime, as he said, which at any time could stop the sanctions by complying with the UN resolutions? Does she not agree with her minister on that point?

Ms. Colleen Beaumier: Mr. Speaker, I think that when the United Nations first imposed these sanctions they thought they would be short term. However, as it went on it became clear and it was obvious, as Denis Halliday and other members of the search team quit, that the sanctions were not working, that they were hurting the people.

I love my minister dearly, but he and I often disagree on different points and have quite an interesting time coming to a compromise on them. However, I think that the sanctions ended up being very wrong, and those numbers are not incorrect.

Hon. Bill Graham: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think it is important to recall for members of the House that affection passing between them must pass through you as the Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not sure that was a point of order, but I am glad everybody likes everybody else.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will try not to get sidetracked by some of the debate I heard over the last few minutes. I must admit it will be quite difficult because quite frankly we heard some nonsense from members on the government side. There is no other way to describe it. It is very unfortunate.

There is a vast difference of opinion in government. That is fine but there are certain situations when a little more research is necessary. Some members put forth quite shocking positions basically blaming our closest friend and ally, the United States, for what has happened in Iraq. It is simply not true. It is unacceptable and I hope we do not hear more of that tonight.

I will not get into too much of that. As defence critic for the official opposition I want to talk about what Canada could and could not deliver if called upon to support our allies in a war against Iraq, something that all of us hope can be averted. Nevertheless we all know Saddam Hussein's past record. We simply cannot count on him. War is a real possibility and we must consider that.

I wish to begin with a comment made by our defence minister earlier tonight in debate in the House. He said that Canada would not hesitate to provide military support if needed if Iraq did not comply with weapons inspectors. I have no problem with the statement. It is certainly what Canada should do but the question I will talk about later is what we could contribute. He said we should provide military support but I want to talk about what we could and could not provide.

It is interesting to see how many Liberals have been shocked by the position laid out by their own ministers who said that if need be, if Iraq would not comply with the UN resolution on weapons inspectors, that we should then be prepared to take military action.

It is quite surprising indeed to see the strong, vehement reaction to that from some government MPs and some opposition MPs from other political parties. They seem to forget that as short a time ago as

1998 their Prime Minister, the current Prime Minister, supported without a UN resolution, the bombing of Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom. That is a fact. That is something that many of these people have completely forgotten.

At the time, I did not hear government members speak out against that action. They seemed to support it with their silence. Why now are they trying to deny what in fact happened in 1998? Why now are they so shocked with the possibility of Canada supporting action in Iraq once again? It is a little hard to understand but the government's position has not been as clear as many Canadians would like to see.

As little as a month ago we had the foreign affairs minister and the Prime Minister take the position that under no circumstances would Canada be involved in military action in Iraq. That was about a month ago.

Three weeks ago both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs said they needed proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and they needed proof that it would be used against Canada or an ally before they would take any action. That is what they said. Members should check the record unless government members are saying that the media has been all wrong on this. They are quoted in the media taking that position.

Now three weeks or a month later we have the government taking an entirely different position, the correct position, that in fact, if Iraq does not comply with the UN resolution on weapons inspectors, then we will be involved with our allies in military action if needed.

That is not a stellar foreign affairs position or stream of events. Consistency is extremely important on foreign affairs issues and it simply has not been here with the government.

● (2200)

Instead the initial reaction was American bashing and anti-American statements even on the part of ministers. Our closest friend and ally and it gets bashed and even blamed by the Prime Minister as being responsible somehow for the terrorist attacks. This is a foreign affairs disaster. Canada has paid a price for that already, and we certainly will pay more in the future.

I have strayed from the area I want to talk about tonight and that is what Canada could deliver. What could Canada deliver if asked? Let us look at what has happened over the past few months. Canada made a commitment of six months in Afghanistan to fight the war against terrorism with our allies. Our soldiers did a marvellous job. American commanders said the Canadian soldiers were better trained and better soldiers than many of their own. That is quite a statement coming from American military leaders. We have among the best in the world. They are well trained, capable people and admirable indeed. Unfortunately the equipment they are asked to work with is completely unacceptable. That was also pointed out again and again by Americans who were fighting alongside our troops.

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When asked for a second six month commitment in Afghanistan of ground forces we could not comply. We had to pull our ground forces out. Our military leadership said they were burned out to such an extent we could not contribute longer. We had to pull more than half the force, the navy and air force, out of the area of Afghanistan. Then we had to cut our contingent in our next rotation into the Balkans because our troops were that badly burned out.

Now, we are facing the possibility of being asked by our allies, and the defence minister agreeing, to make a significant contribution in an attack in Iraq. What realistically can we deliver?

I must agree with what the minister said in one respect. He said it depends on how urgent the situation is. I do not know how he defines what an urgent situation is but he is right in saying that in the short term we could contribute a significant effort again for a six month period. However he did not carry it to the next step which is we simply could not sustain any meaningful contribution in Iraq beyond that six month commitment.

That is not what our allies are looking for and that is not what Canadians are looking for when they are looking for Canada to play its role in a serious situation like this war on terror and the possible war in Iraq. It is not what Canadians want. We cannot contribute what we should.

In terms of equipment, if we are asked for some type of air support our F18s have not been upgraded so that they can fly with our allies. They simply do not have the secure communications system and other high tech equipment needed for us to operate with our allies. As far as the navy, we do not have helicopters that would be absolutely necessary in a situation like that. We have good frigates worth almost a billion dollars a piece and for the sake of not having capable helicopters to put on board they are deemed almost useless in a situation like that. Their value is decreased dramatically, so we could not provide an awful lot there, although we could provide something for a short time. We know our ground forces are burned out. We cannot contribute for an extended period of time whatsoever.

The minister said we must be prepared to support that and we must be prepared to be part of a rapid reaction force that NATO has proposed. That could be put together quite quickly. It could even be part of a war against Iraq. That would be a 20,000 member force. Our minister said we would contribute hundreds to that commitment. That would be absolutely a wasted effort unless we get the strategic airlift to get our men and equipment there quickly and get the high tech equipment that would be absolutely necessary for us to work with our allies in that type of rapid reaction force.

Our men and women, among the best in the world, are let down once again by the lack of action on the part of the government. We do not have enough people or proper equipment to contribute. It is a sad reality, one created by the government over the past nine years and by other governments in the 20 or 30 years before that.

● (2205)

Canadians will pass judgment on all of these people. I want to see action in this next budget, a minimum of \$2 billion per year added to the base budget of our military so that we can start the rebuilding process and make meaningful contributions in the future.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make more of a comment than anything else.

The member, as is often the case, deplors what he feels is the sad state of our military and so often overlooks Canada's great accomplishments in the military field, which will be of tremendous importance should we be engaged in Iraq. I refer to the fact that we have one of the most sophisticated battlefield response teams for biological warfare that exists on the planet. We have the capability of dispatching teams anywhere in the world that can detect and respond to a biological attack.

It is this type of contribution that we should acknowledge, given the very tense moments that are facing us, that Canada does have the ability to contribute in a way that is unique to Canada and shows the kind of expertise that we have acquired in this field over the last 50 years.

● (2210)

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of going to the base at Borden where the NBC team trains. I was shocked to hear what I heard from the people on the ground there. This was about two or three years ago, but there has not been an awful lot of change from what I have been told.

The fact is that force there is a training force. It is not actually there to provide the type of response that the member talked about. It is a training force. It has improved only slightly its capability. We could contribute something in that area but that would not be enough of a contribution; certainly not the contribution expected from a country like Canada.

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have noticed that the member for Lakeland has a great regard for consistency in international affairs. I wonder if he could help me out with a few problems I have concerning the United States in that regard.

I start with Iraq which, Donald Rumsfeld told us the other day, through Congress, was such an evil country during the war with Iran that clearly this was proof that the United States had to act. He is the person who ought to know because he was Ronald Reagan's personal emissary to Saddam Hussein in 1983 to support Iraq in its war against Iran. I want help on that bit of consistency.

I want help on Osama bin Laden. In the 1980s the United States supported the Mujahedeen against the Russians; the Mujahedeen morphed into the Taliban, and we know where that led. I would like some help on that consistency.

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I would like help, finally, on the consistency issue of this past year when we started out, from September to December, with a war on terrorism and by January we were attacking a totally different set of players called the “axis of evil”, which started out as three and is now six.

Could the member help me with the consistency with regard to American foreign policy over the past 20 years, please?

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly not going to defend all actions of our American friend and ally from the past, but I would like to comment on what he calls an inconsistency when he is fighting this war on terror.

It is not only the al-Qaeda that is a threat here. How could the member argue that Saddam Hussein, with his weapons of mass destruction, with his willingness to use these weapons, which has been demonstrated clearly in the past, is not a threat and is not someone who has to be dealt with on this war against terror? Iraq has disobeyed a UN resolution for how long now and has gone against an agreement it signed to end the war. I do not see any inconsistency in that.

Times have changed. I understand what the member is talking about, in terms of the Americans and the other two situations, but the reality is the world situation has changed. He better ask that of the Americans, quite frankly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this take-note debate on the subject of Iraq, we are all invited to share our feelings and ideas regarding a situation that has become increasingly hot and complex, particularly since the Bush administration has decided to make it, or so it seems, the number one priority of its foreign policy.

Just over a year ago, we were having the same type of special debate in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11.

In both cases, there is one question that we must ask ourselves as Canadians and as parliamentarians: what are the reference points that could guide us in this debate and in the actions that could result from it, as we saw a year ago, through the alliance formed to fight terrorist groups from Afghanistan, an alliance which, let us not forget, is sanctioned by the UN and of which Canada is a member? Therefore, this kind of debate can have real consequences.

My first point of reference is to reaffirm my trust in multilateral action and my mistrust in unilateral initiatives.

It was with great pride that, this morning, I heard our Prime Minister reaffirm this great principle of Canada's international policy, and I quote:

I am a great believer in a multi-lateral approach to dealing with international issues. The United Nations can be a great force for good in the world. It is in all of our interests to use the power of international institutions in this complex world...It is the best way to deal with states which support terrorism or who attempt to develop weapons of mass destruction. And deal with them we must. We must deal collectively and directly with those who threaten our peace and security.

It seems to me that our second benchmark should be the following: as the neighbour of the United States, are we condemned to automatically follow their political agenda, or can we still conduct our own analysis of the international situation? Can we allow

ourselves to support our own priorities, in spite of our economic relations and our necessary relations for security and defence purposes?

I believe that we owe it to ourselves and to Canadians to take the time to hold our own debates and make our own decisions, based on our own values, beliefs and interests.

This morning again, I was very pleased to hear our Prime Minister repeat that, in these unsettled times of international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and war in several parts of the world, and I quote:

We have a special role to play because of the nature of our country. A country that has proven that pluralism works. And so we will continue to promote the values of democracy, peace and freedom, human rights and the rule of law.

In order to clearly delineate our concerns and also our government's priorities for action, the Prime Minister announced that we would be taking the appropriate measures to ensure that our values and interests are defended in the long term, including the use of appropriate military force.

However, he also said that first and foremost, we would affirm ourselves as Canadians through our strong commitment to fighting poverty both in Africa and at home, through our commitment to doubling international assistance by 2010, through support for developing countries in investments and trade, and through our resolute commitment to working for sustainable development both in terms of our own environmentally-friendly resources and internationally.

This is what it means to be Canadian, here at home and internationally. We have no interest in betraying our priorities and our values to fall in line with our neighbours to the south who could have other priorities just as important as looking for trouble in Iraq, I should think. Particularly when one considers the colossal deficit the Bush administration is ringing up, and when one considers the state of the U.S. health care system and health care costs in the United States, and when one considers all the work that remains to be done in literacy and in fighting poverty on the home front there. I would think there would be other targets that are just as legitimate, even more so.

• (2215)

My third point of reference consists in asking myself how we are to arrive at a reasonable resolution of this entire conflict with Iraq, which, it must be remembered, has been going on for more than ten years. There is no denying that the list of the Iraqi regime's violations of UN resolutions, leaving aside the new facts supplied by the Americans and the British, is a lengthy and reprehensible one, and there is no point in playing it down.

Nor should we forget that it is this same reprehensible regime which the United States supported against Iran in the 1980s.

We must not ignore the death and suffering of millions of Iraqi civilians in the wake of sanctions which were supposed to topple the regime, with the success we all know.

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And we must not forget that seven countries possess nuclear arms and that ten others could produce them within a short period of time, that 19 countries are said to possess chemical and biological weapons, and that 16 of them apparently have the means to deploy them over long distances, according to the information of the Federation of American Scientists.

I am sure that we would all agree that this information is rather disturbing. It also leads us to ask legitimate questions about the merits of the position or about the strategy of the current U.S. administration. Why are they going after Iraq at this time, since the situation over there has not changed in the last few years? In fact, in the areas of human rights or weapons of mass destruction, the situation over there is no more and no less disturbing than in many other countries.

The Bush administration sometimes argues that Iraq was in collusion with the terrorists who attacked the United States. But the evidence is weak, if not non-existent. One day, the Bush administration says it wants to disarm the Iraqi regime. The next day, it wants to overturn the regime and even get rid of Saddam Hussein, which, in terms of international law, is not at all the same thing. One day, the Bush administration says it wants to build an alliance with other countries and work with the United Nations. The next day, it is ready to go to war all by itself if need be.

Is the Bush administration going after Iraq to deflect attention away from the fact that it has not reached its anti-terrorism objectives? Is it trying to cover up the inefficiency of its intelligence services in the months preceding the events of September 11? Or does the Bush administration need a target abroad to try to get a greater majority at home?

In any case, I hope Canada, like most of the members of the UN security council, will agree to ensure that the United States and the United Nations act in good faith. Acting in good faith will prevent them from being found guilty, whatever happens. If exhaustive and careful inspections are carried out and no evidence is found, the logical thing to do would be to lift the sanctions that have hurt so many people.

If the inspections indicate that there is a problem, they should go back to the UN security council. It would be up to the council to take the appropriate measures to deal with the issue.

This is what I think the next few steps should be. I do hope Canada will play a positive role and initiate a rapprochement with the Arab Muslim countries, which have always seemed to find themselves among the main targets of the United States in the last few years.

• (2220)

[English]

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a trend is developing here tonight among most of the speakers from the Liberal backbench, which I find very troublesome. There has been far greater criticism of the policy of the United States, our ally and the leading democracy of the world, than there has been of the tyrannical, dangerous and aggressive regime in Iraq. I find this very peculiar.

I think that is in contradistinction to the fairly balanced remarks of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who certainly made it very clear that, in the view of the Government of Canada, Iraq is to blame for the current situation in Iraq and that the solution lies with Iraq on whether or not it will finally comply with the 14 outstanding United Nations resolution.

I have two questions for the member. First, he asked whether the Bush administration was targeting Iraq to direct attention from its failure to succeed in the war on terrorism. Is he not aware that the principal American strategic interest in this matter is to avoid having a rogue state such as Iraq provide terrorist networks with weapons of mass destruction which they then can use against the United States, its allies and its interests in a way that is discreet, a way that is difficult to trace back to a state sponsor such as Iraq?

Does the member have any concern whatsoever that left untouched a state such as Iraq, which has demonstrated the power to produce many of these weapons, could use terrorist networks to deliver them to places like Israel or the United States?

Second, how does the member respond to the incontrovertible fact that his government and Prime Minister supported military strikes, which he, I guess, would characterize as unilateral military strikes, by the United States air force and the royal air force against Iraq in 1998 without the coverage of a specific United Nations resolution? How does he square that precedent policy of his government with the position that he articulates this evening?

• (2225)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau: Mr. Speaker, in his question, the member pretended to be surprised that parliamentarians from a country that is a friend and ally of the Americans would raise questions that seem to be critical of the American strategy with regard to Iraq.

I would remind the member that this kind of criticism has also been voiced by many within the United States. One does not have to be Canadian to express this kind of criticism.

For example, Scott Ritter, the former chief of UN inspectors for disarmament in Iraq, asked that we give peace a chance and reminded everyone that the elimination of a regime is not compatible with the UN charter.

I would also remind my colleague opposite of the words of a former U.S. Attorney General, Ramsay Clark, no doubt a good American, who said that possible military action against Iraq would be “criminal”, these are his words, “illegal” and “irrational” in light of known facts and considering the possible ripple effect. Ramsay Clark has accused the Bush administration of trying to lead the United Nations and the international community toward a world without laws and a world of endless wars. Therefore, he called upon the UN to adhere, in a firm and independent fashion, to the international order dictated by its own charter.

If I had the time, I could also quote a coalition of American churches, called Churches for Middle East Peace, which also made a convincing argument in favour of an alternative approach to the one adopted by the Bush administration with regard to Iraq.

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[English]

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs for this opportunity to debate one of the most important issues that I believe will face this Parliament in many years.

I am probably the only member of the House who was present during the debates in 1990 and 1991 and also probably the only member of the House who has actually had the opportunity to travel to Iraq on three occasions: initially in the fall of 1990 with my former colleagues Lloyd Axworthy and Bob Corbett, a Conservative member from New Brunswick; again with a delegation in the early part of the year 2000; and most recently in May of this year, along with a number of British members of parliament.

It is very clear to me that what is at stake here in this debate and in the very critical decisions that will be made in the weeks and months ahead are the lives of literally tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens, the environment in that region and stability throughout the Middle East. It is desperately important that Canada speak out in the strongest possible terms against any possible unilateral military strike that would have disastrous impact on the people of Iraq and on this region.

We have heard eloquent testimony before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

[Translation]

I see my colleague from Mercier and other colleagues also who are members of this committee.

● (2230)

[English]

We have heard eloquent testimony before our committee from former UN humanitarian coordinators, Denis Halliday and Hans Van Sponeck, about the devastating impact of economic sanctions on the people of Iraq. We know as well that the impact on the environment has led to the very adverse results of depleted uranium on children and indeed huge increases in the level of congenital birth defects. I was in the south of Iraq. I visited the hospitals in Basra and Baghdad and saw for myself those results.

We have heard evidence before the foreign affairs committee and certainly I have had to respond personally to the anguished plea of an Iraqi mother in a children's hospital in Baghdad that was desperately short of the most basic supplies. She asked "Why do you feel you we must kill their children". I could not answer that question.

I was very proud of the fact that the foreign affairs committee stood and spoke with one strong, powerful and eloquent voice. I might add that the chair of that committee at the time this decision made was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the hon. member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale. I want to remind members of the House what that committee unanimously called for. The committee called for an end to the economic sanctions, the delinking of economic and military sanctions and a rapid lifting of economic sanctions and a contribution to the overall goal of regional disarmament, a Canadian diplomatic presence and so on.

It is in that context, a context in which hundreds of thousands of innocent children have died, in which a nation's infrastructure in terms of clean water and sewage has been paralyzed, that we are now told by George Bush that there is a concern about weapons of mass destruction, that we must pass a new resolution and obviously that there must be some sort of firm military action to enforce United Nations resolutions.

To accept Bush's insistence that we move in this way is a recipe for disaster. It is also fundamentally dishonest and ignores the history of that region. In fact, members of the House must know that according to the former chief UN weapons inspector, Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, the United States and other Security Council members were manipulating UN inspection teams for their own political ends. I do not have the time to go into that at length, but certainly both Rolf Ekeus and Scott Ritter made it very clear that was the case. In fact Scott Ritter said that far from Iraq kicking out the weapons inspectors in December of 1998 that:

It wasn't Saddam Hussein or the Iraqi government who gave the boot to weapons inspectors from...(UNSCOM). Rather it was the United States. In the person of former President Bill Clinton...

It pushed them out so they could bomb in December 1998.

One might ask who Scott Ritter is. Here is how Scott Ritter describes himself:

I need to say right out front I'm a card-carrying Republican in the conservative-moderate range who voted for George W. Bush for President. I'm not here with a political agenda. I'm not here to slam Republicans. I am one.

This is the source about information about the presence currently of weapons of mass destruction. Ritter said, and he said it clearly and unequivocally to our committee, a committee of this Parliament, that no one had substantiated the allegations that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction or was attempting to acquire weapons of mass destructions. Scott Ritter said:

This is not about the security of the United States. This is about domestic American politics. The national security of the United States of America has been hijacked by a handful of neo-conservatives who are using their position of authority to pursue their own ideologically-driven political ambitions. The day we go to war for that reason is the day we have failed collectively as a nation.

For God's sake, surely our nation, Canada, must be speaking out strongly and clearly to reinforce that message.

● (2235)

Today we received good news. Hans Blix, the chief of the United Nations, UNMOVIC, the monitoring and enforcement inspection commission, has said about Iraq that "On the question of access, is clarified that all sites are subject to immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access". What more can we ask for? Each time they comply, the bar is raised higher and higher.

The spokesperson for the Alliance says that we cannot trust them. Surely we must recognize that when the inspectors go in, they have unfettered access and if there is any suggestion of obstruction of those inspectors, obviously Blix will be in a position to report back quickly to the United Nations, which is where this question belongs.

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The hypocrisy in this area is breathtaking. I have heard from a number of my colleagues on this issue already. The silence in March 1988 from the then American government included a number of key administration officials now, about the gassing of Halabja. There was not a word nor a peep. In fact it obstructed the United Nations Security Council efforts to condemn them. Why? Because then Saddam Hussein was our guy.

As well, we have to be honest and recognize that if we are seriously concerned about respect for United Nations resolutions and Security Council resolutions in the Middle East, what country has violated over and over again UN Security Council resolutions with the support, often alone, of the United States? Israel. Yet there is not a word on that. It is the only country in the region that we know for certain possesses over 200 weapons of mass destruction. I remind members of the House that Israel has refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty. It is hypocrisy.

Which country just last year blatantly refused to sign onto United Nations protocol on developing, producing or stockpiling biological or toxic weapons? The United States of America.

I want to once again appeal to the government and to the minister to recognize that it is within the framework of both international law and the United Nations that this must be resolved. It must be resolved with consistency and equity. It must be resolved in a manner that respects the lives of innocent Iraqi people who have suffered already too much.

Over 100 prominent Canadians, Québécois et Québécoises, Canadiens et Canadiennes from everywhere in Canada, Anton Kuerti, Margaret Atwood, Pierre Burton, David Suzuki, and many more have signed a statement calling on our government to endorse the principle of a peaceful resolution of this conflict. They have said it is time to move beyond war, il n'y a pas que la guerre. I urge the minister to heed the eloquent words of these Canadians.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. colleague across the way for speaking so eloquently and so passionately. However, I would like to point out to him some of us on this side were in the House in 1988-89 and also spoke on that issue.

Could the hon. member, in his own words, give us an impression of or characterize George Bush and Saddam Hussein and could he differentiate between the two? As well could he try to give us an idea of the difference between what Turkey is doing in Kurdistan to the Kurds and what Saddam Hussein is doing to the Kurds?

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, we have to be very clear. Saddam Hussein is a ruthless and brutal dictator who has gassed his own people, the Kurds in Halabja, and who has suppressed in the most violent and bloody manner the civil liberties of his own people. I said that in May of this year in Baghdad in the presence of Tariq Aziz. I made that very clear that those who are responsible for terrible war crimes whether the killings at Sabra and Shatila or the gassing of Kurds at Halabja, must be brought to justice.

I look forward to the day when the brave people of Iraq are able to live in a democratic society that respects the fundamental human rights of all of its citizens.

This is a ruthless and tyrannical dictator. However why on earth would we punish the people of Iraq in the way that is suggested by Bush? Nelson Mandela said that they think they are the only power in the world. Americans are not and they are following a dangerous policy. One country wants to bully the world. We must not allow that.

The member asked me what this was about. In March of this year Colin Powell said about the U.S. policy that regardless of what the inspectors did, the people of Iraq and the people of the region would be better off with a different regime in Baghdad. This is about fulfilling what his father did not finish. It is about regime change. It is about oil. It is about mid-term elections and we in Canada must not be a party to that violence and that brutality.

• (2240)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member, since he attributes every motive possible to the American government's desire to enforce UN resolutions, could he perhaps speculate on or ascribe motives to the Labour Party in the United Kingdom and why its members in their conference this weekend endorsed essentially the position taken by my party? What nefarious Oedipus complex does he choose to apply to Prime Minister Blair and his attempt to ensure that international law and the integrity of the United Nations is respected by enforcement of the resolutions?

Further, does my hon. colleague not understand that in terms of the weapons inspection regime, we would be sending yet once again roughly 100 inspectors into a country roughly the size of British Columbia? Clearly the Iraqi regime has now created mobile weapons plants and mobile scud missiles, which can be moved from locale to locale and quickly and easily hidden from weapons inspectors. Is he not aware that previous weapons inspectors have raised this concern?

Finally, while the member quoted Nelson Mandela, is he not aware that Vaclav Havel, one of the great moral heroes of the world today, has called for the world to act together, if necessary using military force to ensure that the integrity of the UN resolution is respected?

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, if I have to choose for my facts between an extreme right wing member of the Canadian Alliance and an extreme right wing Republican who was actually on the ground in Iraq for seven years, who was the deputy chief weapons inspector and who has said unequivocally, and I repeat again, that no one has substantiated the allegations that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction or is attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction, with great respect to my friend from Calgary, I think I will go with Scott Ritter on this one in terms of the actual facts on the ground.

We want to get the inspectors back in there absolutely. Hans Blix has arrived at an agreement today to do that. I suggest that we allow that to work.

Just a couple of weeks ago the foreign affairs committee took the same position. I want to pay tribute to the member for Mercier and to my own leader, the member for Halifax, for ensuring that the foreign affairs committee had an opportunity to speak out on that very important question.

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In terms of the Labour Party, perhaps my colleague is not aware of the fact that the Labour Party motion that was passed in fact just yesterday made it very clear that both international law and the United Nations must be fully respected in any response on weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening to place on the record my views with respect to Canada's possible participation in military action against Iraq.

As I prepared for this debate tonight, I went back and reviewed my comments during a similar debate on military intervention in Iraq back in 1998. I can tell the House that my opinion on this matter has not changed at all since that time.

In the past I supported requests for Canadian participation in peacekeeping missions. I also supported Canada's participation in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. My own son was part of Canada's contingent in that war. I witnessed firsthand the destruction in New York City on September 11 and I agree with the need for some form of retaliation.

However there is one major difference between our past involvement in military and peacekeeping operations and the recent request of the United States for our participation in Iraq. In all of those cases there was an international consensus that action should be taken. However in this case in question, we are talking about unilateral military action led by the United States against Iraq and supported by Britain.

As I stated in February 1998, if this were an internationally sanctioned effort by the United Nations I would be more inclined to support Canada's involvement. I share the frustration of our American and British allies who have been unable to solve the Iraqi situation with diplomatic efforts for over 10 years. I share their concerns that a madman like Saddam Hussein has been stockpiling weapons of mass destruction.

I agree that the world must act to address the problem, but it would be preferable if the world agreed on a common course of action. I firmly believe that a decision to launch any attack on Iraq should be taken by the United Nations and not by the White House alone. We live in an international community where the actions of one nation can impact on the lives of many. As a result no one nation has the right or moral authority to make decisions that can impact on the lives of those outside its own borders.

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein is a tyrant, but how was he personally affected by previous military attacks? It was innocent civilians who were the biggest victims during the last set of attacks on Iraq and the sanctions that followed. They suffered starvation and disease and I fear that the result may very well be the same.

Over the years many of my constituents have expressed the desire to see our nation maintain an independent foreign policy instead of following the White House. I continue to share their views.

We should not jump every time there is a change in administration in Washington and a change in the direction of U.S. foreign policy. I have grave reservations about sending our brave men and women of the Canadian armed forces to war until all diplomatic solutions have been exhausted. In fact I would prefer to see Canadian defence

policy return to its more traditional roots of peacekeeping rather than peacemaking.

Unless there is a decision by the United Nations to proceed with military force against Iraq, Canada should not contribute troops or participate in any unilateral action against Iraq or any other nation for that matter.

● (2245)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this might just be a question of semantics, but we need some clarification of definition here. The member and others use the term unilateral action when it is already very clear that a number of nations have indicated that they would be allied with the United States if certain things were not complied with by Iraq. Great Britain, Qatar, Israel and Australia at the very minimum have said that they would work with the United States if in fact there would be consequences if Iraq did not comply.

Is the hon. member saying that his definition of unilateral is any action taken by a group of nations outside the United Nations? Is that his definition of unilateral? We need that point clarified.

What would be his advice to his own minister? I gather they talk about this in caucus, at least I hope they do. What would be his advice to his own minister should Iraq fail to comply and the Security Council fails to come up with a resolution for some action to be taken? What would be his advice at that point?

● (2250)

Mr. Janko Perić: Mr. Speaker, until recently the United States alone was pushing for action against Iraq. Then the United Kingdom came on board along with some other players.

There is a United Nations resolution which should be respected. There are over 160 UN resolutions on Bosnia and none of them were respected until the Dayton Peace Accord and diplomacy prevailed. I do not see why we have to jump just because there is some urgent action in Washington. I do not see why Canada should follow Washington and White House foreign policy right away. As clearly stated in my speech, I would support this only if there were a decision of the United Nations and if Hussein did not allow or respect that resolution.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to have an opportunity to ask this same question to the minister, but I would pose a two part question to the member.

First, what type of recent evidence is the hon. member or the government aware of which seems so compelling that it has provided satisfaction to the British Prime Minister and his government, similarly that type of evidence that appears to be in the possession of the United States? If he is not aware of current evidence that reaches that criteria, what type of evidence should Canada as a nation be seeking? What type of evidence would the hon. member suggest would be sufficient to warrant Canada's further involvement in moving down the road toward supporting the United States' position of aggression? What type of specific evidence pertaining clearly to the possession by Saddam Hussein and Iraq of weapons of mass destruction would he suggest would meet that criteria?

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Mr. Janko Perić: Mr. Speaker, it is evident that neighbouring countries around Iraq such as Israel, Pakistan, India and others possess weapons of mass destruction. The inspectors are much more qualified than I or probably the majority of us are in the House. If the resolution passed by the United Nations is not respected by Hussein, then action should be taken.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand and speak to this issue tonight. It certainly is one of the most important issues we have talked about in a long time. Many of the issues we discuss are rather trivial but this certainly is not a trivial issue. It is a very important and meaningful debate.

Because of that I find it hard to understand some of the positions taken here tonight. It seems to me that we essentially have two roads from which to choose. One is a road of diplomacy, a road where we try to use all our diplomatic and political energies to find a peaceful resolution to this perceived threat and one that will eliminate the pressure and, in the end, lift the restrictions from the people of Iraq and provide a solution to the problem.

The other road is one of war, of military action, of violence and of aggression which will result in the deaths of thousands of civilians, men, women and children, hundreds of soldiers, maybe our own sons and daughters here, and incredible environmental and property destruction. It will be a long, drawn out conflict.

I do not see how we can talk about a choice of one road or the other when it is so obvious that we must take the diplomatic route, at least at first. It seems that some people want to jump to military action first. Their focus is on military action. It is not on diplomacy. It is not on political resolution.

Certainly we support the road that ensures every diplomatic effort that can be made is taken to avoid some of those awful consequences of the other road, that is, the devastation and fatalities. When someone suggested that if we even suggest a diplomatic route we are waffling, or we are in the middle and not taking a strong stand, I took exception to that. Any time we talk about taking an action that will result in somebody dying, we need to have sober second thought. We cannot just jump on it and say that we must take this action and we must to do it now, especially when the information we have at hand is so limited, unconvincing and lacking in credibility.

The member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough asked what evidence there was. I ask that same question. What current evidence is there of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Everybody says that it is there and that there is no question about it, but I have never seen a photograph or heard a testimony. I have never heard anything that is current which says there are weapons of mass destruction. They may be there but all I am saying is that I have never heard or seen anything with my own eyes that is very convincing.

Today's news that Iraq has agreed to comply with its commitment to the United Nations to allow weapons inspectors in is very encouraging. We all know that is no guarantee. We are not under any illusion that this will solve the problem for sure. In fact I can guarantee everybody that there will be hurdles thrown in the way as we go along, but it is our job together with the international community to overcome those hurdles without sending in soldiers and without using force unless it is absolutely the last option.

Canada's role should be to ensure that Iraq keeps its commitment. We should be applying our own influence to Iraq and to Iraq's friends to apply influence on Iraq to ensure that it complies with those rules. If we are successful there will be no war, no deaths and no women or children will die. There will be no retaliation and no destabilization or environmental degradation and destruction.

This whole debate is so complex that it makes one stop and think about so many different things. As many people have said, one issue that causes a lot of us to be uncomfortable is the unilateral action that was just raised. Whether it is unilateral or a few countries, it does not matter, we need to have rules based diplomacy here. We cannot have strong countries, whatever countries they are, taking action against weaker countries without following international law, international rules and the United Nations. We cannot start down this road and have this happen or it will be just chaos in the international community. Every stronger country will then refer to this action as a precedent for what they want to do to a weaker country. I think it would be a very dangerous divergence from where we have always gone.

● (2255)

Someone brought up regime changes a little while ago. That is a new divergence. How can one country say that it does not like a particular government, no matter how good or bad it is, and that it wants it to change or it will take all the action necessary to change the regime, even though it may not have done anything to harm the aggressor country in the last 10 years. This is a very dangerous road to go down and would set a dangerous precedent. We have already heard that other countries now use that same term of wanting a regime change.

The other issue that bothers me is the evidence of weapons of mass destruction. Everybody talks about it but nobody puts the evidence on the table. The United States has not. Great Britain has not. Canada has not.

I asked the question at the foreign affairs committee the other day about what proof we have right now that is current and credible that there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. All I heard were references to 10 years ago and that things were really bad. I did not get an answer about today.

What happens if we do attack that country and it turns out that there are no weapons of mass destruction and thousands of people die? I and I do not think anybody in Parliament knows for sure exactly what weapons are there or are not there. For that reason and because we would be putting hundreds and thousands of people's lives at risk, we must explore every diplomatic opportunity and ensure that we take every step before we support military action.

We think that Canada's action plan should be simple. We think that before one Canadian soldier risks his life we, as politicians, and our diplomatic corps should take every step possible to ensure that they have exhausted every opportunity to resolve this issue.

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Second, every effort should be made by the government to follow the recent directive by the United Nations and the agreement with Iraq to ensure that it follows up on the agreement, keeps it word this time and allows unfettered access by the United Nations' weapons inspectors.

We must ensure on the overall that we all follow international law and follow the rules of the United Nations, because if we deviate from these then we just set precedents for other countries to do the same thing. Then we will be offended and we may even be the victims of that action if we are not careful.

We must ensure that rules based diplomacy remains the centre of international cooperation in conflict. One superpower, no matter who it is, must not assert its power over a smaller country without the approval of the United Nations and without complying with international law.

That is our position. We say, not necessarily force but, yes, force if absolutely necessary, but first we must explore every diplomatic and political opportunity to avoid one fatality.

• (2300)

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester for his remarks and would ask him a paradoxical question.

Has it ever occurred to him about the oddity of life in which there are something like 17 countries that have or are acquiring nuclear arms, 26 countries that have or are acquiring chemical weapons and 20 countries around the planet that have or are acquiring biological weapons, and yet there is one country in the world that has failed to sign two of the treaties, one on biological weapons and the other on chemical weapons, and has weakened the proliferation treaty on nuclear arms?

Could the member explore with me the paradox of singling out one country for special treatment without attending to those other issues and thereby allowing the chances in the future of all sorts of other countries around the world acquiring these very same weapons? Does he understand this paradox, because I do not think I do? Maybe he can help me.

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I love the member's paradoxical questions on an oddity of life. No, I cannot answer that question but I think we should all push for conformity and consistency by all countries.

When the member was referring to the oddities of life I was trying to think of another country that was attacked in a pre-emptive strike. Paradoxically it was the United States that was attacked in a pre-emptive strike in 1941 by a country that felt it was at risk by a superpower that had weapons of mass destruction of that day.

There are lots of paradoxes. I cannot explain them but I certainly appreciate the member's question.

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with the member when he says that we will only use force if absolutely necessary. Many people talk about the positive developments, as do many of my members. I do hope that Iraq will let the inspectors have a good look but we have been up and down like a yo-yo with Iraq on this. It does not follow through on its commitments.

I have a short comment and then a quick question. War is a possibility if it is absolutely necessary. If called upon, the members of the Canadian Forces will make Canada proud, as they always have. They never complain. They do their duty. They defend our interests at home and abroad and some may die in the process, as we witnessed in Afghanistan. We owe these soldiers the best equipment available.

The Auditor General's report stated that the budget for the Canadian Forces was woefully inadequate. The reported stated that increases should be \$6.5 billion to \$11 billion over the next five years. We have constantly called upon the government to provide more resources to the military but that has not happened.

Does the member not agree that debates like we are having tonight underscore the vital importance to ensure that we have a properly funded military force in this country, which we believe is so lacking?

• (2305)

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I will make a comment before I get into the meat of the member's question. This is the kind of thing that bothers me. He just said that some soldiers or some civilians may die in the process. I do not think we could ever say some may die in the process and carry on. I think we have to stop when we say some may die and think it over and give it a sober second thought.

To answer the member's question about equipment for the military, when we were in power we were the last ones to expend any amount of money on the military. We built frigates which have been very successful. The last actual major expenditure we committed was for helicopters. We committed to all kinds of new equipment, land, sea and air, for our military to make sure they were properly equipped. Since 1993 we have seen it all decline, all taken away and there has been absolutely no re-investment in equipment for the military.

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member for his remarks and refer him to the statement that was signed just last week by over 100 prominent Canadians strongly opposing the impending war and arguing that a military attack on Iraq at this juncture would be profoundly immoral and would almost certainly result in destabilizing repercussions that would endanger the whole world.

Would the member agree with the concluding remarks in the following statement? It reads as follows:

Peace can only be built upon a foundation of diplomacy and justice. We must work to uphold international law and to safeguard human rights, the environment, and global human security. Then, and only then, can the world move beyond terrorism and war.

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do support that statement 100%. I personally oppose any impending war, as the member mentioned. I think it is our obligation and our duty to do everything we can to avoid even one fatality. To me that is where our focus should be. It should not be on getting ready for war. That has to be a priority but we have to spend equal time or more on trying to find peaceful solutions.

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Today the Leader of the Opposition suggested that I was waffling or in the middle of the road because I was emphasizing the peaceful process and the diplomatic way. That is what I will always do no matter what he says.

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this debate as do others. As many have said it is a very important topic that we are debating tonight. It is great to see the minister here throughout the debate. Hopefully his officials are watching the debate on television because this is the purpose of the debate. There has been a tremendous input of positive ideas from all parties on all sides of the House. Hopefully the officials will sift out the good ideas that come from the debate and present them to the minister.

In essence the parties agree on most of the tenets of the present situation and how to solve the present crisis. We would all prefer a peaceful solution. We all want weapons inspections in Iraq. We all want the inspectors to have unlimited access. We would all like Saddam Hussein to voluntarily destroy his weapons of mass destruction and the components thereof. We want a multilateral decision of the United Nations if Canada is ever to go to war. We all think it is despicable that Saddam Hussein has attacked and killed at least 5,000 of his own people with chemical weapons.

It is probably obvious that I support the government's position and the position of virtually everyone who has spoken, that we should do everything in our power to achieve a solution to this crisis peacefully. If Canada is to be involved in military action it should be under the rule of international law and through the United Nations.

As chair of the foreign affairs caucus I have talked to many of my colleagues about this. The vast majority of my colleagues, if not all, definitely want us to do everything within our power through a peaceful means to try and achieve a solution in Iraq. Certainly there is goodwill in the world where we can use those various levers.

All of us are delighted with today's decision of an agreement between Iraq and the UN inspection team. I am sure we all hope and pray that this works out, that the inspections are completed and any weapons that exist are destroyed.

In the sad case that an agreement does not occur, then the only thing we are debating tonight is the nature of the dangerous path to war that Canada should take. A decision not to attack Iraq could lead to thousands of deaths and the maiming of innocent people. The decision to attack Iraq could also lead to thousands of deaths and the maiming of innocent people. We need to give very serious consideration to how we proceed. This is why this debate tonight is so important.

My constituents have positions on both sides of the argument. I want to ask some questions. I do not have the answers. There are wise leaders in the House who could provide some answers. I want to ask a number of questions from both viewpoints that people should ask of this serious and complex situation before they come to the final determination if things unfold in an unfortunate manner.

First of all, if Iraq does not allow inspections or destroy its weapons of mass destruction and if we do not attack, what would we feel if our friends, family and acquaintances and other Canadians are killed by one of these weapons as Canadians have been killed by

terrorists in the past? How could we live with ourselves after knowing from tonight's debate from the JIC, public domain information, previous inspections and other documents that it was proven or likely that Saddam Hussein attacked his neighbours and his own people with chemical weapons?

What if it was found that Iraq had refurbished its sites for chemical and biological weapon construction, as the independent International Institute for Strategic Studies found at one time that Iraq could assemble a nuclear weapon within months of obtaining fissionable material from foreign sources, and that it had sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa, in spite of having no active nuclear program that would require it?

For those who do not think it is possible for Iraq to develop chemical or biological weapons, they should know that Iraq used mustard and nerve agents against its own people, killing an estimated 5,000 people.

One chemical weapon was mustard gas which when inhaled damages the respiratory tract and causes vomiting and diarrhea. An attack can damage the eyes and mucous membranes, the lungs, skin and blood-forming organs.

• (2310)

Not only did Iraq produce 2,850 tonnes of mustard gas but 210 tonnes of tabun, 795 tonnes of sarin and cyclosarin and 3.9 tonnes of VX. The latter nerve agents can all produce muscular spasms, paralysis and death.

There were also biological agents. In 1991 Iraq had produced 8,500 litres of anthrax, which we know can cause fever, internal bleeding and death. It produced 2,200 litres of aflatoxin which can cause liver inflammation, cancer and death. In pregnant women it can lead to stillborn babies and children born with mutations. Do we want this to happen to Canadians? Do we want this to happen to anyone? It had produced 19,000 litres of botulinum toxin. This is one of the most toxic substances known. Paralysis leads to death by suffocation.

Since 1998 it is likely that Iraq has recalled its nuclear scientists to the program and tried to procure both uranium and centrifuge equipment. It is estimated that a nuclear weapon is between one and two years to production. No one wants another Hiroshima.

There are other questions that must be asked. What if we do attack? If we do not have a grand coalition in this consensus what effect will a unilateral attack on millions of supporters of Islam around the world have? What will their future actions in the world lead to?

I have received a number of e-mails. As I said my constituents are split. A number are against Canada attacking at this time. This one is from a young man. I will read a couple of sentences:

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I write to you in order to express my opposition to possible Canadian support of the use of military force for the purpose of regime change in Iraq. Any military measure taken in Iraq could trigger a much greater conflict with the wider Arab world and certainly increase the likelihood of future terrorist acts. I don't know if my note to you will make much of a difference in the grand scheme of things, however I figure it can't hurt.

I would like Alex to know his note has been heard in Parliament and that every time a constituent writes I read it and it has an effect.

As was asked tonight by many speakers, why this particular tyrant and this particular dictator of the many in the world and why now? What is this policy of pre-emptive strikes? Canada, U.S.A., Australia, France and the U.K. all have powerful weapons. What is to stop someone from one day doing a pre-emptive strike on any of us? How many innocent civilians would be killed in such an attack? If we work to replace an unpopular regime who is to stop people in other nations replacing unpopular regimes in Canada or the United States one day? Where is the evidence from the United States on the terrorism links and the Iraqi weapons that the U.S. government could use to convince more of its own citizens of the clear and present danger?

We should be ever mindful of how we tread on the sovereignty of others lest they choose to tread on ours.

I am sure we all hope for the saving of thousands of innocent lives that the present inspection that has been agreed to today goes ahead and is successful. If it is not I have posed a number of questions on both sides of the situation that should be asked by our leaders and carefully thought out. All the detailed ramifications must also be thought out before we decide on this very serious course of action.

• (2315)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Yukon on reflecting on the clear, overwhelming, and categorized evidence relating to the potential of Saddam Hussein and his capabilities, be they chemical, biological or nuclear.

I must say that we respect what anyone says in this place. We can also say we are astounded and I am astounded when I hear other members in this place, such as the member for Cumberland—Colchester, actually say that there is not enough evidence. I realize he will automatically, as members do, dismiss the data of the United States as if it is not relevant. However, what more is needed than the extensive analysis and work of the intelligence agencies in Great Britain, Germany and our own CSIS which is overwhelming in its documentation? I congratulate the member for Yukon for acknowledging that. It is one thing to raise the question, but we must press on to a resolution of this matter.

I would like to ask the member these questions. In the case where Iraq and Saddam Hussein violate the weapons procedures that are hopefully about to unfold and the UN Security Council does not endorse action, would the hon. member be recommending to his minister that we join the growing coalition which is not unilateral that has said there must be a signal sent to Saddam Hussein that a violation of these resolutions will bring consequences?

Will his advice at that time to his minister be that we should join that multilateral coalition of our allies though it may not be endorsed by the UN Security Council?

Mr. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for those questions. As I tried to explain in my speech, first, I am not totally happy that we have a large enough coalition and, second, enough information.

I am glad the member spoke about information in his opening remarks. I am not satisfied that we have enough information in this area from the United States and others. I stated that I hoped for a much grander coalition, especially those countries in the region who would be most threatened by, for example, the extended use of missiles that Iraq has and is producing so that it can send these agents even farther. If we had a number of those nations who are most threatened on side, we would have a much more convincing case to make those decisions.

I will be waiting on the information that I am talking about from a broader coalition before making any ultimate recommendations. However, until that time I will certainly be urging the government to do everything in its power, and all the other levers outside military power, to resolve this situation.

• (2320)

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in the House not on a good topic. The possibility of war is never a pleasant topic. I want people to understand that the only reason we are standing here tonight in the House, the only reason we are having this take note debate and the only reason we are even discussing this issue is because of the will of our forefathers who had the courage to stand up to tyrants such as we are talking about tonight and fight for that right. I want to thank those people. We should remember when we are in this discussion tonight that a lot of them sacrificed their lives to allow us to stand here fighting against people such as Saddam Hussein.

There are those on the other side of the House and in the general population who will refuse to see just how big a threat to world peace and stability Saddam Hussein really is. The hard evidence is overwhelming if we only just look at his track record to date. Add on the mountain of evidence that says he is building and stockpiling weapons of mass destruction and the only logical conclusion can be that he must be stopped and stopped soon.

He is a man, a brutal man, who has caused the death of thousands and thousands of people and threatens the lives of millions more. He is simply and unarguably a mass murderer in anybody's description. This is not fresh and new evidence. His own son-in-law who escaped his clutches in 1995 revealed at that time that Saddam Hussein was accumulating biological weapons.

We know beyond a shadow of a doubt what he did to the people of Iran. We know what he did in Kuwait. We know how many he killed in Kurdistan. We know what he has done to anyone in Iraq who has posed a challenge, imagined or otherwise.

Why does the government waffle and dodge and not act in the best interests of not just ourselves but the whole world? How many more condemnations of the Security Council will we see before decisive action is taken?

Sixteen times that man has broken separate resolutions passed by the UN Security Council, the highest body of the UN, and we still waffle. "Give him one more chance" is what I hear. "Give him one more chance; maybe he will change". How many times more?

Time is not on the side of the millions who face a direct attack from Saddam Hussein. If anything, time is on the side of Saddam Hussein. The more time he has to prepare before we take pre-emptive action, the more time we allow him to build these awful weapons, the more danger we put the world in.

Consider what a new and democratic regime might do for Iraq if all that wealth was not being squandered on finding new and terrible ways to kill people. In the last four years, since the United Nations' flagrant violation resolution, we can only guess and shudder at how much more he has at his disposal.

The government's chronic neglect of our armed forces puts Canada in a very awkward position. We simply cannot ask our men and women in the forces to do any more than they are doing now. The government obviously does not have the same concerns about our military but I do not believe even the Liberals could be so cruel as to try to squeeze much more out of those overworked and underpaid dedicated defenders of our sovereignty and freedom.

As has been said by other members in the House, even if we cannot afford to offer military support to our friends and our allies, the very least we could be doing and should be doing in the House is offering our moral support.

This is not warmongering. It is simply realizing the truth and looking at the evidence.

● (2325)

Saddam Hussein does, beyond a shadow of a doubt, pose a threat to the whole world. He is a menace to every country, including his own. In the Middle East he harbours terrorists within the borders of Iraq.

The United Nations has been unable to reason with Saddam Hussein, just as we cannot reason with a rabid dog. A man like Saddam Hussein, who has expressed no remorse or concern of any kind for any of his actions or for the victims of those actions, is not a man of reason. All he knows is brute strength. It is very likely that even brute strength will not stop him.

Saddam Hussein does not concern himself or show any discomfort in being harshly condemned for his actions by the United Nations. How could anyone possibly think anything less than pre-emptive military action will stop him?

There are those on the other side and some on this side who would like to negotiate with Saddam Hussein and try to reason with him. They are fooling themselves. If they think the man who launched the war in Kuwait, who slaughtered the people of Kurdistan, who slaughtered the Kurds and used chemical weapons on them will listen to reason, I think they had better give their heads a shake.

Any man who uses chemical weapons against other humans, including pregnant women so that infants are born with horrific birth defects, is not a man who will listen to reason. Any individual who stockpiles chemical, biological and nuclear weaponry capable of

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killing millions will not listen to reason. Saddam Hussein is beyond the point of reason. He may well be certifiably insane. We do not rub the ears of a rabid dog and we do not try to reason with murderous madmen like Saddam Hussein.

All the soft words that can be uttered and all the negotiations for eternity will not stop this man. Consider the lessons of history. Over 60 years ago Neville Chamberlain thought reason and goodwill would prevail. How very wrong he was. They sat and did nothing until it was too late. We lost a lot of good people because of sitting and waiting. We cannot afford to let that happen again.

If Saddam Hussein is not stopped and stopped soon, the only peace in our time will be between right now and the day in the very near future when he begins to launch the weapons of mass destruction against the world. For those who like to sit here and think that we will be safe in this country, I have news for them: we will not be safe. Biological weaponry does not pick or choose where it goes or know only those who supply it. We are more at risk than ever before.

It is time we stood up on behalf of the people, on behalf of our allies, on behalf of those who would stand beside us in our time of need. It is time we got rid of all this anti-Americanism and stopped mollicoddling people like Saddam Hussein. We can supply all the money he wants. We can give him what he wants, but the money will be used to create more weaponry to use against humanity. It is past time that we stood up to this type of person and put a stop to it in this world. On behalf of humanity, it is time we did something.

● (2330)

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap. Clearly since so many other countries around the world possess or are on the road to possessing nuclear arms, chemical weapons and biological weapons, the whole premise of his argument rests upon an interpretation of the intention of Saddam Hussein.

As a former professor of history, I must say I have heard a lot of interesting analogies over the past few weeks with Hitler. It seems to me however that these analogies really do not apply at all because in the 1930s we did not stop Hitler. We had the Rhineland. We had Czechoslovakia. We also had a very different sort of personality. I would recommend to the hon. member the new biography by Ian Kershaw in two volumes which outlines in some detail exactly what we were dealing with, a very different personality, a suicidal personality, not someone who has attempted to create a legacy, a dynasty, palaces and a lifestyle which he wishes to preserve. Hitler was the very opposite.

The other lesson of the history of more recent times, and I would ask the hon. member to comment on this, is that we actually did stop Saddam Hussein during the gulf war and he stayed stopped. He did not immediately do what Hitler did, which was to bring down the entire Nazi regime at any cost. It was destruction or victory. There were no choices. He had a sufficient regard for his own skin that deterrence has worked.

Government Orders

We have known about Saddam Hussein since the 1970s. The Americans back in the 1980s presumably knew about the same person. What new thing has happened? What new self-destructive urge has come over this man that he wishes to take on the mightiest country in the world and give up the palaces, the mistresses and all the other things we read about?

It seems to me that the hon. member has a problem with intention here. Is this the same kind of personality that is likely to bring us all to nuclear destruction?

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member from the other side should listen to what Saddam Hussein has said in his own statements about where he is willing to go and where he will go.

The member mentioned that there are other countries in the world that have the same capabilities as Hussein does and asked what makes him more of a threat than any other country. Well Hussein has used these chemical weapons against his own people.

You want to compare and you say—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I know we are a little rusty following the summer vacation but I just want to caution the House and remind everyone that all the interventions have to come through the Chair. It is quite helpful from time to time.

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member on the other side likes to refer to the second world war and Hitler, and say that we did stop Hitler. It was at a very heavy cost because we refused to act sooner. He asked how we can compare Hitler and Saddam Hussein and chemical weapons. I guess the gassing of the Jewish people does not come into question here and how the chemicals were used then.

Maybe the member on the other side should brush up a little on his history if he was a history teacher. Those are the facts. It does not matter how much we want to try and change those facts. They are the facts and we cannot rewrite history no matter how much we may like to. It will not happen.

Saddam Hussein has shown that he is capable of using these weapons against his own people. There is Kuwait. There is an overwhelming abundance of evidence showing exactly what Saddam Hussein is capable of and has the will to do. Yet again the member will sit there and say that he will not.

My biggest fear is that Canada might get this fellow and bring him into our judicial system. Those guys over there would say that we could send him to jail and retrain him. My fear is he is likely to come out as a schoolteacher. Those are their thoughts. It does not matter how much killing someone does, they think that those people can be reintroduced into society. It will not happen.

• (2335)

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to take part in this take note debate concerning the situation with regard to Iraq.

I recall taking part in a debate on this very subject shortly after I was first elected to the House by the voters of Scarborough—Agincourt back in 1988. At that time we had very clear evidence that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was underway and Iraq was acting in a manner that required a drastic response by the nations of the world.

At this time the situation is quite different. Indications from a wide variety of sources state that Iraq's military infrastructure has not recovered from the devastating punishment it suffered during the gulf war. The allegations by the American government that Iraq has been developing nuclear and biological weapons capable of mass destruction have not been substantiated by any valid sources. The latest allegation that somehow Iraq was behind the terrible events of September 11 is one that if even a causal link could be proven, it would be a major revelation to the world. We are being asked by the United States government as its next step in its war on terrorism to focus on the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, one of the three countries composing what Bush calls the axis of evil.

The United States is now trying to gather international support from its allies for a military attack on Iraq, claiming that this evil state harbours terrorists, secretly builds weapons of mass destruction, used weapons against its own people, misled United Nations weapons inspectors and engaged in wars of aggression and expansion.

President Bush called on the United Nations to prove its relevance and to act quickly to answer the alleged threat posed by Saddam Hussein. At home, the president is struggling to obtain unanimity in Washington, D.C., but he is confident that Congress will soon pass a resolution giving him authority to take military action against Iraq.

To date, the United States itself has failed to show how Iraq is linked to the al-Qaeda network, nor has it presented any evidence to support war. The United States has strongly endorsed the 55-page dossier on Iraq presented recently by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, which warned that Iraq is trying to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as missiles that could reach Europe and its neighbours. Both the United States and Britain argue that this new evidence justifies a pre-emptive strike on Iraq.

The truth is that the President of the United States was elected by only 200 well placed votes in Florida. The United States is going into congressional and senate elections and needs an external evil to rally Republican voters to go to the polls. The Democrats in the United States have expressed these concerns, and if they dare challenge the President of the United States they are called unpatriotic. What irony. The same is practised by Saddam Hussein, who calls unpatriotic all his citizens who dare argue with him. He goes one step farther. He exterminates them.

Our government's position has been steadfast in its work to fight terrorism at home and abroad. Canada is greatly concerned about the policies pursued by the Government of Iraq, particularly with regard to human rights and weapons of mass destruction.

Canada agrees with the United Nations conclusion that weapons inspectors did not complete their work prior to their withdrawal in 1998. Their final report lists areas where questions remain concerning Iraq's disarmament. There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein was and is trying to develop weapons that he states are to defend his country, but they can be destructive to Iraq's neighbours as well as other countries around the world. However, the United Nations permanent members all have such weapons and are more destructive.

Government Orders

In the past few weeks I have had hundreds of contacts with my constituents with regard to Iraq, and the result has been almost unanimous: If there is no solid proof that Iraq has or is in production of weapons of mass destruction, then no unilateral action should be taken. Further, a large majority of my constituents believe that any action that may be deemed necessary can only take place under the control of the United Nations.

● (2340)

I would like to read aloud some of those comments.

Magdi Abdelmasih wrote:

We have to be confident if Iraq has any mass destruction weapons before we are involved in any action that may lead to catastrophe.

Peen Yuyitung wrote:

Canada should not commit to getting involved with an Iraq conflict, until facts from both sides are presented and reviewed.

Glenn McCullough stated:

In my opinion, Saddam Hussein is a madman and must be watched very carefully. That being said, the U.S. desire for regime change likely has something to do with their oil interests in the region.

Canada should listen carefully to U.S. intelligence and concerns regarding Iraq, but at the same time, we must work with the U.N. and proceed multilaterally with any military action. We must wait for the U.N. to assess the situation before supporting any U.S. military action.

Stephen Fan stated:

We should not get involved unless Canada is attacked by Iraq. Even if Iraq has chemical and biological weapons that is not a good enough reason to attack them. There are so many countries in the world who have chemical and biological weapons, does that mean we should attack these countries? If so, we should attack the U.S. first. The U.S. must change their foreign policy and stop their aggressive behaviour.

As hon. members can see from these comments, emotions in the country are running high. Overwhelmingly the response is that we must not support any unilateral attack on Iraq and must do what we can to encourage a peaceful end to the long suffering of the people of Iraq.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): I have a comment first, Mr. Speaker, and then a couple of questions.

I think it is a perilous political road that my hon. friend is going down when he suggests something about the amount of the plurality or lack of it which President Bush enjoyed or did not enjoy related to the Florida election when in fact his own party knows what it is under its present Prime Minister to get elected with less than 40% of the support of Canadians. Does that mean it was illegitimate? That is a dangerous road to go down and he may want to address that since he raised it.

I am also trying to get some clarity on what constitutes evidence. We still have not figured out the Prime Minister's statement that a proof is a proof, and if it is a proof then it is a proof, if it is a proof, then it is a proof. We have not figured that one out.

With the outstanding amount of evidence that has been produced, as I said earlier, not just by U.S. intelligence agencies, but by Canada's, Great Britain's, Germany's and Israel's, the hon. gentleman still says it is not sufficient. What will constitute proof? Will he have to see Saddam Hussein standing with chemical weapons bubbling in

his hands and then say "I think he has them"? What will constitute proof?

Finally, I will pose this question again. We cannot get a clear answer. I will say that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been fairly clear and I appreciate that. We may not agree. He has also been present for the entire deliberations and we appreciate that, but I would like to put this question. Should Saddam Hussein defy the resolutions continually and break the present agreement related to weapons inspection, and should the security council not endorse some kind of action, will he recommend that Canada join the growing alliance of nations that have said they will take action? Or is he saying only unless Canada itself is attacked, because of course Canada was not attacked in the first world war directly, nor the second world war, nor in the Korean War, nor in the conflict in the gulf war, nor in Afghanistan, and yet we sent troops to all of them. Would he please tell us, as we have been clear in our position, what will be his advice to his minister should these conditions prevail?

Mr. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, it is quite ironic that the hon. member did not take a lesson from the last election. People of the country overwhelmingly spoke clearly and sent 172 members of Parliament from the Liberal Party here right on the day of the election.

He claims that the Canadian public did not know what it was doing. The election was over by 10 o'clock. The votes were counted on the same day. The very next day we had a clear-cut majority, unlike that of the United States. The elections were over and they were still counting votes. Still to this day there is a question as to the counting of this vote. It depends on who we hear and what we pay attention to. Some people say that this person won or that person won. There is no absolute case here. The Canadian people spoke overwhelmingly in the last election. They knew what they were choosing. They sent a government of 172 members of Parliament and that hon. member unfortunately did not even pass the word go. He only ended up having his butt kicked.

● (2345)

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I never heard the hon. member on the other side answer any of the questions put forward to him with regard to whether you will recommend to your minister to take action against Iraq only after Canada is attacked or after more overwhelming evidence is shown to you that Saddam Hussein is going to use or has the capability to use chemical weapons. I will ask you again if you are going to recommend only—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not know how long it is going to take me but I will keep trying. I like what I do here and I do not want to be forgotten. I am sure the hon. member will continue to apply his best possible effort to recognize the Chair and make his interventions through the Chair. For today he may not get another chance to practise again. The hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt on a short reply.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, through you to the hon. member, which part of "you have to go through the member" do you not understand?

The Deputy Speaker: Let us try someone else.

Government Orders

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this debate. It is an incredibly important issue. I heard some very disturbing comments which I will get in to in a few minutes.

I believe that we only should go after Saddam Hussein as a last resort, only after all diplomatic matters have failed. However I have to admit that I agree with the rest of my colleagues in my party, that we are approaching that point. If we are not there we are awfully close to it.

We have listened to the Iraqi regime, which has been up and down like a yo-yo. It makes commitments and then withdraws them. That is where there is no credibility. Of course we hear that it will allow inspectors in again. I spoke with the Minister of Foreign Affairs earlier. If Saddam is not on his last breath I do not know who is. I do not know how many more chances he can be given.

Nobody wants to send people to war. We recognize the great danger in which we would be putting the men and women of the Canadian military. It is a very serious issue. However Saddam Hussein continues to make a mockery of the United Nations and all people who support it and the resolution. He continues to laugh at them. I believe there is lots of evidence. I do not believe that countries like the United States and Great Britain are making stories up that there are weapons of mass destruction. I have not personally seen the evidence but I believe there is a lot of it out there. They are not engaging in a war just to have a war. That is ridiculous.

Canada is a sovereign nation. It is important that we are debating the issue in Parliament. It is a very serious matter and Canada will be making a decision on its own as a sovereign country.

Having said that, I want to comment on a few issues I have followed closely in the debate tonight. One of the most disturbing things I have heard tonight is the anti-American sentiment by so many members in the House. It is not just the comments of some members of the NDP like the member from Burnaby—Douglas. We would expect that from that member.

Even the last Liberal member who spoke, and I will use his words not mine, referred to the U.S. needing an external evil. He compared Bush to Hussein and talked about Hussein developing weapons to defend his country. He went on to talk about the United States having weapons too and that maybe we should bomb it first. That is troubling and I mean that sincerely.

Yes, I get frustrated with the U.S. on some of its trade policies. I live in British Columbia and we are going through a horrible time with the softwood lumber industry. It is incredibly frustrating for us but we cannot forget that the United States is a very important trading partner with Canada. It is also a very good friend of Canada and a very good ally.

I am not advocating following the U.S. We are a sovereign country. Canada can stand on its own. I wish it had more resources in its military, but it has done an admirable job with its very limited resources when it has been called upon in the international community.

I find the amount of anti-American sentiment in the Chamber, especially from government members, appalling. It is unbelievable

to listen to them slam Bush and to suggest that he just wants to go to a war for his own election. They are doing it now as I speak. I say it with every sincerity that it is appalling that they would talk like that. I do not believe there is any basis for it.

• (2350)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I was just reflecting how wonderful it was to have so many of you here this evening on either side of the Chamber at this late hour but with the few minutes remaining, I am sure the hon. minister and others would love to hear the end of this intervention and then at 12 o'clock we can all go home.

Mr. Gary Lunn: Mr. Speaker, I will go on to a few other points. I said that in all sincerity. I think the United States is a great friend of Canada, a great trading partner. We want to keep that relationship. Members should be mindful of their comments. Yes, we are a sovereign country and it is up to us to make that decision as to whether we get involved.

I personally believe that Saddam Hussein is on the shortest possible rope that anyone could possibly imagine. That crazy madman cannot be left to continue developing weapons of mass destruction.

I want to talk about a couple of other issues I heard throughout the debate tonight. We heard many members talk about the thousands of Iraqi children who are dying. Some of them went on to even blame this on the United States. That is ridiculous.

I remind all of those members that although Iraq continues to face sanctions, the UN has approved an oil for food program through which the Iraqi government generates \$6 billion a year in revenue, which must be used for the purchase of food, medicine and other humanitarian aid.

As was recently reported in the *Washington Post* and many other international journals around the world, the non-profit group the Coalition for International Justice has released a study confirming that Iraq's government routinely subverts this program for its own purposes.

It is not Britain. It is not Germany. It is not the United States. It is Saddam Hussein who has murdered thousands and thousands of his own people for his own interests.

This year Saddam Hussein will divert over \$2 billion away from his own people who are starving and need medicine and purely direct that money to the rebuilding of the military and paying off his potential rivals. There are other reports that he has over \$1 billion from illegal oil sales.

This is a madman. This is Saddam Hussein. This is a man we have to take very seriously.

Government Orders

If we can avoid a war, we should do that. If enough pressure can be put by a combined coalition to actually force him to allow the weapons inspectors back in into areas that we have very serious concerns about, into some of Saddam Hussein's palaces where it is believed he is storing some of these weapons, if we can get in there to destroy those weapons, that is a very large if. If he actually complies this time and again we are very skeptical on his past record, then we should avoid this conflict. It has to be done under a UN sanction.

We cannot be naive and allow this man to absolutely have no respect for the international community, no respect for the United Nations. To continually make a mockery of them will be at our own peril.

This is a very important topic. I remind all members that we are a sovereign nation. Yes, this is a decision we should make. I would

like members to remember that it is not the United States that caused this problem. We have heard so much anti-American sentiment. It is deeply disturbing. Saddam Hussein is a crazy madman who must be stopped. He cannot be given any more chances.

• (2355)

The Deputy Speaker: Shall I see the clock as 12 o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 12 midnight, pursuant to order made on Monday, September 30, 2002, the debate is now adjourned.

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p. m. pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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