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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 8, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 8, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1000)

[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the supplementary report of the Auditor General of Canada for 2002.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(e), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to five petitions.

* * *

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-220, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (genetically modified food).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I simply wish to explain that this bill is aimed at making it possible for Canadians to know when they buy genetically modified food. At the present time the labelling of genetically modified food is left to the vagaries of the market, and it is not mandatory.

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

* * *

•(1005)

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-221, an act to amend the Criminal Code (no parole when imprisoned for life).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased once again to reintroduce my private member's bill which would amend certain provisions of the Criminal Code relating to life imprisonment. It would ensure that when a life sentence is handed down it means imprisonment without any access to parole for the remainder of the natural life of the offender.

My bill sends a clear message to criminals that if they take a life then they will never again walk the streets of this country as a free person. For the families of victims, knowing that the offender will be locked away for life, this will help to bring an element of closure to a sad chapter in their lives.

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

* * *

CROWN LIABILITY AND PROCEEDINGS ACT

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-222, an act to amend the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased again to have the opportunity to reintroduce this bill. The intent of this bill is to ensure that a person serving time in a prison will not be able to sue the federal government or its employees under any federal legislation in respect of a claim arising while that person is under sentence. If enacted, this bill will put an end to prisoners' frivolous law suits against the federal government and their abuse of the legal system.

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the unanimous consent of the House to again introduce my bill to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act (scabs and essential services).

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent for the hon. member to introduce his bill today?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

S. O. 52

[*English*]

PETITIONS

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present to the House a petition signed by some 40 constituents of my riding of Cambridge.

The petitioners draw to the attention of Parliament that it is unethical to use human embryos for stem cell research. Since adult stem cell research holds great potential and does not pose serious ethical questions, the petitioners pray and request that Parliament take steps to ban human embryo research.

The petitioners urge that federal tax dollars only be used for ethical research not involving the destruction of human lives.

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition of multiple pages from the Port Alberni area. It has to do with the softwood lumber dispute. The petitioners call on the government to move quickly to see this dispute resolved. Since the time of this petition coming in, we have had another five mills close in the Port Alberni area.

The petitioners also call on the government to ban all exports of logs to the U.S. while this dispute continues.

• (1010)

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is on the subject of child pornography. Petitioners from the area of Nanaimo in my riding call upon the House to take note that the creation and use of child pornography is condemned by a clear majority of all Canadians and that the courts have not applied the current child pornography law in a way which makes it clear that such exploitation of children will always be met with swift punishment.

Therefore, they call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials that promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my petitions are from my riding and they deal with child pornography. The creation and use of child pornography is not condoned by the majority of Canadians. The constituents in my area feel that the courts are not taking a sufficiently tough view on this. They are petitioning Parliament to take action and protect our children from child pornography.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak for the 33 signatories of a petition calling for a public inquiry into all of this government's actions during the last parliamentary session concerning Groupaction and the contracts to Groupe Everest, and so on, when taxpayers' money was handed over to the friends of the government.

This morning's petition is the first, but there will be a long series to follow. Later, perhaps tomorrow morning, I will be tabling a petition signed by 550 people. I will present petitions calling for a public inquiry every time that I am present in this House.

[*English*]

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition in regard to debilitating diseases, such as spinal cord injury and muscular dystrophy.

The petitioners ask that Parliament work on the issue of stem cell research and ensure that the maximum amount of research can be done so that these people suffering from these serious diseases and injuries can be helped.

* * *

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: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am here to request an emergency debate on softwood lumber. It is very important that the House of Commons have the opportunity to debate the issue as there will be an announcement today. However there are many other issues that have not been vetted in this chamber.

With regard to the softwood lumber industry in general, there has been turmoil for the last year and a half and uncertainty in communities, as well as companies, with regard to the future of this industry and the importance it plays with regard to our economy.

Since 1996, the government has had the opportunity to take a plan of action to the people but it has not done so. In fact we know that the court case will be extending to 2004. There has been an exodus of companies from Canada, as well as citizens who have been laid off from their jobs. This morning we heard from another hon. member that five more mills closed.

There will be a media release today and we understand an aid package will be announced. We feel it is very important for this industry to have the opportunity to debate the issue in the House of Commons because it is of national concern.

The Address

Softwood lumber has contributed to the growth of a nation and the House of Commons deserves the opportunity to discuss the future of it. More important, the government's record and what it will do for the families and communities, as we have seen tremendous loss in this industry, is of such importance to Canada.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: The Chair has carefully considered the request the hon. member has made. I note that in the past two debates have been granted on this subject. I am of the view that the hon. member's application does not meet the exigencies of the Standing Order at this time. Accordingly, I am not disposed to allow the application at this moment.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from October 3 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Waterloo—Wellington.

It is a pleasure for me to participate in the debate. If there was any message that I wanted to convey in response to the throne speech that we heard from the Prime Minister through the Governor General last week it is that the throne speech is solid, balanced and responsible.

Let me outline why I believe that those three very positive words explain the great value and substance of our latest throne speech, a throne speech that shall be the foundation for the months and years between now and the next election. I know I will be proud to contest the next election based on the record of the government, not only since the year 2000 but in fact from the year 1993.

Why is it a solid throne speech? Why is the opposition somewhat blind in failing to recognize the value and vision contained in that speech? The fundamental premise of the speech is on health, the physical health of people. We look forward to the report by the hon. Roy Romanow next month. He will be reporting on behalf of the national Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada which he has undertaken at the behest of the Prime Minister. It will be the most thorough, modern, up to date and current report on the state of public health care in Canada and will certainly provide a strong signal to the government on what should be done, not only federally but provincially and territorially, to make sure that our citizens get the health care they deserve.

When I use the word solid to describe the throne speech that also refers to the health of our communities, be they rural communities or major cities and all sizes of communities in between. I represent a rural riding in northern Ontario, the riding of Algoma—Manitoulin, with some 60 communities ranging in size from a few hundred citizens up to 12,000 or 13,000. That would be the largest

community in my riding. We do not see our large cities in Canada as the enemy. They in fact are our partners. It is not a matter of the cities versus rural Canada. It is a matter of the cities and rural Canada working together to make the country strong.

●(1015)

The throne speech recognizes the value of all communities, large and small, to the economic strength of our nation. The announcement of a 10 year program for infrastructure investment is an example of the government's recognition that our future lies, on one hand, in our citizens, but, just as important, in the communities wherein those citizens live.

The throne speech is solid also because it talks about health of the environment. Several bills will be reintroduced, such as species at risk and others, that will deal with the environment. However I would like to point out that the government's commitment to the Kyoto accord is a real commitment. I look forward to the debate in the House of Commons on the Kyoto accord. I look forward to a vote in this place hopefully before the end of the year where the House of Commons will endorse the government's plan and intention to ratify the Kyoto greenhouse gas accord.

Our citizens expect nothing less than that we do the right thing, not only for ourselves and the planet in this day but for our children and grandchildren who will inherit this planet from us.

We cannot pick up and leave. We obviously have to live here. It behooves us to manage this beautiful planet for the benefit of all, not just our own wealthy nation but for poor nations as well.

This solid throne speech talks about the health of the economy. Some of the national media and certainly the opposition, before the throne speech was read, were suggesting that the Prime Minister, for his legacy, would undertake some huge, wild and careless spending. The proof is that is not the case. Just as he has managed the government properly, appropriately, and fiscally in a sound fashion since 1993, that continues. This is not the throne speech of a big spender. This is the throne speech of somebody who says "I have been here for 41 years and I plan to leave this place and the country the message that responsible management of the federal government finances is really what makes it easier for future governments to continue to deliver quality services and appropriate services to the public".

During the fall 2000 election, I as a candidate, my party seeking re-election and the Prime Minister promised to continue with a balanced approach to our economy. It was balanced on the one side, in terms of debt and deficit, that we must in each year seek a balanced and surplus budget to pay down the nation's debt. It was a debt that was far too huge when we were elected and is still far too large for our country's good fiscal health but certainly a debt that is in decline relative to our GDP.

The Address

I recall that our federal debt was something in excess of 70% of GDP when we were first elected in 1993. The members do not have to believe my comments. The comments and reports of other nations in the OECD indicate that the ratio of our debt to GDP has now plummeted to below 50% and is dropping. This is a good thing for our economy. It will ensure that we are not competing with the private sector for loan dollars.

• (1020)

We have had five balanced budgets in a row. I believe and I am very confident that we will have another one ahead of us. With the continued support of the public, who have shared in the exercise of making sure the deficit has been slain, who understand and trust our approach regarding the finances of the country, we hope to have another opportunity in a couple of years to continue that solid approach.

When I said that the throne speech in total was solid, it was with regard to the health of our future, most particularly the future of our children. It will ensure that they have hope for jobs when they are ready for jobs, that they have hope for a good education, either college or university, that they have hope that the environment is a healthy one for them, and that they can raise their children in a place that we all can be proud of.

The throne speech also talks about the health of the planet, not just environmentally but also politically. We are facing some very challenging times right now, as we all know. I really believe the Prime Minister has led us wisely when he counselled his fellow world leaders, particularly the U.S. president when he told him to walk carefully through this difficult time and to use the resources and leadership of the United Nations as a means to find the path through this difficult time. Although the UN, I agree, is not a perfect place, at the very least a community of nations is better equipped to find a way through this difficult time than any single nation, or two or three nations.

I will conclude by saying that the throne speech is a solid, balanced and responsible approach to governing the country.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when my colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin talked about a solid throne speech, does he not believe that it has to be solid after 10 years of being the same throne speech? Does he not agree with me that by paying down the debt and balancing the budget the government has put it on the backs of our children, many of whom are coming out of university facing a debt of \$50,000 which was created by the Liberal government? How can the Liberals be proud of a throne speech that does not even look after the youth of our country? How can he be proud of that?

I would like him to answer the question honestly. I am not saying that he is not honest but how can he be proud of a throne speech that is putting the debt of our country on the future of our country?

Mr. Brent St. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Acadie—Bathurst for his question. It is not a surprising question coming from the NDP that has an allergy toward balancing books and toward I think balanced spending.

He suggested that the government was repeating itself. He should know that good things bear repeating. A good thing is to approach

the country, not as a business, as my Alliance friends across the way might suggest, but as a cooperative effort to build our nation and to provide a good place for our children and our grandchildren.

• (1025)

A balanced approach means investing in our communities through programs like ACOA in Atlantic Canada, FEDNOR in northern Ontario and western diversification in western Canada to make sure our communities have access to those financial resources to build on their ideas and to invest in our social programs. We have seen a major investment going into the last election. In September 2000, the government in cooperation with the provinces invested \$23 billion in skills and innovation.

Our young people, quite contrary to the member's point of view, have tremendous access to education. Yes, there are some requirements that families and students contribute toward that, and any amount of debt is unfortunate, but I graduated from university with a debt and I was happy to pay it off.

Every family should have the opportunity to make sure their children have access to education. We do not manage education, the provinces do, but we are doing our part in cooperation with the provinces and others to make sure our kids have the best chance to continue to be the leaders in science and technology, medicine and social services, and leaders in the world in many other ways.

I hope I can speak to the member behind the curtain some day and help him understand that we are doing a great job.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin for his wonderful comments and presentation.

He spoke about the throne speech and the future of health care, the health of the economy, the health of society, Kyoto, and urban and rural relationships. He also mentioned that he would be very proud to run on the Liberal record since 1993.

However he forgot to mention the record. I would like to ask the hon. member to give us the record of the Liberal government since 1993 of which he is so proud that he wants to run again.

Mr. Brent St. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I do not have enough time to describe all the things we have accomplished since 1993 so I will summarize.

I sense a degree of confidence in my constituency, which I know my colleagues on both sides have seen, although the other side might have a harder time acknowledging it, about the future of the country that was not felt leading up to the election of 1993.

When we went into that election we knew that people were in despair. The OECD was suggesting that Canada was a basket case. The *Wall Street Journal* had some reports that Canada was a third world country when it came to its fiscal framework.

The Address

Because we have been able to manage the books, we have made major investments in health, and there is more to come. We have revitalized the Canada pension plan. We do not hear seniors or people of any age asking whether the Canada pension plan will be there when they retire. We can tell them, yes, it will be because we have taken the initiative to put the Canada pension plan on stable footing.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry but the hon. member's time is up. I am sure there will be ample opportunities to continue this conversation either with the gentleman from Acadie—Bathurst or Brampton another time. Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General.

● (1030)

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about the throne speech and the important initiatives that are contained therein.

My constituents in Waterloo—Wellington are pleased with the general thrust of the throne speech and understand, as do most Canadians, that it is a good blueprint for future endeavours and for projects that we as a government will be undertaking in the future.

The portfolio of the Solicitor General covers a broad range of programs and initiatives. Our mandate is to protect Canadians and to help maintain a peaceful and safe society. It is dealing with the root causes of crime such as poverty or taking measures to deal with substance abuse. Underpinning all of our efforts is a proactive approach, not a reactive approach, and one that seeks to address problems before they are before us.

I would like to speak to four key areas from the Speech from the Throne and their relation to the work of the portfolio of the Solicitor General. These areas relate to: community crime prevention, our national drug strategy, first nations governance, and national and continental security.

Building healthy communities is an element of the Speech from the Throne and public safety is an essential ingredient to a healthy community. I would go so far as to say that it is a bedrock without which it is impossible to have a healthy community. To promote strong and safe communities we are working with the Department of Justice on the national crime prevention strategy and other things. The strategy seeks to remove personal, social and economic factors that lead some individuals to engage in criminal acts or to become victims of crime.

Since its launch in 1998, the strategy has supported more than 2,200 projects, improving the quality of life in over 600 communities across the country. As we launch projects, the strategy will continue to help those who may be most at risk, for example, children, youth, aboriginal people, women, people with disabilities, homeless people and ethnocultural groups.

In communities across Canada, public safety is being undermined by substance abuse. In the Speech from the Throne, the government pledged to renew our national drug strategy to address addiction and promote public safety. The speech set a direction for progressive measures to deal with this multi-billion dollar problem. Substance abuse is a health problem, a public safety problem, and an economic

problem. It can only be overcome by taking a comprehensive, balanced approach through prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement. The portfolio of the Solicitor General of Canada supports a drug strategy in all four areas.

Fundamentally, a proactive approach is a cornerstone of any successful substance abuse strategy. To that end, we are looking at innovative ways to strengthen the role of police in prevention and harm reduction. We are offering treatment programs to more than half of the offenders in federal correctional facilities. For example, about 10% of offenders are severely addicted. A high intensity substance abuse program has been developed and is now being tested to treat this group. These are a couple of examples of the many programs that are available to beat the problem of substance abuse, something that is horrific to many people.

More research needs to be undertaken. We need to know how to fine tune our strategy and to determine if we are using the best possible tools. We will continue to support the work of the House of Commons special committee as it reviews Canada's drug strategy and to pursue a balanced approach to combating this serious public health safety issue.

Taking charge of our future is a basic theme in the Speech from the Throne. This applies more aptly to first nations than perhaps any other group. The first nations policing program provides unique and distinctive police services that are professional, community-centred and culturally appropriate to the first nations communities that they serve. We will continue to support first nations police services which are essential to the safety and stability of our aboriginal communities.

Public safety and security is a basic underpinning of a healthy community, and the first nations policing program supports the government's aboriginal agenda by working with those communities to build their capacity for economic and social development and to reduce aboriginal incarceration rates.

● (1035)

The events of September 11 have altered the environment in which we live and in which we operate. Last fall the government moved quickly to develop and implement its anti-terrorism plan, including new legislation and substantial funding. This plan is measured, focused and in balance. It provides authorities with the tools they need to deter, identify, disable, prosecute, convict and punish terrorist groups. It has created a road map to govern our actions over the next five years. We are in the process of putting these measures into action. The government has allocated almost \$10 billion to national security over the past two years.

The Speech from the Throne highlighted the importance of agreements such as the smart border declaration, a 30-point action plan to enhance border security and improve the flow of people and commerce across the Canada-U.S. border.

The Address

We are working closely with our allies to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians. The portfolio of the Solicitor General is active in a number of law enforcement and security measures under this declaration, perhaps the most significant cooperative security initiative ever undertaken by Canada and the United States.

The Canada-United States cross-border crime forum, a key component of the smart border action plan, exemplifies how two countries can and should co-operate against cross-border crime, terrorism and other emerging threats to our common security and safety.

Other initiatives such as the expanded deployment of integrated border enforcement teams along the entire Canada-U.S. border and the enhancement of our intelligence capabilities by the creation of integrated national security enforcement teams in major urban centres will improve our capacity to respond to threats to the well-being of our nations.

We are equally committed to conducting more counterterrorism training exercises to test our response plans and to further enhance our joint response capabilities. Our next joint exercise is scheduled for May 2003. The portfolio of the Solicitor General is doing its part to help achieve the Canada we want.

I appreciate having the time to explain in broad terms how we have been contributing to building this foundation. It is important to know that our communities are safe and secure and that the government is assisting in that important endeavour to ensure that Canadians feel good about who we are and what we represent.

I know firsthand that constituents in my riding feel strongly that the throne speech has gone a long way to ensuring that this is the case. They know, as do most Canadians, that we are now in a position where Canada can flourish strongly and will continue to do so in the future. The throne speech laid the groundwork to ensure that happens. Canadians recognize that and are appreciative of that. It is our mandate as a government to ensure that carries on in a manner consistent with the great values of this country, and that we will continue to do.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was good to hear the hon. member talk about the national crime prevention strategy because it is important for community capacity building. Perhaps with more investment and with more crime prevention in the agenda this will prohibit and stop situations like Groupaction and other scandals that we have seen over the last year.

Congestion and backups continue to be problematic at the border in Windsor West. This is a violation of NAFTA whereby goods and services are supposed to flow on both sides on an equal basis. The local Chamber of Commerce has noted that Americans are not staffing their border at the capacity they should to allow vehicles to go through, especially with security measures having been increased. In fact, a task force was set up by the government and one of the things it noted is the specific capacity with regard to staffing on the American side. They are actually back to 1992 levels.

Would the parliamentary secretary agree that we should have a written agreement with the United States to enforce NAFTA or go to dispute resolution to ensure that the border is staffed correctly so that goods and services trade equally on both sides of the border?

● (1040)

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, what we do know is this. There is an enormous amount of trade that takes place between Canada and the United States as a result of the free trade agreement. The Windsor-Detroit corridor is an important conduit for that trade. It is arguably the most important one across the country.

What we have done, through the good offices of the Deputy Prime Minister in dealing with his counterpart in the United States, Mr. Ridge and others, and certainly the Minister for International Trade, is put in place the kinds of things that are necessary to continue to facilitate that trade.

Canadians, wherever they live, understand that trade is a lifeblood and a lifeline to both economies. We benefit greatly as a result. Therefore, any of the measures that are being talked about, and any of the things that can enhance and help us in ensuring that trade is done in an efficient way, consistent with good economic principles and other things, is important.

We as a government will continue to ensure that takes place because our economy depends on it. We recognize that it is in our best interests in a number of ways to ensure that is the case.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member reminded us that his government spent \$10 billion on security. He told us a few moments ago that he is very proud of that.

Does the hon. member really consider Canadians to be more secure? What about job security? What about families in the coastal communities that are suffering as a result of the softwood lumber crisis? What happened to their security? What about the almost two million Canadians who are either homeless or one step away from being on the streets because they cannot afford the high rents or because the rental vacancy rate is zero, or because housing is so dilapidated? What about the security of those Canadians? What about Canadians who lost income or are working at minimum wage and finding it harder to get through the month and put food on the table? What about the security of those Canadians?

It is curious that the hon. member did not mention that kind of security. He is proud that we have billions of dollars going into security agencies and protection at the borders, yet when it comes to security issues that affect Canadians on an everyday basis his government has contributed to the—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. In the time remaining there is approximately one minute left for a response from the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The Address

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, the throne speech did talk about the security and safety of all Canadians, including the homeless, children at risk, aboriginal people who require help, including people in all regions of Canada who are in need of government assistance.

The benefit of the government and being part of a Liberal government is to look at all aspects of these problems and ensure that we come out with a balanced approach. The NDP never wants to do that. It does not understand the word balance. It does not understand the word equilibrium. It only understands some loony left wing approach to things that are in this area. However what we do as a government, consistent with the values of the country, is maintain a balanced approach for all Canadians.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Vancouver East.

It is a pleasure to speak on the throne speech today, especially after the comments we just heard in the House that the NDP is on the left and does not want to balance and find the middle of anything.

I would rather be on the left all the way through than be like the Liberals who were on the left for 45 days before the election and on the right for the rest of the four years. Normally that is what they do. For the first 45 days before the election they were totally on the left because they needed the vote of the little people. Then right after the election they forget about them and they are on the right. They have a hard time to even meet them. That is the definition of a Liberal for me.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Well you should sit down and listen to what I have to say.

• (1045)

The Deputy Speaker: I do not want to take away any enthusiasm or even animation from the House but let us ensure we make our interventions through the Chair.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, you should tell them to stay here to enjoy what I have to say.

[*Translation*]

First, let us look at this Speech from the Throne the Liberals are so proud of. They claim it is solid. It is so solid that it has not changed in nine years.

The Speech from the Throne is so fascinating that, last time the Prime Minister made his speech on it, approximately 100 Liberal members did not even show up in the House in support.

[*English*]

Over 100 Liberals did not even show up in the House of Commons to listen to the Prime Minister when he spoke about the throne speech. He did not even have the support of his own people. He has 15 months to do everything he did not do in 10 years. In the spring of 1993, he was against free trade, he was against the GST and he was against all the changes to unemployment insurance that the Conservative Party was making. But in 1993, right after the election, like I said, he switched to the right and then kept the GST and free trade and made cuts to unemployment insurance.

[*Translation*]

These are the exact same promises he had made when in opposition. It is a disgrace to entitle a throne speech “The Canada We Want”. A better title for it would have been “The Canada We Lost”. The Canada we want, we had it, but lost it under the Liberals' watch these past nine years.

[*English*]

The throne speech was about the Canada we want. What happened to the Canada we had? We lost it.

[*Translation*]

In 15 months, this will all be back. We have an employment system that no longer allows workers to qualify. More than 800,000 people do not qualify for employment insurance, yet the government claims to want to help children and families out of poverty. Jobs were lost in high tech firms. There are also problems in the fisheries, forestry and agriculture industries. Yet the government claims to want to help the poor. Let us not forget, however, that the cuts, the surpluses and the balancing of the budget have all been done on the backs of the poor. That is what this government has done.

It claims to want to protect health. We have lost our health system. The government has lost control over the system. The House leader of the Canadian Alliance went to the trouble of getting an MRI done in the private sector in Quebec, because it could not have been done under the plan we have here in Canada.

What is the government doing? Absolutely nothing, except to say, “We are waiting for the Romanow report”. There are laws in this country and the Liberals should enforce them. They do not need to wait for the Romanow report. They should get their act together and enforce the legislation. This should not be permitted. The day that we have to pay for a private health care system in our country, we will be stuck with it and it will be like the American system. At this point, we have lost everything as far as the softwood lumber issue is concerned, because of the Americans. This is what is happening to us. If we look at the infrastructure, how can the Liberals be proud to say, “Yes, we created jobs, but in certain regions”?

Let us take a look at an area like mine, Acadie—Bathurst. The unemployment rate is still at 20%. This is an area where people have seasonal jobs. It is not easy for them. There is a need for infrastructure. We need highways that will help us attract companies and develop our area's economy. Our people are hard workers. One simply has to tour Ontario to see how many people come from the Atlantic region. People from the Atlantic region are hard workers, even though some would have us believe that they are a bunch of lazy people who do not want to work.

It is shameful to see a throne speech that is a rehash. The Leader of the New Democratic Party told the media, “This is recycling”. It is only that. It is the same old stuff.

The Address

Mr. Speaker, it is as if you were to fix dinner and then served leftovers the next day. It would not be so bad. However, when the stuff is nine years old, it begins to stink. And this is what we have here: nine year old stuff and absolutely nothing for ordinary people and nothing to create jobs in our regions. There is absolutely nothing in the throne speech for those who are fighting for these people.

As for transfers to the provinces, people who are on welfare cannot survive. They do not even have a roof over their heads. These people are forced to live on \$485 a month. Try to imagine living on \$485 a month or, in the case of a single person, on \$265 a month.

Now the Prime Minister is saying that he wants to end poverty. He has his work cut out for him, and he will have to make transfers to the provinces to help these poor people. He should ensure that these people have a roof over their heads.

In the Speech from the Throne, the government talks of:

—helping children and families out of poverty.

Some people on employment insurance received overpayments. What did the government do starting July 1? It started charging interest. For example, there is a woman in my riding who has to pay \$120 every month. This amount was deducted from her employment insurance benefits to pay back the overpayment. The government is charging this woman \$100 in interest every month on the overpayment. Twenty dollars a month goes toward her debt to the government, a debt which totals \$20,000. She will never be able to pay back that amount.

Let us talk about the debt that the government has put on the shoulders of our youth. Young people leave university with \$40,000 in debts. The government says, "It is not our jurisdiction, it comes under provincial jurisdiction".

The federal government loves to bandy about the expression provincial jurisdiction when it suits its purposes. However, young people now have to deal with the CIBC and end up with a staggering debt, these days.

● (1050)

A young woman came to see me to say, "I finished my studies and now I owe \$50,000. From the time I finished my studies to the moment I managed to get a job, I was unable to pay the bank. As a result, my file was passed on to a collection agency. I am a young woman with a bad record with the collection agency. I want to start my life; I want to buy a car; I want to buy a house, and I do not have the credit rating I need to do so".

That is what the federal government has done to our young people, and it is shameful to see the members opposite stand and tell us that this is the best Speech from the Throne ever. "The Canada We Want"; it should read "The Canada We Lost" instead. And it will not be this government that will bring it back.

[English]

Yes, I am proud to be a member of the NDP because if I am on the left I will be on the left from the beginning until the end of the next election, not halfway or 45 days before and nothing after. When we go to the people to ask for votes, we are surely not telling them that we are going to put them in debt. We say what the Liberals say too:

"Vote for me and I will work for you". However, the Liberals are not doing that. They should speak to those youths. They should speak to those people who are sick and cannot enter the hospital like they could if we had a good program. We have lost everything under the Liberals today.

Canadians are paying taxes that cannot be believed. The Liberals know that and they said they would get rid of them but did not do it. We can look at what the Liberals have done with free trade. We are losing all our jobs. We have all the people in the softwood lumber industry losing jobs.

I do not know how government members can be proud of what they have done. I would not be proud if I were in their place. I hope that Canadians wake up, too, and send them where they belong after the next election, which is surely not in power.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, over the couple of years that I have been here I have listened to the member quite often. One thing we can all say about him is that he speaks from the heart and is extremely concerned about the area which he represents. In totality it is not entirely unlike the area which I represent. He has seasonal employment. It is certainly not considered one of the richest regions in the country.

One of the peeves I have about the throne speech is that there is absolutely no mention made of investing in our young people. If we are ever going to get away from the poverty cycle, we are not going to do it by adjusting the child tax credit and giving families an extra \$10 or \$20 a month. That is not going to do it. We can do it by investing in our youth. I would like to ask the member if he agrees with that, with government investment in our youth so that they can obtain a proper post-secondary education, one they can afford. Right now, if they do not live near a university or in a university town or if their parents are not wealthy, chances are they may not get a post-secondary education. They cannot afford it.

If we invest in our youth, down the road we avoid the unemployment cycle. We avoid the heavy health care costs. We get great returns by investing up front. I would like to ask the member what he would think of an idea such as that.

● (1055)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for St. John's West. I know that he understands what I am talking about. I have visited Newfoundland many times. If we look at the geographic part of it and at what is happening there and what is happening at home, it is the same thing. They are living in an area where there is seasonal work.

If we want to bring the economy up and be part of this world of all those jobs and everything, we have to educate our youth. There is only one way to do it and I am not the only one saying it. The government has said many times that the right investment has to be in the youth, the future of our country. How do we invest by putting them in debt? I think that is totally wrong.

The Address

It is wrong when a man or a woman who goes to university leaves with \$50,000 in debt. If the man meets a woman who went to university or if a woman meets a man who went to university, they have another \$50,000 of debt which totals \$100,000 of debt. If they get together and buy a house, they have \$200,000 of debt and they do not even have a child yet. If each of them has to work at different places, they need two cars and then they are about \$240,000 in debt. They are our youth and that is not acceptable.

That is not investing in our youth. It is wrong. That is where we have to give them a break if we believe in our youth. They are our children and we are not looking after them. We are looking after big corporations and that is all. A manager of a company, a president of a company that makes \$10 million a year, that is what the government is looking out for. It is not looking in the right place: the youth of our country, our children.

The Deputy Speaker: A brief question from the hon. member for Peterborough.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what my colleague had to say. He and I have been on the same committee for a number of years.

I do understand it is the role of the opposition to oppose. I really admire people who do that effectively and fairly. In terms of opportunities for education, in which I know the hon. member is passionately interested, I realize, as does every member here, that the Government of Canada had to take \$42 billion out of the system. I believe we had to do that, but I know other people believe we did not. We had to do it and we did it in as fair a way as we could.

Since then, in my view, in the area of post-secondary education, the colleges, universities and programs like that—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Has the member for Peterborough concluded his intervention?

Mr. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, could I—

The Deputy Speaker: No. Time is short. We have five minutes for questions and comments. I said we had time for a brief question. The question or the comment has been made. I now turn to the member for Acadie—Bathurst to wrap it up.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I just cannot see how the member across, for whom I have lots of respect, could say that the government did a good job when our children are more in debt than they have ever been. The government has transferred the debt to CIBC. Now it has changed the law and they cannot get out of that debt for 10 years where before it was two years.

How could anyone say the government did a good job? It is shameful to say the government did a good job because it did not do a good job. It put the debt on our children. This is wrong because they are the future of our country.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share time with the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst and pick up the debate where he left off. I want to express my outrage too that the member for Peterborough would dare to suggest that somehow students are better off today than they were 10 years ago. If we look at any report from StatsCan, from the Canadian Association of University Teachers, or from the Canadian Federation of Students, all the factual information tells us that students are

worse off today in terms of a higher debt load and higher tuition because of the massive retreat of public funding in post-secondary education.

One of the questions I wanted to raise in my response to the throne speech, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to do this, was to point out how the throne speech was presented to us. We heard a Liberal member across the way say over and over again that it was a solid speech. That kind of solid speech reminds me of Jell-O; it is nice to look at but eventually it just turns to mush.

I come from British Columbia where people are really hurting because of the massive cutbacks by Gordon Campbell and his provincial Liberal government in health care, in education, in child care, in social assistance payments. The people in my riding were looking to the throne speech and yes, they were looking for something solid. They were looking for some clear statements from the government, for example, that it would uphold the Canada Health Act and stop the privatization that is happening in British Columbia and elsewhere across the country.

People were looking to the government for some solid statements that there would be some standards to ensure there would be accessibility for students who want to go into post-secondary education. We do not want to see more reports out of StatsCan that tell us the chances of a low income young person or even a middle income young person getting into university are now much decreased because they simply cannot afford to pay the tuition which has gone up 136% in the last 10 years.

People in my riding of Vancouver East were looking to see some solid commitments on the housing front. I read the press release “Time to start building new housing” from the National Housing and Homelessness Network which has done a tremendous amount of work on this issue. It said in response to the throne speech:

We can start building the housing and providing the services tomorrow, if the federal government would only make the commitment today.

What we saw by way of commitment was just more promises that the federal government would deal with the housing issue. The reality is the \$680 million over five years that was earmarked last November does not even come close to the 1% campaign that many groups and the NDP have endorsed which would produce what is actually needed, which is about 20,000 new units per year. That figure comes from CMHC. It tells us that we need new units in those kinds of numbers to deal with making housing prices affordable in this country.

The throne speech was a huge disappointment to the millions of people who were looking for leadership and a real commitment to deliver these promises that we have seen recycled so many times.

The Address

I also want to raise the promises that were made around the child tax benefit. One of the concerns I have in the throne speech is that the government is using language that talks about the cycle of poverty and dependency. It leaves the impression that people on welfare and single moms and their kids need to be motivated off social assistance. The reality is that the child tax benefit the government is so proud of does not go to the poorest of the poor. It does not go to families on social assistance. Therefore when we talk about dependency, it is a dependency that is created by public policy. It is a failure of public policy.

I would like to ask a question of the government, in particular the HRDC minister, who was quoted in the press as saying that the government would increase the child tax benefit. I would like to know whether or not the government is finally going to acknowledge that when it created this program it did it with a fatal flaw which was to deny the poorest families in Canada access to the child tax benefit by clawing it back. That is something we absolutely have to see change.

● (1100)

The Canadian Council on Social Development pointed out that the resolution which came from the House of Commons in 1989 by the then leader of the NDP, Ed Broadbent, said that we would eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. In actual fact what has happened between 1984 and 1999 is that the wealth of the top 20% of families rose by 43% and the net wealth of a median couple fell slightly, but the median income of the bottom 20% of earners fell by 51%.

I ask government members, is this any measure of success? It is a measure of failure.

I also want to spend a few minutes talking about the so-called promises in the throne speech to our urban centres, Canadian cities. About 80% of Canadians live in the urban environment. In fact, the throne speech said that there would be a 10-year commitment to an infrastructure program.

It has to be said that we have had enough of these on again, off again infrastructure programs. We need a permanent program that defines a new relationship with Canadian municipalities. It is outrageous that \$4.6 billion is collected in gas taxes from municipalities and only \$400 million of that goes back into transportation. Virtually none of it goes into public transit.

The throne speech said nothing about developing a new relationship with cities. It said nothing about some of the proposals put forward by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. It said nothing about creating a standing committee on urban affairs. There are committees on every other conceivable topic, but when it comes to something that affects 80% of the population, there is no indication the government is getting the message. The throne speech was a failure on that score as well.

The FCM even put forward proposals to reduce greenhouse gases by 40 megatonnes. This would meet 20% of Canada's commitment on Kyoto. Here we have a very concrete proposal on a hugely important issue to all of us. What is the response from the federal government? We have no idea of what the government's plan is to implement Kyoto. In fact, the NDP has been pressing this in our

caucus repeatedly over the last five years asking where the government's plan is to meet Canada's commitments on Kyoto.

I will end my comments by coming back to post-secondary education. When we look at the throne speech, we see there was nothing in there that actually delivered a promise or a commitment to students who are really hurting. They are still in a big black hole. There is still unfair discrimination against students who are facing the 10-year bankruptcy law that is hanging around their necks. Even though a recent federal task force said that this bankruptcy law is very unfair, there has been no response from the government.

There is still no sign of any sort of coherent public policy based on accessibility for post-secondary education and based on a publicly administered system. As a result of the federal government withdrawing public funding we are seeing an increase in privatization. This is something we should be very worried about. We have had a very long tradition of publicly administered post-secondary education which is now in danger of being jeopardized as a result of the irresponsibility shown by the government.

I will close by saying that these are issues that we in the NDP will continue to press. We will continue to raise them with the government. We do believe in balance. We do not think it is balanced for the government to say it is fair to hand out \$100 billion in tax cuts that benefit huge corporations and wealthy people, when the people at the bottom end up with nothing. That is the real proof of what is going on with the government's record. That is what the NDP will stand up against and hold the government to account for.

● (1105)

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of her speech I believe the member continued from where I left off for lack of time. She put her finger on it. She mentioned tuition fees and the extraordinary costs, which her colleague had been describing, the increasing costs at colleges and universities. They have been extraordinary, but that is provincial jurisdiction and my remarks were addressed to the federal role.

As I mentioned, we were faced with the horrifying fact that the country was borrowing \$42 billion a year. If we accepted that, my colleagues and I, as members of Parliament, had to do something about it so we took that out of the system.

Since then with respect to higher education, we have increased the CHST, the transfers to the provinces, much faster than we have increased the funding of federal programs.

Nevertheless, and my remark was about us having done a good job, we have put money into the millennium scholarships, 95% of which goes directly against student loans. We have increased and improved the Canada student loan program, although I know it is still a loan program. We are funding 2,000 research chairs to help the universities with their funding problems. The Canada Foundation for Innovation directly provides research infrastructure to colleges and universities. The granting councils, which help the universities as well as they can through research, have also had their funds increased faster than other federal government programs have.

The Address

My previous remark was that in this area of provincial jurisdiction where, I agree, there have been horrifying decreases in access, the federal government has gone out of its way within the limits of its jurisdiction to improve or alleviate the situation. That was the point of my earlier remark.

I would like to ask this member a question on the same point. Given the fact that the provinces control this area, what other measures would she have the federal government do, without interfering with the provincial jurisdiction, to see to it that these students get better access?

• (1110)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Peterborough for the question. I know that he has long been interested in post-secondary education, but I think where we differ significantly is that the \$42 billion he refers to which had to be taken away was taken away on the backs of students. It was taken away on the backs of the lowest-income people in the country. The fact is, the government had a choice. It had a choice about creating a fair taxation system which would have ensured that all social safety nets still existed. Right now they barely exist.

We are facing the lowest level of federal funding in post-secondary education in 30 years. Tuition has gone up about 130% in the last 10 years while inflation has gone up only 20%. One cannot escape these facts, because they show what has happened to post-secondary education as a result of the federal government moving away from its responsibility.

Yes, I agree that the delivery of education, like health care, is a provincial responsibility, but it has to be based on some sort of national sense of purpose about what it is that we believe is accessible to young people in this country. When that does not exist, and it does not, then we begin to see the reality that is emerging today, that is, enrolment in post-secondary education by young people with low and moderate incomes is declining because they simply cannot afford the tuition. They cannot afford a 100%-plus increase. This is what we have seen in B.C. in recent months.

This could have been averted if the federal government had taken a strong position on creating some national standards based on accessibility. The member and I are well aware of this because it has come up at the committee that we were part of. There were choices and the government chose to make choices that took away these programs for people and basically lined the pockets of corporations, businesses and wealthy Canadians that had a lot of lining there already.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Halton.

It is my pleasure to respond to the Speech from the Throne, a blueprint for the continued progress and prosperity which have been the hallmark of the government since 1993. It is a prosperity that has been shared right across the country and increasingly a prosperity that has been shared with the rest of the world.

The Government of Canada has done an exemplary job of consistently and competently managing taxpayers' money and ensuring that government has the flexibility it needs to address the concerns of Canadians promptly and to react to what cannot be

expected, be it natural disasters like floods and ice storms, or the terrorist attacks on the United States, to which as a neighbour we have responded immediately and generously.

However, we are not just about maintaining the status quo. While there is nothing more difficult than to pose innovative ideas and take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things, the Government of Canada has clearly identified a number of new initiatives that are meant to lead to social and economic progress for Canada.

It is not necessary to recite once again an exhaustive list of these goals and priorities that have been outlined, but I must say I am proud that our government is working toward: the protection of the environment; improved life chances for aboriginal people, particularly children; ensuring that Canadians are secure; investing in research and development to make Canada a world leader in innovation and learning; expanding minority language and second language education; the creation of a ten-year program for infrastructure, including a responsible transportation system that will be used to ease traffic problems in cities and trade corridors; targeting regional development activities to address the direct challenges of Canada's urban, rural and northern communities; and, an accessible and quality health care system.

I want to take a minute to express my disgust at the untruths that are being circulated regarding health care spending in the country. Provincial governments and opposition parties often like to distort the facts on health care spending by saying that the current federal contribution to health care is 14%. We have seen the advertisements in newspapers and on TV. They are a deliberate distortion of the amounts of money that the federal government transfers to provinces. That figure is closer to 40% rather than 14%. When we consider all the different kinds of federal spending, such as transfers to the provinces and territories, direct spending and federal tax credits, we spend \$29 billion a year on health care. This \$29 billion is almost 40% of all public spending on health care.

In P.E.I.'s case, the federal share of provincial health spending during 2001-02 was 68%. That is \$86 million from the CHST in cash and an additional \$67 million in CHST through tax points. Combined, the total was \$153 million, and P.E.I. was not the only province that was given considerable amounts of money by the federal government, whether it was in equalization payments or CHST transfers.

For example, the province of Manitoba received \$1.207 billion in equalization payments, plus \$720 million in CHST cash and \$554 million in tax points, for a total of \$1.274 billion. These statistics were gathered by the Department of Finance and upgraded on March 6. With the exception of Alberta and Ontario, all provinces received equalization payments, plus they received tax credits and CHST tax points. The average for all of Canada is \$1.107 billion, which is par for the course across the country.

The Address

•(1115)

So indeed, not only are we giving considerable amounts of money and spending almost 40% of the total spending on health care, we are also giving the provinces the flexibility in tax points to be able to spend that money whichever way they see fit. That is respecting jurisdiction in matters of health care. If we made one mistake in this arrangement we negotiated in 1997, it is that we did not include at least a bottom or minimum figure on the CHST transfers to be spent on health care. They had the flexibility to spend the money not only on health care but on other social priorities too. We respected the provincial spending jurisdiction in those areas.

None of our plans, including providing such federal assistance in health care spending, could have been achieved without the hard work the Government of Canada, on behalf of the people of Canada, has put into balancing budgets since 1993. Theodore Roosevelt once said "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are". Since taking office in 1993, the federal government has followed this creed and has worked hard to strengthen the fundamentals of the Canadian economy by living within our financial means.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada predicted that the Canadian economy would be on track for 2002. He was right. The economy has recovered since the slowdown and the terrorist attacks, with positive growth rates that are expected to increase in the near future. *The Globe and Mail* recently reported that the Bank of Nova Scotia, in its latest global economic forecast, expects Canada to lead all Group of Seven nations in economic growth. Our actions have helped the Canadian economy weather the economic downturn in 2001 and the negative consequences of the terrorist attacks and have resulted in economic growth rates that have outperformed those of the United States.

Five consecutive surpluses, including a record \$17.1 billion surplus in 2000-01 have allowed us to reduce the national debt by almost \$41 billion, which happens to be saving Canadians \$3 billion a year in reduced interest payments. We could, if we eliminated that debt, actually reduce our spending by over \$40 billion a year. Surpluses have also allowed us to make \$100 billion in broad-based tax cuts and have allowed us to put \$23.4 billion into health care and early childhood development. Our prudent management has led to lower interest rates, which are helping the economy grow today.

In P.E.I. we have seen the unemployment rates steadily decline from an all-time high of 18.1% in 1992, at the end of the Mulroney years, to a low of 11.9% in 2001. Between 1992 and 2001, employment grew 23% in Prince Edward Island, outpacing both population and labour force growth in the 1990s. In 2000, P.E.I. led the country in terms of economic growth and was in third place behind Newfoundland and Alberta in 2001.

I want to make special mention of our potato industry, which has certainly seen its ups and downs over the last few years due to the trade ramifications of potato wart and PVYn. However, the industry is currently showing signs of positive growth and stability as Canadian and U.S. officials work together to protect both potato growers and consumers in both countries against unnecessary trade restrictions. I must say that this may be the year our potato growers finally get to pay off a little of their debts. There is a bumper crop and the prices are relatively good.

I cannot say enough about ACOA, the regional development agency. With the low levels of investment by private enterprise, the fact is that outside the city of Charlottetown, our major city, in our rural areas we would certainly be in sad shape today if it were not for the ACOA investments. For example, there was a \$300 million Atlantic innovation fund announced by the Prime Minister of Canada as the flagship element of the broader \$700 million Atlantic investment partnership. This is a direct effort by the Canadian government to keep our young people in the area by investing in high-tech information technology programs.

I also want to mention some benefits to my riding because of government investment in Prince Edward Island. There is the wind test facility in North Cape, where we are now investing in wind power. The program was spun off from an Alberta pilot project and has been continued in Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island. We are producing 25% more power than was anticipated from this windmill investment in my riding. We see great strides being made with that incentive. I also want to mention the money that ACOA and other agencies have put into the Northport development in my riding and into harbour repair. We have never before seen the amounts of money that have been invested in our harbours on behalf of fishermen.

•(1120)

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's remarks. I certainly know why the windmills are at the western end of the island. There is always more wind at that end.

I was most interested in the member's comments on the figures regarding equalization and CHST. He seemed to be indicating, and I agree with him on this point, that the federal government is putting more money into health care, equalization and the CHST. However that is a divergence from some of the ads we see in the press from some of the governments across the country. It is a particular divergence from some of the statements made by our premier in Prince Edward Island, which seem to attack the feds, as they often do, and try to leave the impression that we are only paying around 14¢ on the dollar.

Could the member expand a little further on what the federal government is doing for health care and how this throne speech and the government's direction will be of benefit to Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Joe McGuire: Mr. Speaker, on the hon. member's comment, there was a politician on the western end of Prince Edward Island called the great west wind. Robert Campbell was his name. He was an MLA for over 30 years. Compared to him I am just a little breeze.

The Address

It is really criminal what the provincial governments are doing with their advertising. They are spending millions of dollars to mislead and misinform the Canadian people. They say that we are only spending 14% on health care costs, when we had committed to spending 50% right across the board. All these facts are basically untrue. It is misinformation and disinformation in an attempt to get the federal government to transfer additional dollars. They are not prepared to wait for the Romanow report so we can see exactly what is required in a revamped medicare system for Canada. They are trying to pre-empt the report. They think that as long as we transfer more money to them, this will solve all their problems, which is never the case.

We put \$2 billion into the hospital equipment fund a number of years ago, then we found out that instead of buying equipment for the hospitals in question, the provinces spent it on lawnmowers, trees and all sorts of things that had nothing to do with hospital equipment. This was being done right across the country. Some provinces had put the money in the bank and were collecting interest on it.

• (1125)

One wonders where the emergencies are, when the provinces react in a very undisciplined way with the money that we do transfer to them.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was driving along in my car one day listening to the radio. CBC was reporting that the Prime Minister was visiting Prince Edward Island in order to deliver a cheque. I think it was an HRDC grant to help open up a call centre. I do not remember exactly the location on the island but I remember being really incensed when the person who accepted the cheque, and they actually played the clip on the CBC, said, "Mr. Prime Minister, we are so glad that you came here and brought us this money. You have been here for us when we needed you and now you can count on it that we will be there for you when you need us at the next election". I remember that because it caught my attention.

Surely the people of Prince Edward Island must be downright annoyed at being held hostage by the Liberal government because of the threat that the money will stop if they do not vote Liberal. What is the member's response to that?

Mr. Joe McGuire: Mr. Speaker, my response is that the hon. member continues to display his ignorance of Atlantic Canada when he does not know the difference between Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Surely nothing I said indicated that I was mixing them up. I told an accurate story about Prince Edward Island. I do not care where this member is from.

The Deputy Speaker: That continues to be a matter of debate.

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I only have 10 minutes to enter into a discourse on this Speech from the Throne because it is reflective of an ongoing story that began in 1993. For the most part, the subject matter contained in it is an extension of what was begun at that time.

We have heard previous colleagues talk about the fiscal responsibility comments and the support for children which are

contained in the Speech from the Throne. I would be remiss if I did not point out that because of the actions that were started in 1993, 300,000 fewer children live below the poverty line. That is an ongoing story and is an ongoing challenge that Canadians have to face. The recognition of the need to continue to support and expand the support for children is acknowledged in the Speech from the Throne.

There is also a section on the benefits of innovation. As we know, the federal government has involved itself to the tune of about \$3 billion in innovation in Canada. It ties in very suitably with this new issue that has come upon us over the last 10 years but now is gaining prominence. That is the issue of climate change and the Kyoto accord. In my personal opinion, the Kyoto accord and its ratification should be considered only as baby steps in the beginning of a transformation in the way we live in this world.

I know the opposition members have taken a position of simply opposing the accord. I will deal with some of the arguments that have been put forward by them. It seems to me that some of these arguments, when examined, are pretty peripheral. For instance, one that was put up the other day was that Canada only contributes 2% of the pollution on the face of the earth and, therefore, why should we bother trying because it is only 2%?

Let me put it this way. If 50 other countries were producing only 2% and they all tackled the Kyoto issue, that would be 100% of the pollution in the country. It is sort of like saying, "Why should I ride public transit instead of driving a car? It only represents 1/27-millionth of the pollution in Canada".

I got thinking about that as I came over from Pointe Gatineau on the bus this morning: Why am I doing this? Why do I take a bus from the airport to Parliament Hill when I come in from my constituency? Simply put, it is a time for every citizen in the country to take personal responsibility for what is happening to this globe. Surely a conversation with any insurance company will tell us about the catastrophes for which it has had to pay because of what are considered natural occurrences, whether it be hurricanes, or drought or whatever affects the lives of human beings. It is happening whether we care to acknowledge it or not.

I heard a comment from the opposition about the benefits of CO₂, carbon dioxide. That is a very interesting one because a certain amount of carbon dioxide of course is exhaled and inhaled by growing matter on the planet. As a tree grows, during the day it gives off oxygen and then consumes carbon dioxide. It is a cycle. What we are doing as a nation or as human beings on the planet is adding to that non-cyclical carbon dioxide. It is increasing in our atmosphere every year. Some people say that is a good thing. I have heard the opposition say that.

• (1130)

I would like to challenge any member of the opposition to something today. I would like them to sit for an hour in a room filled with carbon dioxide. If they come out of it alive, I will give them a month's salary. They know very well that if they are faced with high levels of carbon dioxide in the air they will die. This is one of the manifestations of climate change which we are witnessing.

The Address

They tell us that it is impossible to meet Kyoto targets. Let me suggest that they are right, without imagination. They are right, without innovation. They are right, if there is no vision. They are right, if there is no creativity. They are certainly right, if there is no willingness to participate.

That is why I am so enthusiastic about endorsing what is perhaps largely symbolic and is only the beginning of a journey. However I want to challenge Canadians. I want to challenge their imagination, their vision, their creativity and their willingness. As a government, we are actively challenging their ability to innovate. This is where we have to go and where we certainly can go.

History has shown that humans usually do not change their behaviour pattern very much unless there is a perceived crisis. In the 1970s I can recall when there was an oil "crisis" in the ability or the desire of OPEC to deliver oil to North America. It resulted in escalating prices of crude oil. Many of us can remember that. Some of my colleagues are too young to remember it. I can remember when oil hit \$50 a barrel on the Chicago spot the prediction was that it would go to \$120 a barrel. What happened? It precipitated the biggest voluntary conservation effort ever in North America.

Today we have a crisis which is coming upon us gradually; it is not acute. However, when 1,800 people die prematurely in Ontario every year, I would challenge it and say, if that happened with airplane crashes, not one airplane would fly in Canada until that problem was sorted out.

That is our challenge. That is the challenge facing Canadians and the whole world. Canada has the ability through its innovation, vision, creativity and willingness to become the world leader in this quest.

• (1135)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was good to hear the hon. member rediscover innovation in the environment after years of neglect, including a massive cut to the ministry of the environment since the Liberal tenure of government. We have seen many of those problems, which could have been worked on during this time period and could have been addressed, proliferate and grew even worse. The targets for Kyoto have been set for much longer and we still do not have a definite plan. This is a real weakness with regard to the Speech from the Throne.

It was also good to hear the hon. member talk about innovation. I recently attended a really interesting innovation summit. Every knife sharpener from Ontario was there, but we did not have a good discussion with students because only one was invited.

With regard to innovation, the government talks about the role of students in terms of their future. However their education becomes sticker shock when they find out how much in debt they will be when they actually leave their education program. Those people will be necessary for the hon. member's platform of a strong and vibrant Canada and using Kyoto as a way to open up new markets. However, doing it on the backs of students is not the proper way to go.

Further compounding that is the fact that students are graduating later in life and are having families later in life. Hence, we have to get more immigrants to come into the country to contribute because

childbearing years are being reduced by citizens, including myself and my wife, who delayed that for career and occupational goals as well as paying down student debt.

As we go through the innovation strategies talked about in Kyoto, why should student loan rates be above the prime rate and often times triple the actual rate of inflation for this innovation to take place? Will the hon. member commit to lowering student debt and ensuring that as we go through this process it will not be on the backs of students and those looking to contribute to the future of our country?

• (1140)

Mr. Julian Reed: Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending an innovation summit as well but it did not throw all innovation on the backs of students. As a matter of fact, the process challenged business people, political people, people from all walks of life to put on their thinking caps and do some innovating of their own. Another innovation summit will be held here in Ottawa this fall.

I can tell the member that rather than laying it on the backs of students, we laid it on our own backs. We looked at what was good in our environment now and we looked at what we would need to do to move forward. That was our interpretation of innovation. The federal government has committed \$3 billion to that innovation.

Talking about the cost of student tuition, I would like to remind him that we do have a \$2 billion millennium scholarship fund. This not only allows students of lesser financial means to take advantage of student loan programs but the millennium fund is also there to provide some assistance.

A member of my family, who did not have the resources to complete university, completed it through the student loan program, which helped him out immensely. When I went through college I was lucky enough to earn enough money to pay my tuition, but I will admit that was many years ago and the cost of tuition was, admittedly, much less than it is now.

We have a tremendous future ahead of us. Innovation is not limited to students or universities.

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Gander—Grand Falls.

It is an honour to stand today in the House to respond to the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the good people of Dauphin—Swan River.

Important issues are missing in the government's agenda. There is nothing for agriculture, there are no plans for rural Canada and there is no increase in funding for additional health care providers. Many of the promises we see in the speech have been mentioned in previous sessions of Parliament and only about 25% of those have been acted on by the government. No doubt this really was a useless exercise. We really did not need the Speech from the Throne. Over the last day we debated on the government's motion to bring back old legislation which died on the order paper.

The Address

The Liberals could have done several things with the throne speech. They could have promoted a responsible financial plan, an active international agenda or a collaborative approach to social programs and democratic reform. Instead, they chose to propose a long list of legacy spending in the absence of a budget. Canadians need planned direction, not spending sprees, from any of their governments.

I will take the time to quickly and briefly go through different sections of the throne speech. The first section deals with plans for and funding to health care. We all know that health care is first and foremost in the minds of all Canadians. As former government speakers indicated, we are at the point where only 14¢ out of every \$1 comes from the federal government. When the plan was first put together it was 50¢. An increase in transfers to health is long overdue.

We must not forget the current disastrous condition of health care. This began in 1994 with the \$24 billion cutback which forced the provincial governments to centralize and reduce their spending. Unfortunately, as we all know, technology is costly and is always on the rise. As we all age, a greater demand is put on health services.

The hon. member for St. John's West indicated to me this morning that in a province like Newfoundland, which has a population drain, it is even harder on the health care system because the number of taxpayers are not there to help pay for the system. Special attention certainly needs to be paid to that.

In terms of investment in cities and infrastructure, we know that over the last 50 years, from the first infrastructure program, which was the brainchild of FCM, that bridges and water and sewage systems are falling apart. It is unfortunate that governments, this one as well as past governments, have not paid more attention to infrastructure upgrades.

Today, with the experience of Walkerton, we know that potable water is very important. It is part of our health. In fact I have been lobbying the minister responsible for western diversification. Currently the situation with the prairie provinces is that most of the provincial-federal agreements have lapsed. Therefore they need to sit down at the table and renew these agreements so that more money for infrastructure development can be put in place.

Rural Canadians, certainly in my riding, are waiting for federal funding or tripartite funding to assist in potable water development. The community of Gilbert Plains in my riding is waiting to hear from the federal government. Unfortunately, if the money is not there, the work will not get done.

In the area of new money for early childhood programs and welfare reform, it is time this government and future governments started looking at the whole issue of free tuition for post-secondary education. Other progressive nations in the world are doing that. We all promote education in the House because we know it is necessary. It is how people change their status and improve their livelihood. We talk about that for the aboriginal community continuously and we all support that. I think that is the direction in which we need to head.

• (1145)

The speech talks about renewing environmental commitments and creating 10 national parks. Most Canadians would agree with that

but the problem is that there are not enough funds to look after the parks we have today. In fact, the people living within national parks are fed up with the taxation increase. The ironic thing is that instead of looking after the urban sites, the recreational sites within national parks, the tax money is being used to look after the parks.

Another contentious issue is the whole issue of park wardens. It is ridiculous that the heritage minister, through Mr. Lee, the parks agency administrator, has absolutely refused to be rational when it comes to park wardens retaining their status as peace officers and being able to use handguns. The judgment from the labour board was in the park wardens' favour. It is so ridiculous that over the past year the park wardens have lost their status as enforcement officers. Do members know that a park warden cannot even stop a poacher on the highway or do anything about the poaching? The park warden has to contact the RCMP and literally wait until the RCMP arrive. It may take hours to do something about illegal activity in national parks.

Basically the park wardens have no role left other than that of being public paper pushers in their offices. It is very unfortunate and unreasonable. Park wardens are a part of the enforcement system in this country and they need to be treated with respect.

Ethics guidelines for public servants are long overdue. Perhaps we need to add ethics guidelines for governments. What will we do about broken government promises? We hear that concern from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. There is no recourse. Politicians can promise all they wish. Maybe it is time for them to be accountable for what they say. I think it is probably long overdue and most Canadians would agree with that.

In the time I have left I want to talk about what the throne speech says on page 14. It says:

Respectful of our history, confident in our future, let each of us do our part.

I want to mention two historical situations that this government and past governments have neglected and which need to be dealt with.

The first one is about the internment of Canadians of Ukrainian descent. We all know that during the first world war over 5,000 Ukrainians were interned in concentration camps and in 24 work camps throughout the country. The government must deal with this long overdue problem. These people were Canadians.

The Address

Past governments have resolved the issue of the Japanese internment. I think it is time the government acknowledged that the internment of Ukrainians actually happened in Canada, in this free, democratic and open country, during the war years only because they came from another country and perhaps looked or spoke like the enemy. Certainly that is a danger we encounter today with the war on terrorism and with people who have come to this country from the Middle East.

We also have the issue of Canadians of Chinese descent, of which I am one. The whole issue of the head tax must be dealt with. It was unjust and unfair, that whole idea of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923. The government needs to acknowledge this problem. If that is what is written in black and white in the throne speech then the government has to be accountable and carry out its promise.

It is time for the Liberal government to walk the talk. As we all know, actions speak loudest. We are looking for action from the government.

• (1150)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague raised a topic which has been raised two or three times this morning in dealing with the cost of post-secondary education. The point that seems to come out in debate is the cost of tuition and how people work to pay their tuition. That is all well and good.

However, if people do not live near the university town, they need more than tuition. Tuition is only a small portion of the total cost of a post-secondary education. The real costs result from having to get an apartment and having to furnish that apartment, having to buy food, as well as the costs of travel.

Most post-secondary education courses during the year will cost an individual who comes from other than the university town around \$15,000 or \$16,000. A maximum student loan does not even come close to that. Unless parents can help, students cannot receive an education. It is not the costs they have on their shoulders when students come out, it is that they cannot even afford to go.

Does the member, serving part of a rural area, find that many of his young people are having problems accessing proper post-secondary education?

Mr. Inky Mark: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I live in a large area and the majority of people who want to go to university have to leave the area. They are looking at a four to six hour drive to Winnipeg and there is that added cost. That has always been the dispute between rural and large urban centres. There is that added cost of living. Students have to find a place to live and there is that extra cost.

There are creative ways of dealing with that. Universities need to decentralize and offer courses in smaller communities. In the world of technology that we live in there is no reason why the Internet is not a big part of the equation. I see throughout the country that community colleges are probably way ahead of the universities on this point. They establish satellite locations in smaller regions and communities so that students from distant communities can have access to education whether it is at the community college level or taking university courses.

• (1155)

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, PC): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech was a missed opportunity for the government. It was a time for the government to show its vision for the entire country. Unfortunately there was nothing for Canada and Canadians living in rural areas such as the riding of Gander—Grand Falls.

I can only speak about my riding because I do not fully understand at times, listening to members speak, what is happening in other ridings. I can only concentrate on how my people are feeling and how it is affecting them. The throne speech offers no hope and demonstrates what a low priority rural Newfoundland and Labrador is for the present government.

After two previous speeches from the throne only 28 of the 114 promises have been actually fulfilled. We hear from both sides that the numbers vary, but why promise to do a lot of things when nothing is done? This goes back to the 1993 Liberal platform. It is a clear admission that after nearly 10 years of government the Liberals have failed to achieve what they have set out to do. It is an admission of failure to the people. This country needs new ideas and a new approach. The Liberal government is full of promises but for some reason or another, it is short on performance.

I want to highlight some of the areas that were missed and are important for my riding. Rural Newfoundland and Labrador is important to me and should be to the government. One of the things that is lacking in my area is the ability to have technical support so that people can have the same access to all the technical ideas and thoughts that urban centres have. A former MP started that motion but because of the cost factor it failed. Sometimes if we are serious about doing something for rural Canada and rural Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a cost factor that we must look at. Sometimes the cost is not that much when it is compared to other items.

One of the other items that was a major loss for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador was the custodial management of the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. While the government talked about protecting species at risk and environment protection it failed to protect the most important resource of our province, which is fish.

We talk about Kyoto being costly for Canadians. Custodial management is the way to guarantee the protection of several marine species and a way of life for people in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially from my riding.

We can also look at the airline industry in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and rural Canada. There is no way in the world that any politician can state in the House that rural Newfoundland and Labrador and rural Canada are getting the same service as the urban centres. It is impossible for anyone to say that. In my travels, as well as the travel of other MPs, it is a difficult task to get flights out and to make connecting flights because of the limitations.

An hon. member: What about the cost?

Mr. Rex Barnes: The cost that has been echoed has always been there. The people in Gander—Grand Falls have always paid a higher cost for air travel than their counterparts in St. John's. People travel to St. John's, which is a five hour drive, so they can get a cheaper airplane ticket; sometimes it is \$200 to \$400, which is totally ridiculous.

The Address

The government should be acting on items such as fees with regard to travel costs to make it easier for people from rural Newfoundland and Labrador and rural Canadians to travel from their own airports rather than having to travel all across their own province to go to urban centres.

One big item is the health care plan. There is always a big debate about whether the government is spending the money wisely with regard to health care. Coming from the health care field, I realize that a pot of money will not fix the problem but it will help the situation.

• (1200)

Governments have always pumped out all kinds of money at times. We hear the Liberals talk about the fact that they put another \$1 billion into health care. However the workers on the ground do not see this. We do not know where the money goes. It is time for the government to have a plan for health care and a plan for rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

In rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador people do not have access to doctors. They have to travel long distances to see doctors and specialists. The strike by doctors in Newfoundland and Labrador today is a prime example of what the doctors are going through. Sometimes they talk about money, and yes, money is a factor. However, as I heard one doctor state on the news, it is about service delivery to patients. If there is a high cost for that, then the government must ensure the money is there to ensure the service is available for people in rural areas.

One of the hottest topics in my riding right now is the unemployment crisis, which I am presently undertaking with regard to the problems that we have. I have asked to meet with the hon. minister and her department. When we meet with her department, the big issue is always top up programs. A portion of the top up program is to boost EI while waiting for a full time job. The problem is that the workers are not seasonal in my province and in my riding. It is the work that is seasonal.

Our people are looking for full time work but, unfortunately, we have no choice but to go the other route. The government has failed in its ability to do something about that, especially acknowledging in the throne speech that it is a serious problem and how we would challenge it.

The top up program is a small avenue in the unemployment crisis. It is no good to top up the higher salary. It is essential that top up programs are made EI eligible because of the scarcity of work in rural areas. It is important that we take note of that.

I will be discussing this with the minister very soon so that we can make some movement to ensure that the voices of the people in my riding are heard at the level where it will count.

We need to revitalize rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We need to have a plan for not only my riding but the whole of Canada because I am sure that the rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, Gander and Grand Falls, are the same all across Canada.

We need to have infrastructure put in place. We all realize there is a cost. I am not standing here saying there is no cost factor. We have to prioritize where we should go. If we do not prioritize with a plan, then we will have no plan and no ability to pay for it.

Any government can say it will do all these wonderful things but if it does not have a plan, how will we pay for it? Every time we look around the government is floating all these trial balloons about how we are going to pay for things, yet we have no budget. There is no budget to determine where this money will come from. Before we have a plan, we should tell the people where the money will come from so we know exactly where it will go.

It is important that as a government we have a plan. If we do not have a plan with a budget, then we will go nowhere. We can promise all we like but we cannot deliver.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for York Centre.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

It is a privilege for me to take part in this debate on the Speech from the Throne. The vision laid out in that speech is based on values and principles that are deeply rooted in the spirit of the people of Canada. This means the sharing of risks and benefits, equality of all citizens, tolerance and a celebration of our differences.

It is a vision which builds on our past successes. Those successes have not been based solely on economic growth and financial prudence, but also on our ability to listen to Canadians and to set as our priorities the issues they deem important.

The commitments made in the throne speech reflect these priorities: a comprehensive plan for health care reform; a strong economy; a healthy environment; and the well-being of children and families.

One of the things which makes Canada strong is our linguistic duality. As a staunch defender of official bilingualism, I anxiously await the implementation of a renewed action plan to revitalize our official languages policy.

Promoting and reinforcing the bilingual nature of the public service constitutes an important part of this plan of action. Canada's public service is, and always will be, a bilingual institution and there can be absolutely no room for compromise on this.

I am particularly pleased to learn that a recent study on public servants' attitudes towards official languages indicates that the vast majority of them support the official languages program, and feel that it is important to serve the public in the language of choice and that bilingualism in the workplace must be encouraged.

That said, it is certain that there must be more active promotion of the use of both official languages in federal government workplaces. This must be a dominant characteristic of our daily activities and our policies must be better understood. More will be said on this in the coming months.

*The Address**[English]*

I want to turn to the subject of human resources management in the public service. As the final commitment in the Speech from the Throne, the government will “introduce long-awaited reforms for the public service to ensure that it can attract the diverse talent it needs to continue to serve Canadians well”.

For me, it is fitting that this should serve as a conclusion to this important speech. It is fitting because the public service underpins all that we do in government. Whether in advising ministers on policy, supporting parliamentarians, delivering services to citizens across Canada or abroad, or in enforcing the law, we rely on the dedicated men and women who are the Public Service of Canada.

The public service is one of the country's greatest assets. As a parliamentarian, I consider that a vital characteristic of our democracy is the positive energy and results that are produced when those elected to serve Canadians are supported by an impartial, non-partisan, professional, representative and bilingual public service. While it is true that we set the agenda, we must all recognize that our public servants make it happen.

It is because of this that there is a clear political determination to make the changes required to ensure that our public service is prepared to take on the challenges of the 21st century. We realize that if we are to meet Canadians' legitimate needs, we must rely on an effective and competent public service.

[Translation]

My perspective has always been that it is people who count, regardless of the organization, be it in the public or private sector. Given that it is the role of all governments to provide their citizens with the high quality services that we all need, human resources are even more important in the public sector. Our employees give the government a human face.

The current employee management system is outdated and lags behind current management theories. Some of our rules and regulations were enacted 30 and 40 years ago and have been changed very little since that time, despite the profound changes that have taken place in our public service and in our country.

The demographic reality is that approximately half of our current public servants, and a much greater proportion of our senior managers, will be retiring in the next ten years. At the same time, competition to attract more talented people is intensifying. Therefore, one of our priorities is to retain competent employees and to recruit new ones. The public service must be able to retain, attract and train highly motivated women and men.

We must also ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to train our future leaders and to ensure an efficient transfer of organizational knowledge. This is why we must renew our legal and administrative framework for the management of human resources, which is quite rigid in many respects.

We must encourage innovation, which means putting in place more flexible policies and procedures. We must provide employees and managers with the appropriate tools so that they never have the feeling that they have to battle the system in order to do good work.

●(1210)

[English]

We need to create an exemplary workplace. In my view, an exemplary workplace is a place that embraces diversity, where employees are proud to belong, where they can work in the official language of their choice in bilingual regions, and where they receive fair compensation for their work. It is a place where managers encourage employees to take advantage of a range of possible working conditions so that they can better balance professional and family responsibilities. It is a workplace that promotes learning and professional development for all employees regardless of level.

Of course such a workplace should also be a place of harmonious labour relations, where a real spirit of cooperation, not confrontation, leads to frank and constructive exchanges and problem solving between the employer and union representatives.

In an exemplary workplace, systems, practices and regulations are aligned with getting results. Right now many of our human resources management practices are just plain inadequate for today's challenges. Anyone who has tried to recruit or transfer an employee in the public service knows that the process is lengthy and tedious. I have received much correspondence and I have had numerous conversations with members on both sides of the House about the difficulties some of their constituents have encountered with the current human resources system. These exchanges have been very helpful to me because they illustrate the practical difficulties Canadians face when applying for a public service job.

[Translation]

Change is needed, and it will occur. However, changing the system does not mean changing our fundamental values. On the contrary. Any new human resources management framework must remain based on values of integrity, equity, respect, accountability, transparency, skills and merit.

The reform must be based on sound ethical principles. We are stressing these principles because they provide a democratic government with what it needs to operate in the best manner possible and because, this way, the public will trust Canada's public institutions.

For all these reasons, I will soon introduce in the House of Commons legislative changes that will address these matters. Each and every one of us has a duty to participate in this initiative. The reform of the public service human resources management system is a priority of our government, as it should be for all the members of this House as well.

The Address

We are not undertaking this initiative because we feel there is something wrong with the Public Service of Canada. The government I represent believes, as I do—and I hope our colleagues opposite do as well—that our public sector is one of the very best in the world. We just want to ensure that this sector will be able to grow and adjust in order to meet the challenges of our ever-changing economy and society.

I am confident that, with the support and involvement of everyone in the public service, from senior management to employees, our union partners and our parliamentarians, this initiative will lay a strong foundation, so that we can continue serving Canadians well.

[*English*]

I believe we are headed in the right direction. For change to happen, we need to focus on our goals and we need to bear in mind that changes must be possible and practical. Ultimately we will all benefit from modernization.

I applaud the Prime Minister for concluding his reply to the Speech from the Throne by saying:

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, how they can participate and lead in the future.

I urge all members of the House to follow his lead and to discuss with our young graduates the Public Service of Canada.

• (1215)

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the minister on a fine speech of empty rhetoric. It has been nine years and now she says the Liberals recognize the problem, that their eyes are open and they now know what they want to do. Well, I am still waiting to see that legislation she is promising, because after nine years I think it is long overdue. It is time that the government and the President of the Treasury Board brought in some meaningful legislation that would work.

Let us look back at the universal classification system. It was the great panacea that was going to ensure that we had a uniform workforce, that there would be no discrimination of any kind. It cost us \$3.6 billion and the policy did not work so it was thrown in the garbage.

There have been rigid hiring practices for years and still a vast number of people are being hired on term employment because the process of hiring permanent employees is so constipated that it cannot work. Therefore we end up with term employees who cannot look forward to a career in the public service unless they get converted to permanent employee status. That destroys morale.

The President of the Treasury Board made reference to regional hiring and how she is going to fix that. That type of discrimination was absolutely condemned by the public accounts committee yet regional discrimination continues because the government cannot figure out how to end it.

People who want to get hired by the civil service have to live in Ottawa most of the time. A graduate from the University of Toronto, UBC, University of Ottawa or wherever, who goes back home to live with his parents in northern Alberta and is trying to find a job in the

government, cannot get a job because his address is in northern Alberta.

Although those were comments and not necessarily a question, I do have a question. If the President of the Treasury Board is so concerned about improving the morale and the effectiveness of her civil service, is she prepared to commit to bringing in the merit system to compensate people on the value of the work they do, rather than—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see that the chair of the public accounts committee approved of the priorities set out by the government for the public service. All members of the committee have studied some of the problems that we have in the system right now. That is why the Prime Minister appointed a task force last year to look at the human resources management system, to look at exactly what went wrong in the system and to see if we need some legislative changes. The answer is yes.

I have to say that it is very rare to find in a government the political will to bring in those changes. I am happy that our Prime Minister decided it would be a priority for our government. I am sure that all parliamentarians realize that we can have the best Speech from the Throne with wonderful ideas coming from parliamentarians and wonderful legislation, but if we do not have the right people to implement them, they will not be a success. That is why we need a very good public service. It is why we need to make some legislative changes to the human resources framework. We will do that in the coming months.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I know the minister and President of Treasury Board and am well aware of how attuned she is to the working conditions of public servants. I think she places great importance on respect of the individual. It also seems that health was a very important issue in the throne speech.

This morning, a newspaper article reported on psychological harassment of public servants. Psychological harassment is a very serious thing.

I would like to ask the minister what she intends to do in the very short term to deal with the problem of psychological harassment?

• (1220)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that our first survey of the whole public service was carried out two years ago. It was a first; we had never surveyed all of our federal employees. We asked them what they thought of their workplace. To our amazement, one of five respondents reported being a victim of harassment in the workplace.

We immediately struck a task force along with the unions to review our anti-harassment policy, and now we have a new one.

The Address

There is no room for compromise in this area. It is very clear that all departments have a duty to look very carefully into the situation each and every time there is an employee complaint, in order to immediately take the necessary steps to remedy the situation and prevent it being drawn out or expanded to other sectors of the department in question.

Needless to say, all departments must comply with this policy.

[*English*]

Hon. Art Eggleton (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the first occasion that I rise in the House, not as a minister but as a member of Parliament for York Centre, to give some perspectives I have on the Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne is a solid blueprint for dealing with the challenges that face the country and the people of Canada at this time. It talks about the need to reform health care and reform the justice system for our aboriginal people. It goes on to say how Canada must be a leader in terms of innovation in learning, and it commits and recommits to the concept of dealing with child poverty, one of the issues that I hope to spend more time on in this session of Parliament.

It deals with the Kyoto protocol which we all want to see put in place in a reasonable way that helps to meet our obligations with respect to the environment while at the same time continuing with a strong economy which we have enjoyed for some time in the country.

How much of the blueprint will be put into action will depend upon another document to be tabled in the House at a later date and that is the budget. It will contain the resources that will be needed to implement many of these things. It will determine how much of it can be put into action at this time.

We have for a number of years had as a firm policy the desire to keep our fiscal house in order, not to go back into deficit. We spent a number of years getting out of deficit. We want to ensure we never do that again. We want to ensure that the debt continues to reduce as a percentage of our gross national product.

We want to ensure though that at the same time we can put in place for Canadians a balanced approach for dealing with these many challenges which are incorporated in the Speech from the Throne. That will have to be determined as we determine what financial resources are available.

I will focus on two parts of the Speech from the Throne. Neither one of these should be of any surprise to members of the House because they deal with my experiences over 30 years in public service and elected office.

First is defence. I was Minister of National Defence for some five years and was grateful to see in the Speech from the Throne the notation that Canada's military be equipped to fulfill the demands placed upon it. That is a principle that has to be implemented as quickly as possible. Now there is more defence program than there is defence budget. These two things have to be brought in balance. We can no longer afford a roughly \$13 billion program but a \$12 billion budget. There has to be a reconciliation. We must recognize that the

demands on our troops have increased the operational tempo over the years since we last did a review of the defence program in 1994.

At that point in time we thought 60,000 troops would be enough coming out of the Cold War. Since then we have had more peace support operations than we had during the entire 40 years of the Cold War. We should continue to meet that operation tempo because we have built a solid reputation for this country when it comes to peace support operations around the world. Countries of the world and the United Nations look to Canada to be involved in those peace support operations. It is our forte in terms of our contribution militarily to the international arena.

In order to be able to do that we will have to add troops to the Canadian Forces to keep up that kind of operation tempo. Otherwise we must cut back on the operation tempo. We must do the same with equipment. We need to add to the equipment. We need to replace the outworn and outdated equipment as quickly as possible.

● (1225)

We need additional moneys, at least a billion dollars a year, in terms of the operations of the Canadian Forces to carry on this kind of programming and these kinds of services and relieve some of the pressure on the operation tempo. We need some additional dollars to go into capital equipment. We need to develop a rapidly deployable force. This is something we have been developing. However, we need to continue to do that so that we can move quickly to deal with some of the challenges that we face in the world. While we may not have a Cold War, we may not have the bipolar world that we had for a great many years. The world is still an unsafe place. There are still many conflicts. Canada has to be there to be part of making a contribution.

We continue to need multipurpose combat capability. Our troops need to be combat capable because peace support operations are not so peaceful nowadays. As we have seen in the case of Afghanistan, we can find ourselves in conflict situations which are necessary for us to provide the training and the equipment for our forces. At the same time recognizing that the operation tempo needs to be reduced.

We have spent a lot of time and effort in terms of the quality of life for our troops. However, more needs to be done to ensure we support our Canadian Forces the way they should be supported.

The second subject deals with the plight of our cities. I spent 11 years as the mayor of Toronto and well know the difficulties that cities have in making ends meet and getting the kind of tax resources they need to solve the problems that their citizens want them to solve. I was grateful to see in the Speech from the Throne the 10-year plan for infrastructure.

The Address

Infrastructure is a good contribution that the government can make to help our cities. Our cities need their infrastructure modernized so they can continue to contribute to the economy of the country. The economy of the country is, by and large, made in our cities. Over 80% of our people live in our cities. We need to ensure that they get the infrastructure needed to do that. A 10 year plan helps to ensure that our municipalities have the planning horizon they need. They cannot plan ahead by putting in funds one year and cutting them out the next. That is not the way to govern our cities. A 10 year plan for infrastructure, as mentioned in the throne speech, is a solid, good move. However, more needs to be done

There is the whole question of affordable housing. We have put money into trying to help solve the problem of the homeless. However, it is not solved. There is more that needs to be done there. There are people in my city of Toronto, thousands, waiting years in lineups to get affordable housing. There are seniors in my constituency of York Centre who are paying 50% or more of their income for rental accommodation. They do not have enough money left for food and for the other necessities of life.

We have a real problem in housing in my constituency, my city, and cities right across the country. The infrastructure program or the housing programs of the federal government must help to deal with the problem. We are not in it alone; we are there in partnership. The provinces and municipalities must be there as well. The federal government must recognize the needs in terms of our cities.

There is the problem regarding transit. In my city there is enormous traffic congestion choking the streets of Toronto. We need more put into public transit to expand the public transit system.

There are things that we can do at the federal level, for example, housing for seniors. The guaranteed income supplement, the seniors pension program, is indexed to inflation. However inflation does not cover the cost of housing in Toronto. We ought to be looking at increasing those kinds of pensionable allowances so that our seniors are not paying 50% or more of their income.

We should look at tax policies and transit. Right now, in terms of our urban municipalities, if we are driving a car we get a free parking space but if we get a pass given by our employer it is a taxable benefit. Those are things we can do at the federal level to help in terms of the plight of our cities, in terms of supplementing what we are talking about in terms of our infrastructure.

The Speech from the Throne says that this will lead us to the Canada we want. I believe we can do that, but we have a lot more work to do.

• (1230)

We have to provide the resources that are necessary to do it and we have to continue with very sincere follow-up to the principled statements that are made in the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's comments this morning. Since about 1992, the Prime Minister has stated that there is a need to restore trust in government, a need to restore respect on the part of the Canadian people for their government, in short, ethics.

For almost a week now the member's colleague, who sits very close to him in the House of Commons, the Solicitor General, has been embroiled in a scandal because he chose to issue, and the key word is chose, a sole source contract to a friend. We all remember that the member for York Centre was removed from his position as defence minister a few months back for a very similar incident.

How does the member explain to Canadians the inconsistency in this disciplinary action by his Prime Minister? How does that begin to restore or do anything except further damage the trust and respect of Canadians for their government?

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, trust and ethics are important issues. I have given comments with respect to my own situation in that regard, as the Solicitor General has with his. The matter is now under investigation by the ethics counsellor, who will subsequently report on this matter for the edification of the entire House.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague is on almost the same lines. We saw in the newspaper yesterday that the member disagreed with what happened to him and yet nothing happened to the Solicitor General.

The only thing is that in the throne speech the government talked about being more open to all Canadians. The government's money is not there for its friends but rather for the citizens of our country who are in need right now. After listening to what the member has said it is like the government has not done enough. That means the government has not done too much over the last 10 years, and yet it is looking ahead 10 years to see what it can do. I think the time has run out. People are in trouble today. What will the government do?

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall speaking on either one of those issues. I am not sure that the throne speech debate is the appropriate time to discuss them. As I indicated, there is an investigation going on with respect to this matter. I think that all members of the House have to adhere to a high ethical standard. There is absolutely no doubt about that. As I have indicated, when it came to the rules I abided by those rules. I think we will hear more about the case involving Mr. MacAulay.

Meanwhile, we do have a throne speech here—

• (1235)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member is a veteran in the House and knows that he cannot call a member by name but only by title or riding.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned a couple of topics that have always troubled me, child poverty being one and the state of the military being the other.

In 1993 the throne speech indicated that a million and a half children lived in poverty but that by the year 2000 this poverty would be eliminated. We are now in the year 2002 and have more than a million and a half children living in poverty.

Our military equipment was always going to be upgraded, since 1993. I think there was an effort to do a bit of that, but we are still way behind, as the member himself stated.

The Address

My question for the member is this: What happened? What happened to the throne speech of 1993 when child poverty was going to be eliminated and the equipment in our military was going to be built up? Is it a fact that, according to the Auditor General, the government has wasted \$16 billion on foolish projects? Is that the problem? Or is it just poor management?

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, I certainly share the hon. member's concern about child poverty. Back in the eighties, I believe, the House did say it would eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Obviously that has not been done. I applaud the Prime Minister for making child poverty a priority in terms of the throne speech, to do more, and more needs to be done.

There is no doubt about the difficulty of funding everything Canadians need and want. The government, though, has done a terrific job in terms of finding the right balance of things and we will continue to do that. There is no doubt that child poverty has to be dealt with, and our military has to be dealt with as well.

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with my colleague, the member for Wild Rose. I am pleased to have this opportunity today to rise and speak in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne is an avenue available to the government to clearly set out its agenda and vision for our country, but with the member from Shawinigan indicating just a short while ago his intention to step aside as our Prime Minister to allow one of his competitors to take his place, the throne speech is more about creating a personal legacy for the member from Shawinigan than creating a well-rounded vision and direction for Canada.

I find this cheapening of the throne speech and its use as a personal political tool shameful and would suggest that the Prime Minister, with his many years of service in this place, should have taken the high road on his way out. Nevertheless, it is done and Canadians are left to battle the rough seas of political and economic uncertainty in a rudderless ship, with a captain on his way out.

If one is from the big cities of Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, there may be facets of the throne speech one can find pleasing, but the reality is that those most in need of the government, those producing the wealth in the country, hard-working Canadians, are those in rural, remote and northern Canada. They are all but forgotten in the member from Shawinigan's vision of Canada.

It is what is lacking and who is forgotten in the throne speech that I take issue with. I am a proud Canadian from northwestern B.C. and am offended that the government has ignored us once again. I am angered at the thought that vote-rich areas in southern Canada are more important and more deserving than those of us here in the north.

An example of the member from Shawinigan's narrow urban vision for Canada can be found in his steadfast support for the greenhouse gas emission reduction plan called the Kyoto accord. The reality is that 100 kilometres outside the limit of any major city greenhouse gas emissions are not the top issue on people's minds.

In northern Canada and my riding of Skeena, people put food on the table, pay their mortgages and hydro bills and, when they can afford it, send their kids to college on salaries paid by companies that

do business extracting raw materials from the land. Be it forestry, mining, fishing, farming, oil and gas, most companies in northern B.C., northern Ontario, northern Quebec, and even rural Atlantic Canada, produce wealth from our natural resources.

In the north we are mining the metals that go toward making computer chips that run the manufacturing companies. We cut down the trees that make computer desks. The hydroelectricity we generate keeps the lights turned on and those computers running. And without the fishery and our agricultural industry, we would be having a pretty light lunch here today.

I would have to agree that the smog and pollution seen in Canada's big cities is a problem, and more mass transit and better car emission regulations are part of the solution. But to penalize northern and remote communities because of a problem they contribute to in a much lesser degree is not only irresponsible. Frankly, it is another reminder that unless people live in vote-rich southern Canada they just do not count with this Liberal government.

Let us take a look at the problems faced by the softwood lumber industry today as another example that shows the government has no plan and has really given no thought to the difficulties faced by rural, remote and northern Canadians. Here we have an industry that has been struggling to stay in business since the United States, our biggest trading partner, began imposing large tariffs and duties on those importing our products. These tariffs and duties are arbitrary. Even the WTO has agreed that Canada is not dumping lumber into the U.S. market. The U.S. action against Canadian lumber is predatory in nature.

What has the Liberal government done about the softwood lumber crisis? Absolutely nothing. It is not mentioned in the throne speech. There has been nothing that has made one iota of difference in the grand scheme of things. The Minister for International Trade has said he is working through the WTO and other organizations to see a resolution to the impasse. He has said he wants to take a wait-and-see approach and is certain that Canada will win in the end.

That wait-and-see approach so often used by the government has seen numerous sawmills shut down, thousands of jobs lost and, frankly, many families broken up as parents leave their homes in search of work, all because the government prefers to wait. The employees, small businesses and other spinoff economies affected by the softwood lumber crisis, particularly in B.C., cannot wait. They need help now as opposed to more hollow promises of assistance from the government.

The Address

The Prime Minister and his throne speech did not address the issues and concerns foremost on the minds and in the hearts of rural, remote and northern Canadians. Why not? What I am talking about today is a lack of certainty. As I said earlier, the government has done nothing with the throne speech to address the uncertainty we are faced with today.

● (1240)

One of the reasons there is a downturn in the economy is the lack of corporate investment in Canada and in particular in northern Canada. In my home province of B.C. not only is investment scared away by Canada's high capital taxes, but the continual aboriginal land claims uncertainty creates an atmosphere in which many businesses find it hard to operate. Recently there were articles in the newspapers citing concern for the future exploration and development of offshore oil and gas off the B.C. coast due to continual land claims wrangling in our courts and, in particular, in the court of public opinion. Until there is certainty of land tenure, British Columbia will find it very difficult to realize its natural resource potential. Unfortunately it is the federal government that continues to drag its feet. The province pays the price.

I have outlined several issues that should either have been addressed more adequately or considered in the throne speech. One area that I know my constituents and most rural, remote and northern Canadians feel should be addressed is the hated gun control legislation, better known as Bill C-68. There is no mention of this in the throne speech. It is a piece of legislation that was sold in the vote-rich cities of southern Canada as the be-all and end-all for solving crime.

The Liberals touted Bill C-68 as the solution to all crime and called it legislation that would mean safer streets in those urban areas. Instead, it meant penalizing rural, remote and northern Canadians. It has done nothing to reduce crime in our cities and has already cost the Canadian taxpayer \$1 billion.

I will now move on to a problem exacerbated once again in the throne speech, one with which I am all too familiar having been active in municipal politics for almost 25 years, six of which I spent as mayor of a small, northern remote community in B.C. Infrastructure is the problem to which I am referring, one that has been poorly understood by the government for years. Yes, the throne speech did address the need for more infrastructure funding for cities to deal with needed road repairs, sewer system upgrades and better water treatment facilities, but nothing was done to address the hugely flawed funding formula.

What many MPs may not know is that the funding formula of one-third, one-third and one-third is highly impractical and even impossible to achieve in some smaller rural municipalities. Allow me to explain. In order for much-needed infrastructure repairs to be made in many municipalities, they need to access federal and provincial funding. The one-third formula means that each pays a third of the cost. That is to say, the federal government pays a third, the province pays a third and the municipality must come up with its third.

Large capital projects like those needed to upgrade sewer or water treatment facilities are not cheap. It is not uncommon for smaller municipalities to be unable to come up with their one-third share of

the cost of the project. What then? The throne speech said that infrastructure funding would be available. It is available, all right, if we can convince the feds and the province to pay their share and only if the municipality has the tax base to come up with its share. The reality is that many municipalities in northern, rural or remote areas of Canada do not have that tax base to provide their share of the money, so having more infrastructure dollars available to be used for upgrades will not help them.

Again I must say I believe these funds are not directed toward those smaller municipalities in need of federal assistance. I believe this is an example of the government talking like it has funding for everyone but all the while knowing that those funds will mostly be used by the big vote-rich cities for which they were all intended. It is shameful how rural, remote and northern communities are ignored by the government and the Prime Minister in the throne speech.

When I heard the throne speech mention the government's vision for health care, I cringed. There was no vision and there were no new ideas. All Canadians heard was that the government was waiting for the results of the Romanow commission. Again, as I said with softwood lumber, the government is fixated on a wait-and-see attitude about everything. Since 1993 when the Liberal government was first elected, it has been tinkering with health care. Commission after commission, report after report, and here we are three elections later with nothing new. Meanwhile, waiting lines are longer, Canadians have been forced to go to the U.S. for treatment, and northern and remote communities have seen their specialists leave and their MDs burned out and frustrated. The system is not working. That is obvious to everyone except the government.

To conclude, I would like to remind the House and those Canadians watching at home today that there is a better way than the tired old Liberal ideas outlined in the throne speech. I would urge them to forget the tired Liberals and try something new, exciting and enthusiastic: the party I represent, one which represents much of northern, remote and rural Canada, the Canadian Alliance.

● (1245)

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned with the Alliance member's remarks in trying to make a rural-urban difference in the matter of the Kyoto accord. He said that when people get 100 kilometres outside a city there is no problem or words to that effect. I sincerely would like to persuade him otherwise.

The Address

I represent a rural riding that is an hour and a half to two hours outside Toronto. In the last two summers on the worst smog days of the year, the pollution capitals of southern Ontario were Peterborough, which is a small city of 60,000 to 70,000 people, and the village of Omemee, which has a couple of thousand people. Both are well outside the city of Toronto. On those days it was possible to feel the loss of lung capacity. People who went outside and exerted themselves could feel the poison in the air.

The hon. member is quite right that most of the pollution is produced in the cities, but to think that means rural people can forget about it is a mistake. The pollution rises in a plume over the cities and then spreads over the rest of the country and the rest of the world.

The member mentioned his northern riding. I can say there have been poisons found in the breast milk of Inuit women. In the same way that Peterborough is a focus for the plume of pollution from Toronto, the north is the final source of the pollution from the industrialized part of this hemisphere.

This poisoning of the atmosphere affects us all.

Mr. Andy Burton: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from across the floor for agreeing with me that I was right, that pollution does come from the big cities. Pollution is not generated in the small northern areas to a large degree. We all have our problems. Diesel generated electricity, for instance, in some of the small northern communities creates a bit of a pollution problem, but nothing compared to what is generated in the cities.

An hour outside most major cities in my part of Canada, for example Vancouver, a person will probably be 60 miles away from the city. A person is not going to be 60 miles out of Toronto in an hour and a person would be lucky to be out of Toronto, so perhaps my analogy was not totally on, but I think it was correct.

The bottom line is the bulk of the pollution is created by the automobiles and in the big cities. To offload the cost of the Kyoto accord on the resource rich communities that create the economy in our wonderful country of Canada is not the right way to approach it.

• (1250)

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in the debate on the throne speech. Right off the bat, I want to say that I have heard all the throne speeches since 1993 when I first arrived here. What I heard in 2002 was a repeat of much of what I heard in 1993 and what was missed in this throne speech from 1993 the government picked up from the 1997 throne speech and before. It is nothing new.

We continually listen to these things over and over again. They are unfulfilled promises, a pile of rhetoric with no real means of achieving what the government is attempting to achieve. I will give a few examples.

First I would like to call to the attention of all Canadians, and particularly those people who are involved in agriculture, that in this particular throne speech there was one little sentence about agriculture in Canada. Agriculture is one of the most important industries, if not the most important industry. It is certainly one of the largest employers of the Canadian people. It deserves a lot more than one little sentence.

There are difficulties for the agricultural producers, the food supply and other things are happening, but Africa was talked about quite extensively in the throne speech. We have drastic needs throughout the country. In particular, western Canada has such a severe drought. No drought has ever been recorded as being this severe, yet it was not even mentioned in the throne speech, not one little sentence.

Nobody likes to see the suffering that is going on in Africa. It just sickens me when I watch the advertisements by World Vision, Samaritan's Purse and other groups. They are doing their best and they are doing an excellent job. However what we have done is to continually look at refunding, putting in more money and doubling our efforts in terms of money.

If that was the solution the problem should have been solved a long time ago. That has been our answer to their needs for the last 100 years. We have created in those other countries very rich people and extremely poor people. The more money we put into those countries, the larger certain Swiss accounts get for certain individuals, the bigger their palaces are, the better their robes are and the more jewels they have. The rich continue to get richer and the poor continue to get poorer. It is not the answer.

It is not a deficit of the rich and the poor as the Prime Minister has stated. When are we going to recognize that the real deficit in many of those countries is there is no democracy? Democracy does not exist. We are dealing with tyrants and dictators who have no value for the human being whatsoever and our answer is to feed more money to the tyrants and dictators while the poor continually suffer.

If we would wake up and recognize the real deficit that exists in these lands is that there is no freedom, that there is no democracy, maybe we could put a little different spin on our efforts to help those who are suffering so severely. However the throne speech talked about them for all that length of time and had one little sentence about people in our own country who are losing their farms. People are committing suicide. They are going completely bankrupt and are no longer able to fulfill their mission as good farmers because of all the things they have to contend with and we do not even address it even so much as to say small things.

For example, at the end of this month if a fine is not paid by 14 farmers in Alberta they will go to jail. Why will they go to jail? They chose through the Internet to find a niche market and sell their own grain across the border in the U.S. where they received a much better price. They were trying to survive and make a living and that is against the law.

• (1255)

Those farmers broke the law. Thousands of other farmers in Canada are allowed to do that but in western Canada the farmers are not allowed to do that. Let me give a very sad comparison. There are three countries that do not allow farmers to sell their own produce which they work hard to produce. Communist China is one, communist North Korea is another, and dare I say, communist western Canada? I will just say western Canada because it is not that bad yet.

The Address

Western Canadian farmers are in the same category. They cannot sell their barley and wheat without the government's approval through the Canadian Wheat Board, yet it does not apply to thousands of others. Talk about an unfair situation in a free country like Canada. For Pete's sake, when are the Liberals going to wake up over there and realize they cannot treat people like that? If it is good for one farmer in one region, then it has to be good for another farmer in another region.

It seems lately the only people who recognize this are the farmers themselves. A great number of farmers from Ontario and other places worked hard to produce some hay. People did their utmost to get it to the farmers out west to help them with their problem. The government sat idly by watching them do this and then dared to step forward and take credit for what the farmers themselves were trying to do. It is disgraceful.

Regarding child poverty, in 1993 the throne speech said that by 2000, child poverty in Canada would be eliminated. That was the government's promise in the 1993 throne speech. It is now 2002 and it is as bad as it ever was, if not worse. It is empty rhetoric but the government keeps saying it because it sounds so good. Poor old John Q. Public out there who never heard the 1993 throne speech does not realize that this is going on and on and on.

Then we ask why it is not happening. We are a rich country. The revenue that is taken in by the government is huge and it is sufficient to do the job. Is it because fountains need to be put in the Prime Minister's riding rather than take care of some poverty problems in our own country? Is it because contracts are given out to hundreds of people who do not even produce a product for the job they were hired to do, and which the RCMP has to investigate because it sounds so strange? Is it because the \$75 million gun registry, which is now at \$1 billion, is a complete waste of money? It does not fight crime. There is another \$925 million that could have gone to fight poverty.

We could make a list that would go on and on, but the Auditor General did it for us. In the last report she said to the government that she could identify \$16 billion of waste that could have been used for very good purposes like eliminating child poverty, like equipping our military that has the finest men and women we could ever ask for. I have talked to lots of them in the last year, particularly at the G-8 summit where they were so involved in security. They are great people. They deserve better. Canadians deserve better.

The taxpayers of Canada deserve better than what the government has been giving them for nine years. One day the Liberals are going to wake up and realize that we are tired of the same old throne speeches promising the same old things that they never fulfill because they are filling their own egos and so obnoxious that they have to find a legacy for the Prime Minister.

• (1300)

Why does the Prime Minister not work for a legacy that says he was the Prime Minister that addressed the very serious problems that so many Canadians faced? He has not done it today. He has not done it in nine years. He has looked after himself and his colleagues well, and that has to come to an end. The taxpayers of Canada have to wake up. It is time for a change.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is truly both a privilege and a pleasure to speak in reply to last week's Speech from the Throne, which urges Canadians to work together with the federal government to build the Canada we want.

What is most inspiring to me in this visionary document is the fact that it encourages the public to get involved in the Canadian nation building process, thereby recognizing that democracy depends as much on citizen participation as on the underlying social partnerships.

As the Prime Minister indicated, maintaining public confidence does not depend so much on government accomplishments as on what we do together to make Canada stronger and create something lasting for our children.

I am very proud to be part of the Government of Canada, a government committed to ensuring that Canada keeps presenting ever more opportunities for our generation as well as for future generations.

[*English*]

The government presents opportunities grounded in fiscal responsibility that focus on the highest priorities of Canadians and priorities that reflect our common vision for our great country. It is a vision of Canada that fully seizes its potential to change lives and change our future for the better. It is a vision in which all citizens have equal opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social and civic life of the nation. It is a vision that reflects the core values that are at the very heart of what it means to be a Canadian.

The priorities identified in the throne speech are backed by the sound principles of sustainability, inclusiveness and responsiveness and the recognition that there needs to be a balance between passive and active measures as well as a focus on flexibility. Most important, is the commitment to partnership in identifying and building good social policy for our country.

[*Translation*]

The throne speech reinforces our belief that, with the help of our fellow citizens, we can make Canada the country with the best quality of life for all its inhabitants in the 21st century.

This does not mean, however, that we must forge ahead at all costs. The throne speech recognizes the difficult financial times we have gone through in Canada. Our government has worked very hard to put its fiscal house in order and eliminate barriers to economic prosperity.

The fact that our government is able to bring forward balanced budgets speaks volumes. Since 1993, we have balanced our budgets and reduced the debt. More than 2.5 million new jobs have been created, and the number of full time jobs has increased by 21%.

The Address

In addition, Canada will lead G-7 nations in economic growth both in 2002 and 2003. We have clearly demonstrated our ability to manage the economy.

• (1305)

[*English*]

Yet we also know the necessity of social investment that builds for the future. We recognize that governing is not about choosing between economics or people. It is a question of making the right choices in order to build a more inclusive and stronger society.

Canadians can rest assured that the comprehensive and balanced approach outlined in the Speech from the Throne is a recipe for ongoing growth and prosperity. Whatever steps Canadians decide we must take to build the Canadian society we want, we will do it in the context of affordability, focusing on essential and sustainable investments.

[*Translation*]

We know that there is no better investment than taking the necessary measures to ensure that children have the best possible start in life and that their families have the tools they need to provide them with the care they require to meet their needs.

Nothing we do could maximize the enormous potential of our country more than investing in our children. The national child benefit truly reflects the effectiveness of this approach. This program, which is the biggest social policy initiative since medicare was created, seeks to reduce child poverty and support low income families with children whose parents want and need to work.

[*English*]

The program puts extra money into the pockets of low income families every month to help get our children off welfare and ensure that they are healthy, safe and secure so they are able to develop to their full potential. Reflecting on our commitment to sustainability, since the program's creation, we have made significant incremental investments in the benefits moving toward the goal of taking children off welfare.

I am very proud that the 2001 national child benefit progress report confirms that, for the third consecutive year, the percentage of Canadian families with children living on low income has declined. The first report of the NCB, in partnership with the provinces and territories, shows that the number of low income families with children in poverty has decreased by 16,500, and this includes 33,800 children. This decline is expected to continue.

[*Translation*]

However, because the poverty rate remains high, and we are aware of this, too many Canadian children end up with limited opportunities; we know we must do better. For this reason, the Speech from the Throne reaffirmed our commitment to working with our partners to increase investments and help poor families escape the vicious circle of social assistance, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence.

We are committed to ensuring that Canadian children have a good start in life. This will be the objective that the government and its partners will work toward in order to provide a level playing field in

terms of access to learning opportunities and quality day care services, two elements that are particularly important for poor and single parent families.

We will be implementing special measures in order to meet the needs of low income families who have to care for children with a disability, because they are among the most vulnerable members of our society.

[*English*]

We realize that these families face additional costs in providing care, costs that can contribute to a cycle of poverty. The Government of Canada will take steps to relieve this economic hardship by increasing income support for families caring for children with severe disabilities. We will work with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure that these benefits are passed on to low income families.

In the Canada we want, Canadians and their families should be able to care for a gravely ill family member without fear of losing their jobs or incomes. When families are caring for a gravely ill family member, their needs are particularly acute. In recognition of the stresses families face at these times, the Speech from the Throne renews and strengthens our commitment to support Canadians through compassionate care leave. We want them to be able to support a seriously ill or dying child, parent or spouse. This kind of investment represents the best of enduring Canadian values.

I am especially proud of the government's efforts to improve the life chances of aboriginal children. The throne speech sent a clear signal of our resolve to provide young aboriginal Canadians with the tools they need to take advantage of the opportunities Canada has to offer. As the fastest growing population in the country, these youngsters need the skills and knowledge to succeed in the new economy. If we help them achieve that, we will go a long way to addressing Canada's looming skills and labour supply shortages.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

As the Speech from the Throne indicated, we are determined to develop a strategy to remedy the skill and manpower shortfalls that threaten our country, and to take energetic steps to prepare all young Canadians to take advantage of the opportunities our economy will offer them in the 21st century.

We are well aware that we cannot afford to exclude anyone at all at this time in Canada's history, when our greatest comparative advantage lies in our country's human capital. Canada needs the talents and creativity of each and every one of its citizens, and we must take prompt action to ensure their integration.

I am delighted with our commitment to reorient our youth employment strategy. Our plan is to target our programs more effectively and reallocate resources so as to help our young people acquire the skills the jobs of the future will require, while at the same time providing assistance to those who face the greatest barriers to employment.

The Address

[English]

Canada's youth need and deserve the best development and learning possible because we understand that in today's knowledge economy, it is people and their skills that drive innovation, increase productivity and give businesses the edge to stay ahead of their competitors.

[Translation]

If we wish to equip ourselves with world calibre workers who will be at the leading edge of progress on the world economic scene, we need to make Canada a country whose workers will continue to learn new things throughout their entire working lives. The economy of the 21st century will require workers to have the ability to adjust and adapt to change. Skills acquired on the job will play a vital role in this.

That is the reason that our throne speech commits to making changes to the national employment assistance programs and to working along with the various stakeholders and the public to create the skills and learning architecture Canada needs in order to equip itself with a skilled and highly specialized work force. We will report to Canadians on what is working and what is not.

[English]

The Speech from the Throne also commits us to help those Canadians who need to overcome barriers to employment. For example, we will work with the provinces to help Canadians with disabilities gain the skills and confidence and the respect and satisfaction that comes with self-reliance.

I am especially optimistic about our plans to tailor training programs so aboriginal and Inuit people can participate in economic opportunities, such as Voisey's Bay, the northern gas pipelines and other projects throughout Canada.

The economic potential unleashed by these projects will create unprecedented opportunities for aboriginal people who historically have been severely disadvantaged. Equipped with the workplace skills required, these workers will have access to a higher standard of living and quality of life that other Canadians take for granted.

[Translation]

It is also essential to work with our partners across the country to break down the barriers to the recognition of foreign credentials.

Many Canadians do not realize that the majority of newly arrived immigrants in Canada are highly educated and specialized, but they cannot contribute their talents because of a lack of comprehension and because we do not properly recognize the value of what they have achieved in their country of origin.

In 2001, 60% of working age immigrants at landing had a post-secondary degree, compared to about 42% of the Canadian working age population. Yet instead of taking advantage of this talent, we are wasting it. We underutilize the skills and the knowledge these immigrants bring with them, at a time when we are beginning to experience a serious shortage of skilled workers and manpower.

Governments, employers and communities each have an important role to play in helping immigrants fully achieve their

potential and make a full contribution to our country's social and economic life.

• (1315)

[English]

In addition to foreign credential recognition, fast-tracking skilled workers entering Canada with jobs already waiting for them is also a priority, as is more aggressively selecting and recruiting the talented foreign students and skilled workers Canada will need in the years ahead.

The consistent message throughout the throne speech is that the Government of Canada recognizes its responsibility to provide security to our citizens; personal, economic and social security. It goes further, underscoring that good economic policy depends on good social policy. They are flip sides of the same coin.

If we are to count on the next generation to carry on the economic and social progress we have enjoyed in this country so far: we need to invest in children; we need to invest in youth; we need to invest in skills and learning; and we must ensure that nobody is left behind.

[Translation]

However, the throne speech goes further by stressing that the value of economic policies depends on the quality of social policies. These are the two sides of the same coin, so to speak.

Our future labour force, on which our sustained growth will depend, must get all the attention and support it needs, because if we do not invest now, we will not get any dividends later on. People who do not develop fully in their early years or who are confronted by obstacles that prevent them from achieving their full potential are less likely to be successful in their professional life, and this has a negative impact on their quality of life in general. In the end, it is the whole country that pays the price.

It is clearly mentioned in the throne speech that making responsible choices implies a fine balance that requires the contribution and commitment of all Canadians. It is also pointed out that all our decisions on where to invest our resources are based on the principles of sustainability, inclusion, flexibility, accountability and partnership, which are all based on dialogue.

[English]

Let us take the example of the national child benefit. We sat down with our provincial and territorial partners and set out the program's principles together. We built a platform for investment, making the incremental increases we were able to do as a country and reinforcing our commitment to sustainability.

Together we worked to help Canadians understand the direction we wanted to move in, helping them to understand the program, the platform that is there for them to utilize and for us to build upon.

The Address

We not only provide the money to our partners or invest in the services ourselves, we measure the outcomes to ensure we get results. We make every effort to make sure these investments are benefiting all citizens to the degree that we expect. Ensuring everyone has the positive outcome that we are looking for is sometimes a real challenge, which is why it is essential for us to be flexible enough to respond to the unique needs of different Canadians.

We also test the transparency and accountability of our choices. We talk to Canadians about whether we have it right, whether the time is right and if we are fiscally able to make an additional infusion of capital because, at the end of the day, it is up to each of us to decide what kind of Canada we want.

The values and principles articulated in this road map to the future reinforce the reason Canada was the chosen land for generation after generation of immigrants who came to our shores, and I am one of them, from the far-flung corners of the globe.

[*Translation*]

The vision defined in this landmark document helps us better understand why Canada will continue to provide ever greater opportunities to future generations.

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am astounded to say the least by the comments from the member for Laval West. She seems to be proud of and making a big deal about nothing. Coming from Quebec, she should be very familiar with Quebec's special needs, and those of all of the provinces. She spoke about responsibilities, but we all know that it is the provinces that have all of the responsibilities and it is the federal government that pockets the money.

Let us talk about health, education, labour, health, job security, legal assistance to name just a few. She touched on health. Does she know? I think she knows, but she did not say a word to defend Quebecers and not one word about taxation. The federal government made a commitment to contribute 50% for health care; it contributes 14%. The math is simple. Why did she not talk about that? The Speech from the Throne contained not one word about this.

I could talk about employment insurance too, but I am being told that my time is about to run out. There is more than \$40 billion that belongs to workers. As for labour, it is the provinces that are responsible.

What does she think about health care, labour, and the fact that Quebec is losing workers in droves?

● (1320)

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his remarks. However, it is obvious that I do not agree at all with what he just said.

Absolutely, I am proud to be a Quebecker and a Canadian, particularly since I was not born a Quebecker, but became one. When the hon. member tells us that the federal government is pocketing money, it must be remembered that the federal government is not an individual. It is a group of individuals, of which my colleague is a member, since he is among those who were elected to

this august House. The federal government has a responsibility toward Canadians; therefore it does not pocket anything. Rather, it takes the money collected from the public through taxes and other means, and it uses it according to the priorities that I mentioned in my speech.

When I defend the federal government, I defend all Canadians and that includes Quebeckers.

Again, I am proud to be a Canadian and a Quebecker.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with regard to three of the issues raised by the hon. member regarding the Speech from the Throne, the first one concerning the disability tax credit really shows that the government still is not willing to commit it to the document.

We know right now that the Minister of Finance is moving, with his department, to narrow the scope for persons with disabilities to be able to claim this tax credit, literally making it from spoon to mouth in terms of being able to access this small amount of funds which are so vital for their quality of life and, more important, for their subsistence.

Does the hon. member support the narrowing definition that the minister is actually moving toward right now?

The second issue has to do with student debt and the situation of our youth who are attending university. The hon. member noted that their future was vitally important. Right now students who have had access to student loans are coming out of university with debts averaging \$30,000 to \$40,000. Sometimes they leave university at age 22 or 23 with one degree and often need to seek a second degree and come out at age 25 or 26. Sometimes they have to pay off that debt up to ages 35 and 40. I would like to know if the hon. member would agree to lowering that student debt and the interest payments.

The last issue has to do with persons who come to this country to contribute their education, experience and value. Would she agree to eliminating the head tax for new immigrants? That is something that is very regressive. It was introduced by the previous minister of finance. We need to make sure that new immigrants are not introduced to the Canadian culture of debt.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the terms used by the hon. member opposite, who referred to a head tax.

The fact is this is not a head tax at all. I have spoken extensively of how immigration will help us meet the needs in terms of population, since immigrants will be filling the jobs.

At present, the economic situation in Canada is such that jobs are not being filled because individuals meeting the requirements for these jobs cannot be found in the Canadian labour force. The only solution is to increase immigration, while carefully selecting newcomers to ensure they can contribute to our economy and society.

We are not talking about a head tax. We are talking about individuals who want to settle in Canada paying to have us process the application they file when they come here.

The Address

Regarding the student debt issue, I am a member of a government group that is looking very seriously at the issue of post-secondary education and the possibility of working together with ministers not only on reducing the debt load but also on alleviating the situation, so that students would not have to get into debt as much as they currently do.

• (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member made a fair bit of reference to social investments and the economy. Those are nice words but perhaps she could comment on how she might approach this? Increases in the level of CHST transfers are actually less than 1993 levels.

She addressed the child poverty issue with some numbers, something like 33,000. I understand the member for Wild Rose brought up the number of 1.5 million possibly in this category at this point in time. This was also something from the 1993 throne speech. It looks like the number of children who have been helped here are about 2%. Does the member really think that is acceptable after a nine year approach to this. Could she possibly look at the CHST transfers to help the provinces to deal with some of these problems?

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about child poverty nothing is acceptable. It is true that we have not eradicated child poverty as we had hoped we would do. I know that all members in the House, not just those on the government side, want child poverty to be eradicated.

I gave the numbers in my speech a few minutes ago. We have managed to bring down the numbers. We have not managed to get rid of the numbers all together. What I will say is that we are working hard to bring the numbers down even more. Child poverty is very complex because we are not just talking about the poverty of children, we are talking about children being poor if their parents are poor, and very often it involves a single parent family.

We are working, not just on the children themselves but on an economic and social change in our society. This takes a long time and it takes a great deal of investment.

What I can say in answer to the member is that we are working on it. We have managed to bring down the numbers and we will continue to bring down the numbers.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most apropos thing the parliamentary secretary said was that it takes a lot of time. The government has now been in office for 10 years.

With respect to the throne speech, clearly one of the biggest disappointments was the repeated lack of commitment for the Canadian military. We know that we now have subs that will not go down and helicopters that will not go up. We saw the spectacle in Afghanistan of sending soldiers into a combat zone with uniforms that were forest green in a desert.

We know that there are battleships, frigates in the Canadian navy that will be needing refits. There was public speculation by the Minister of Defence himself about the possibility of selling off tanks.

The neglect of the Canadian military is at an all time high. We have heard from Senate report committees. We have heard from the Auditor General. We have heard from Liberal backbenchers. We know that the military from the top brass to the men and women in uniform in the trenches have all been crying out for the government to do something to address the shortcomings that are demoralizing and debilitating the Canadian armed forces.

When will the government step up and do something to protect those in the Canadian military who protect us?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly say that I am no expert on military matters. I must say, however, that I took part in a DND program. I had the honour of working alongside members of the Canadian Forces. I travelled to Bosnia with them.

I was greatly impressed by the fact that our soldiers are not there for war but for peace. My view may differ from that of many members of this House, but it is a great honour for me to know that our troops, and those who were in Bosnia with me, are people who bring peace wherever they go.

Obviously, and I have no objection, we need to provide assistance in terms of budgets, and I hope that we will do so.

• (1330)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and join in this debate. I would like to begin my remarks by thanking my constituents of Portage—Lisgar for their ongoing support and encouragement as I represent their views here, and also thanking my family for their ongoing support, encouragement and love.

I would like to begin by stressing that I am not anti-American. At the same time I resent those, including members of the government, who choose to attack the United States for their own purposes, largely political I am afraid. What concerns me most about the direction that the government appears to be drifting in is that the process of Americanization, year by year, becomes more pervasive in every phase of Canadian life. This can only be addressed from a position of Canadian strength.

For the most part Canadians like Americans, but are also worried about them. American culture, economic and political influences so pervade our way of life that many of us have begun to wonder if our relatively small nation can retain its independence in the face of the strong pressure generated by our giant neighbour. In this love-hate relationship it is important to recognize that Canada will suffer whenever we use anti-Americanism as a cloak for our own ignorance; whenever we use American policies as a scapegoat for our own sins of omission; and whenever we blame American inventiveness and energy for what is our own lack of vision.

The Address

Contempt for articulate American patriotism goes hand in hand with a complete lack of faith in Canada. As I listened to the words in the throne speech I heard little to rekindle such faith. I heard in the words of the throne speech a superficial attempt to speak to the results of internal polls.

There are three major issues that concern me and I would like to address them today.

I want to talk about the issue of ethics. I hear the government talking about ethics. I learned a long time ago that there is a great likelihood that those who talk at length about ethics are probably not as ethical as those who simply behave in an ethical manner. I see a government that unfortunately has confused the best interests of its own party with the best interests of this country, and which seems to believe that if something works for the party's advantage it is worth pursuing.

I see a government that lacks the courage to see the longterm impacts of its decisions because it is unable to overcome the fears it has of losing popular support in the short term. I see a government more concerned with its communication of issues than with the position it takes on the issues themselves. I see a government whose leadership has become less forward looking than it is inward looking.

This concerns me and it concerns a growing number of Canadians for it is in the ethics of a government's leadership that we see the legitimacy of its leadership. I am concerned at the lack of reference to investment and defence in the throne speech, and the relationship which those investments have to our strength as a nation and our relationship with others, particularly the United States.

Coping with the fact of the United States is and always has been an essential ingredient of being a Canadian. It has formed us just as being an island has formed Britain. It is our power to persuade the United States that is of critical importance to us in the world community. It is because of our limited capacities, because of our vulnerabilities, and because of our dominant relationship to the United States that the Canadian government's most potent technique in achieving the objectives of the Canadian people is the use of influence.

We have limited abilities to use other techniques of statecraft such as force, coercion or inducement. Persuasion is perhaps the only technique we have left. In the context of international politics the art of persuading an adversary to move to a position more congenial to one's interest is known as diplomacy. However to suggest that Canadian diplomacy, which has been so much a part of our history, is not imperiled by the frailty of our current defence capabilities or lack thereof is to ignore the realities of today.

As a country we have embraced internationalism. We understand that to be an influential player in the world we need to be multilateral. We need to commit to international institutions. We need to be willing to enter into agreements with other nations. As part of that we need to be willing to enter into commitments with other nations and to use our national resources for the system as a whole. These commitments are fundamental to us fulfilling our responsibilities in the international community, and yet our defence

capabilities have dropped to such a degree that they imperil our ability to fulfill those commitments.

• (1335)

We are, by the nature of a lack of investment and a lack of commitment by the government to our defence capabilities, despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, becoming isolationists. Canadians are not isolationists; we are internationalists. We want to avoid war, we want to avoid conflict, and we seek to achieve those ends by different means than others.

We must accept the argument that peace is indivisible. We understand that the fate of any one state and the peace of the international system as a whole are interconnected, and that as a precept to internationalism we must understand we must make real commitments in the event of military activity if the Liberal government's record has not maintained Canada's contributions to its military, to peacekeeping, and to the other aspects of keeping a real defence in place. This has not been a government enthusiastic for the job as exhibited by its predecessors.

To paraphrase the remarks of one of the country's frontbenchers, the current Minister of Finance, while many others in the international community have stood at the ready, the government has hidden in the washroom. Canadians have no reason to feel as a result of this throne speech that there is a plan to position us more adequately to fulfill our international role in the future or to restore the deteriorating Canadian reputation vis-à-vis the other nations of the world. Most importantly, Canadians have no reason to feel optimistic that the government has an understanding of the need, ethically and practically, to stand strongly for a Canadian vision which will strengthen us in our relationship in the shadow of the world's greatest and only superpower.

The Canadian Alliance has a strategy, which we will pursue and advance, and which will advance Canada as a nation. It is an ethical strategy. It is a forward looking one and it is courageous. I for one would rather be attacked for such courageous strategies and ideas, and for advancing them than I would ever wish to remain, as it appears the government is content to do, popular in the absence of such strategies and in the absence of any vision.

Failing to learn from one's mistakes is a recipe for eternal frustration. The throne speech left many Canadians, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, very frustrated. For 25 years increasingly large amounts of money have been thrown at aboriginal problems raising the level of frustration incredibly high. On a per capita basis the federal government now dedicates more than eight times as much to aboriginal-specific programming as it did three decades ago. Welfare dependency and the associated problems of poor health, low levels of educational attainment, involvement in criminal activity and suicide, especially among young people, show no signs of abating. Last week's throne speech promised, unbelievably, more of the same.

This is hardly a compassionate approach. Increasing spending on failed old billion dollar band-aid approaches shows a miserable lack of genuine caring. Longterm solutions can only result if we pursue major reforms which empower aboriginal communities by empowering aboriginal people. To arrive at the answers we must ask the right questions.

The Address

The government promises more funding, for example, for the aboriginal head start program in answer to the question: How can we help poor preschool children on Indian reserves? That is a good question and it seems logical enough. However, did the government consider for a moment another question such as: What steps can we take to encourage economic development on reserves and reduce the number of poor children? The government did not ask that question and there is no indication that it has any answer for that problem.

It is similar with other promises that the throne speech makes, such as, "The government will work...to improve educational outcomes". That is a great promise. It has been made before. However it is in answer to a question which logically enough is, "How do we improve educational outcomes?" The Liberals promised to do it. However, the question they do not ask is, "How relevant is education and skill development?", when there are no jobs on most reserves.

All these vague and empty promises beg the question, and aboriginal Canadians are asking it, "If tens of billions of dollars have not made a dent in these problems, why should we believe the government now?" If the trends continue, we will soon be dedicating one of every 10 federal dollars to aboriginal-specific projects. Canadians would not mind that if they saw an end to this mess, but they do not, and they are starting to object. Before it gets uglier, let us cut the spin, and let us talk truthfully about the problem.

• (1340)

Poverty comes from joblessness. Jobs come from capital put at risk. People will not invest in an Indian reserve and they will not risk their capital because they do not expect to make a profit. If profits are not theirs to keep they will not invest. These systems of private ownership and private property do not exist on reserves. Economic climates for job creation do not happen on reserves. Most reserves are still victimized by the high levels of poverty that they have had for years.

It is important to recognize that there is a better way. We will only find that better way if we attempt to address in a real way the root causes of the problems that exist—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt. I have been very indulgent. Questions or comments. The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for stating it so clearly because Canadians coast to coast need to hear that.

I also want the member to help me. I received a letter from friends I made in west Texas two winters ago. Obviously they watch some of the proceedings here. The letter said: "Why do the people in your government say such nasty things about us Americans? We don't dislike you. Please answer our letter".

Could the member tell me how am I to answer that letter?

Mr. Brian Pallister: Mr. Speaker, it is a difficult issue. There is sometimes, within all of us I suppose, an aspect of envy. For some people the way to deal with that is to lash out at those we envy. Politically, it is well known and well understood that many elections have been fought on the basis of what one is against, not what one is for. Governments like to define themselves in this country in ways

that are descriptive of their anger or their lack of concurrence with American positions. This is a tactic which many Canadians see through far better than some of the so-called strategists.

We are in a situation where we are economically interdependent, perhaps more so than ever before. What that spells out to us in this political organization is the importance of strengthening our own capabilities, for example, in defence, trade and economic development, and increasing the strength of the foundation of our tax and regulatory regime in such a way that we can compete, can compete to the advantage of Canadians.

Lamenting the success of our neighbours to the south, or in the absence of any defence capabilities of our own in the real world, we attempt to make foreign policy for the Americans. With all due respect to the great debate we had here over a number of hours last week, American foreign policy is not made here, but Canadian foreign policy is.

It is time we took up the challenge of strengthening our own nation and putting it in a position where its words are amplified and magnified by that commitment we make to be real partners with our neighbours, not just making abundant rhetorical flourishes of a negative nature every time they initiate a project that is very difficult or undertake a decision which is even more difficult.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, during the time that I spent as Indian affairs critic a couple of years ago I had a chance to visit with hundreds of grassroots natives across the country. I spent lots of time in their homes with their impoverishment. The main cry that was coming from these people was that they wanted two things to happen more than anything else. They wanted some democracy in their own reserves and some accountability from their own chiefs.

Could the hon. member tell me what progress he feels the government is making in respect to providing a truly democratic and accountable society on our reserves?

Mr. Brian Pallister: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to pay tribute to the member for Wild Rose. Since I have assumed the position of critic for Indian affairs, I have travelled fairly extensively in the last few months. His name comes up quite frequently in my consultations as somebody who has taken more than an interest in learning about aboriginal people. He has learned firsthand about the circumstances they face, both on and off reserve. I know other members in the House have done the same and I compliment them on that.

I believe the member raises two excellent points. The issue of democracy and how we make democracy work is enormous and we could discuss for hours. However suffice to say, I think aboriginal people are very cognizant that democracy cannot work in the absence of accountability. Nor can it work in the absence of economic freedoms. In other words, we can have a democratic system on a reserve that says everybody can vote, but if the chief and council control the welfare money and where everybody lives, then people will not be inclined to speak up much.

The Address

The system will not work in the absence of economic freedoms. That has come through time and time again. The idea that people could perhaps benefit by having some sense of owning their own house or at least having the sense that they could not be kicked out of it will lead to democratic freedoms. However imposing democratic freedoms and accountability from above never works. It has to come from below, from the real people who are governed. That is what aboriginal people would like us to pursue.

• (1345)

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to rise in this throne speech debate. You and I have been here some time and we have seen a few throne speeches in our day. I was a little surprised to hear this one. In fact, if we just look at the title of it, it is called "The Canada we Want".

I have been a member of the government for nine years. It seems a bit late to me for anyone to say "The Canada We Want". If the government really wanted that Canada, surely to heaven it could have started a few years ago in the very first throne speech that we listened to as the class of 1988, and I came in right behind you in 1989, Mr. Speaker.

It is now nearly a decade later and the government is saying that this is the Canada it wants. It seems to me that the Canada we wanted back when the government came to power in 1993 should now be the Canada we have, maybe putting a few finishing touches on for the Prime Minister's flourish, for his legacy. However it seems to be a little late to admit that this will be the Canada we want.

When I think about the throne speech and the timing of it and of course we were supposed to start on September 18 but the Prime Minister bumped that forward to the 30th, everybody in the country sensed a real feeling of enthusiasm that the Queen would open Parliament. There was all kinds of bantering back and forth about whether she would or would not.

When we think about a Speech from the Throne, there really is only one throne. You are sitting on one, Mr. Speaker, but it is pretty small potatoes. Her Majesty celebrated her 50th this year, as I did on July 1st. She was to be in our country when Parliament opened but it did not happen that way.

There was talk again that it would set a precedent if she opened Parliament. She was here in 1977, and she has done it in other countries in the Commonwealth. I wonder the Prime Minister did not say "Your Majesty, we would be honoured to have you come and open our Parliament", or whether she did not feel comfortable or think it was appropriate, even though she did it before. Maybe she heard some rumblings from this place from some pretty high profile, high powered people that maybe they were not keen on her. I say shame on them.

It is one thing to harbour ill feelings toward the Queen, and I supposed everyone is entitled to that, but it is quite another thing to be so classless as to go on a rant about it when she is in our country. We as Canadians are so horribly polite all the time. Would someone's mother not say "Zip it, she's here, honour her, celebrate her"?

When I think about people with far too high a power going on these silly rants about it, maybe we should not blame her for not being interested, or not tempted, or embarrassed to come and open

Parliament. What a pity and an absolute shame that is. Maybe she did not read it. I do not know.

I am rather keen on the Queen. Her coronation was in 1952, and we both just celebrated 50 years. I have a soft spot in my heart for her. I still cannot imagine anyone being so crass as to carry on the way our Deputy Prime Minister did. He is number two in charge. It is just unbelievable. Yet we have seen her on TV and she is so classy. I am actually sad that it was not her sitting on the throne giving that speech.

The government said it is the Canada we want. It has had almost a decade. It seems to me that the desperation to have a legacy, to say "I did this", is coming a little too close to the surface for our Prime Minister. When he was announcing his parks the other day, he said that he was not looking for a legacy. It is one thing to say it but it is another thing to try prove it by his actions. Sad to say, the Prime Minister, after nine years of inaction, seems to have taken pride in saying that he really has done nothing and that he just manages the place.

Someone asked what he liked about being Prime Minister, saying that he had tremendous influence across the country to accomplish whatever he wanted and that he could put his stamp on it.

• (1350)

He said he liked the job. That is cool but it is not reason enough to have that passion to say that he is Prime of Minister of the country, for what will be a decade by his term is over, while wondering what his legacy will be. It strikes me as kind of pathetic. In fact a lot of the things the government has done strike me as pathetic.

Just imagine the opportunities the Liberals have had to deal with taxes. They say they have cut them, but it has not been great. They say they care about families, but it is still an unbelievably oppressive regime, in terms of families where one of the spouses might want to stay home to raise their kids.

What about crime? I do not think Canadians feel any safer now than they did when the government took office. I do not think they feel more comfortable knowing that everything is well with them.

What about defence ? Billions of dollars have been cut out of defence and our defence has become defenceless. I will make reference later to a few little phrases in the throne speech. That is a sad thing.

I represent many people near the super base of Edmonton. My colleague from my old riding of Beaver River, who is in the Lakeland riding, represents Cold Lake, another enormous military base in Alberta. These people are feeling like the wind has been knocked right out of them. They are feeling defenceless. They will come to the charge. They will do what they can because they are committed, they believe in it, they have a passion for it and they will do everything they can do. However they have not been given the tools. They have not been given the opportunity. They have not given the manpower. They are over-extended and underpaid.

Yesterday in the House I raised the issue of the \$1.5 billion which had been taken out of the funds allocated for equipment to pay the salaries of these people. Yet, time after time, we say they are standing on guard for us, and they are, to the best of their abilities, but it is falling far short.

The throne speech stated:

And the sacrifices that some of our citizens make are deeply appreciated by their country

That is true.

When men and women go to war, they understand the costs and potential costs and what might happen when they go to war. It is sad to say that many were injured. It is sadder yet to say that four did not come home. I paid tribute to those men today. I was at the ceremony just after the four young men were killed. I must say that I cannot remember being at such a moving ceremony in all my years of elected life, plus my life before that. It was very moving. We are willing to make sacrifices.

The Governor General went on to say, on behalf of the one who should have been sitting in the throne:

This kind of contribution...makes us what we are as a nation. It is a very precious life that we share as Canadians. And we must be prepared not only to praise it, but also to make sacrifices for it.

The ultimate sacrifice that those four young men paid is the highest sacrifice one could make for one's country and for one's family. Yet when it comes to valuing our military, the government waxes on about how committed it is. It will put it on paper. However we would really like to see it, and I am sure the military would like to see it, reflected in pride they would like to feel as they do their very level best.

My colleague said that three out of four F-18 fighter jets were not fit to fly at any moment. That is pretty frightening. The military wants to be able to say that it has the manpower and that it will go at it. However it needs the principal and the pay.

Think what our military is doing and what it is prepared to do. Think about the shame the government should feel. The report of the Auditor General, the think tanks of the House of Commons and Senate defence committees and, more specifically, the Conference of Defence Associations, have come out with a stinging, damning indictment of the government, a government that says that everything is under control and going really well.

● (1355)

We must think about what actually is going on, about the people studying behind the scenes and meeting with real military people. It is important for them to know they have a government that stands behind them, not one that says it wants another paper, another review or that it needs to consult some more. The studies that have come out one after the other are embarrassments of what the government's pathetic legacy is for Canada's military.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton North was so uncharitable. The least she could have done was damn the Prime Minister with faint praise but there was no praise whatsoever.

S. O. 31

We on this side will recall that the Prime Minister was the one who brought in the clarity bill, and that, I do believe, is indeed a legacy for the Prime Minister insofar as it was an enormous contribution to national unity.

I have a question for the member for Edmonton North. She said in her remarks that the person who should have been in the chair during the Speech from the Throne was not there. If I recall correctly, the Queen was invited to read the Speech from the Throne but she declined.

Does the member for Edmonton North think that was an appropriate response from Buckingham Palace?

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I suppose I appreciate that he has called me not very charitable. I am sure he has called me worse the odd time, in fact, who knows when?

The member talked about the clarity bill and the fact that I should have heaped praise upon the government for the clarity bill. Maybe I should have because it was taken out of our new leader's handbook. He actually wrote the clarity bill many years ago and the Prime Minister finally figured out that it might even be a legacy so he had better snag on to it. It took him awhile but he did get around to it.

The member said that the Queen was invited give to the throne speech but she declined. Can anyone blame her? Who knows why she did not come? I do not know all the machinations and I dare say the member for whatever it is probably does not know all the reasons either. However I think she should have been here.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE CENTRES

Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has proven its commitment to research and innovation. Yet, we need to do more if we are going to reach the next generation of scientists.

The Canadian Association of Science Centres has many innovative ways of reaching our nation's children using science centres across the country. It is asking the federal government to make an investment of \$25 million annually so that it can reach more budding scientists.

I invite all members of the House to support this proposal by the Canadian Association of Science Centres. Let us give the youth of tomorrow the tools they need to keep this country in the forefront of innovative societies.

* * *

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate National Family Week. A study of history will reveal the crucial importance of strong families to the survival of nations.

S. O. 31

A child's nurture and development are best achieved in the context of a loving family.

The Canadian Alliance is the only party with a family issues critic and a commitment to evaluate the family impact of each and every piece of legislation.

We are committed to the strengthening of the family through tax reduction and tax reform. We will continue to push for a universal child deduction for all families with children and uphold the traditional definition of marriage. We will continue to advocate for the concept of shared parenting after parental divorce, while keeping the best interests of both parents and children in mind. We will continue to press for strong measures to protect children from prostitution, pornography and pedophilia. We will continue to push to raise the age of consent to at least 16.

The government poorly serves the family. The Canadian family needs the Canadian Alliance alternative.

* * *

• (1400)

[Translation]

LEAHY ORCHARDS

Mr. Serge Marcil (Beauharnois—Salaberry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Leahy Orchards, a company in Franklin Centre, in my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry, has gained particular distinction at the latest awards gala for new Canadian products, organized by the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors.

The company earned first prize for its natural Applesnax brand of applesauce, in apple-strawberry and apple-peach flavours. It is worth pointing out that this applesauce is totally additive free and has no added sugar, making it ideal for diabetics.

This honour reflects the team efforts of a group of dedicated people. My congratulations to President and CEO Michael Leahy for this success, and my greetings to the company founder, James Leahy.

* * *

[English]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what opponents of the Kyoto accord are saying, its ratification offers Canadians advantages and opportunities: one, to become more energy efficient and less energy wasteful; two, to make Canada more competitive and more productive; three, to make non-renewable fuel reserves last longer; four, to develop renewable sources of energy; five, to remove unwarranted tax subsidies to the oil sands and nuclear industry; six, to improve air quality; seven, to protect the polar ice caps; eight, to reduce the rising sea levels; nine, to moderate weather extremes, frequent droughts and forest fires; ten, to be a good team player on the global scene; eleven, to shoulder with other countries the short term burdens that go with the ratification of Kyoto.

For these reasons, today the majority of Canadians support the ratification of the Kyoto agreement.

EXPORTER OF THE YEAR

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ZENON Environmental Inc. of Oakville, Ontario has been awarded the 2002 Canadian Exporter of the Year award.

Founded in 1980 by Dr. Andrew Benedek, ZENON is winning over environmentalists and investors alike with its advanced membrane products and services that improve the safety and quality of water and waste water.

Over the past three years the company has penetrated new markets in Asia, Australia and eastern Europe, establishing thousands of installations in over 30 countries while helping to safeguard the world's water supply but being virtually ignored in Canada until the Walkerton tragedy.

I have had the pleasure of touring the Oakville headquarters and talking with Dr. Benedek. I would like to add my personal congratulations on a job well done.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2002

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day 2002 will be the second since the tragic events of September 11. Canadians are now more aware of those who have paid the supreme sacrifice in war which has resulted in over 100,000 Canadian fatalities.

I will reintroduce my private member's bill asking that all flags on government buildings be flown at half-mast each Remembrance Day. Today only one flag, the one on the Peace Tower, is lowered to half-mast on November 11.

I plead with the Minister of Veterans Affairs to order all flags on all federal buildings to be flown at half-mast each November 11, and particularly starting this year. This would be in keeping with the new mood of Canadians who truly remember the great sacrifices made.

What an opportunity for Parliament to promote and implement this symbolic act which I believe truly reflects the sentiment and the mood of Canadians everywhere.

* * *

ALS SOCIETY OF CANADA

Mr. Joe Fontana (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge today the important contribution of the ALS Society of Canada and to offer my congratulations for its very successful second annual Walk to D'Feet ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Over 7,000 individuals, families and friends in 27 communities all across this great country participated in a walk in September and raised more than \$1 million. In my community of London, Ontario, over 800 people walked and raised over \$160,000. My thanks go out to Dora Redman and Jane Engels.

ALS is a rapidly degenerative neuromuscular disease that kills two or three Canadians a day. Approximately 2,000 Canadians suffer from this illness. The ALS Society provides support for research and support to ALS partners to help them provide quality care for those affected by ALS.

I would like to congratulate all those people associated with the ALS Society for their hard work and contribution to our nation.

* * *

• (1405)

[Translation]

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I was involved in a “jail or bail” style fundraising activity organized by the Côte-de-Beaupré chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society. As you can all see, after a mock trial I was sentenced to shave off my hair.

I went along with this because it afforded me an opportunity to show solidarity with cancer patients, who sometimes lose their hair during chemotherapy. Having lost people dear to me to this insidious disease, I of course took part and was able as a result to raise \$7,000 for research.

My congratulations to the organizers, Martin Roy and Gilbert Blouin, and my thanks to all who donated money to this cause. Thanks to their generosity, research can reduce the incidence of cancer and the rate of mortality from this disease.

Let us show our support for cancer patients by extending a helping hand and opening our hearts to them. By so doing, we can help them win their difficult battle.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 25, the pilot project for mothers on preventive withdrawal began.

This project will allow pregnant women who opted for preventive withdrawal to decide if they want to collect partial employment insurance benefits while they receive CSST benefits. Those who choose not to receive partial EI benefits may be eligible for a longer maternity and parental leave.

The purpose of this pilot project is to remedy a situation that prevents some women who receive preventive withdrawal benefits from receiving their full maternity and parental leave benefits when they are receiving partial employment insurance benefits at the same time.

The Government of Canada wishes to ensure that all Canadian mothers have full access to maternity and parental leave. This project

demonstrates our renewed commitment to supporting Canadian families.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last night's emergency debate on the drought in western Canada was drowned out by rhetoric. Liberal statistics flew high, wide and handsome, muddying the verbal waters to the point of losing all sight of the farmers who are trying to keep body and soul together.

The Minister of Agriculture is trying to pull the wool over farmers' eyes by claiming that the recently announced agricultural policy framework will provide farmers with over \$1.1 billion of federal money per year over the next five years. It is not true.

Once the minister's temporary bridge funding runs out next year, farmers will be receiving less than \$700 million a year through the agricultural policy framework.

This is a cut in support. It is time that the minister came clean with farmers and quit playing his shell game. Farmers have the right to know that they will be receiving less money under the APF than they are right now.

The only thing missing last night was the Canadian Wheat Board minister coming in and explaining his statement that farmers would be receiving \$15.2 billion in agricultural policy framework funding.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since its inception in 1987, ACOA has played a significant role in the Atlantic Canadian economy. This agency provides valuable assistance to Atlantic businesses.

As the agency's 2001 performance report recognizes, ACOA assisted firms have consistently out performed non-ACOA assisted firms in the Atlantic provinces in productivity growth: 15.7% compared to 10.5%.

Research indicates that between 1987 and 1997, every \$1 of ACOA spending generated \$5 of GNP impact. This does not take into consideration other newer programs, such as the \$700 million Atlantic investment partnership that was launched in 2001 to encourage innovation and R and D in the Atlantic provinces.

Atlantic Canada needs its regional development agency. Atlantic Canada needs to share more in national programs.

ACOA has played an extremely important role in rural communities and regional development in general for Atlantic Canada and deserves recognition for a job well done.

S. O. 31

MIDDLE EAST

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, "A time comes when silence is betrayal... We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision".

These words of Martin Luther King in the context of the Vietnam war surely apply to Canada's shameful silence today in the face of the spiralling death toll in Israel and in the occupied territories.

The targeting of civilians, whether by tanks and helicopters or by sniper and suicide bombings, constitutes an attack on basic human rights and must be unequivocally condemned. Or have we become utterly desensitized to the unending carnage of innocent civilians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Canada must find the courage to speak the truth: that we need a renewed commitment to peace, achievable only upon the immediate end to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. Peace will come only when Israelis and Palestinians negotiate a means whereby each can live safely and securely within their respective borders.

Canadians are watching. The world is watching. When will Canada make its voice heard?

* * *

•(1410)

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has pointed out that despite the fact that the federal government decided last year on an action plan to solve the problem of social insurance cards, nothing has happened except that the situation gets worse by the day.

This is the great government that claims to protect Canadians from terrorists by passing bills on security in Parliament to collect information and data. Meanwhile, just managing social insurance numbers seems to be a major challenge.

How is it possible that it could be so incompetent as to have five million too many cards in circulation, or to have sent 225 cards to the same address? In terms of incompetence, this takes the cake.

Those who still believe that Ottawa knows best will have to rethink their position. The management of social insurance cards demonstrates yet again how incompetent this government really is.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year 67,000 Canadian women are diagnosed with cancer. Cancer and its treatment can be devastating, not only in terms of the illness itself but due to the side-effects of treatment such as hair loss, weight loss and skin disorders, which can compound the despair and depression that affect patients' self-esteem and ability to cope.

The Look Good...Feel Better program, co-sponsored by the Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association, is a free

national program to teach women techniques to ameliorate these side-effects.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of this program, the Look Good...Feel Better workshop on wheels travelled across the country to raise awareness and pay tribute to the thousands of Canadian volunteers who help make it a success. The volunteers are in Ottawa for two days. I encourage all members to wear the commemorative pin and join the volunteers this evening in Room 200, West Block, to celebrate this program.

I wish to congratulate the Look Good...Feel Better team on 10 years of success and to thank them on behalf of Canadian women.

* * *

MEMBER FOR OTTAWA SOUTH

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is scheduled to be the official escort to Her Majesty the Queen when her royal tour brings her to the nation's capital, this notwithstanding that on Friday last he told reporters in Montreal that he favours severing all ties with the monarchy after the Queen's reign ends.

By my count, the Deputy Prime Minister has sworn an oath of loyalty and service to Her Majesty no fewer than four times in the last two years, yet he has used his position as a minister of the Crown as a podium from which to rail against our history and our heritage. The minister says that instead of the monarchy he would prefer an entirely Canadian institution, but he fails to recognize that the monarchy is as Canadian as the House of Commons itself.

I pray that the Deputy Prime Minister will apologize to the Queen when he hosts her. In fact, he should go to the Prime Minister and say that he should not be her host and that the Prime Minister should put someone else in his position when the Queen comes to Ottawa.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ATHLETES FORUM

Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to recognize the impact of the Athletes Forum held in Quebec City from September 27 to 29.

With more than 120 delegates in attendance, including the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport, it is the largest annual gathering of Canada's national team athlete representatives.

The forum provides Canada's high performance athletes with an opportunity to network with others, share ideas, learn about the sport system and develop leadership skills.

The Government of Canada is proud to have supported such a major event, and I congratulate all those participants who contributed to the success of this gathering.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

•(1415)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today the Conference of Defence Associations released a damning report on the deterioration of Canada's military. Among other things, the report states that up to half the army's weapons and vehicles could be grounded within 18 months and, some time after that, Canada's navy will no longer have the capability for an international presence in multilateral operations.

Why, at a time when our allies in the world community contemplate possible action in Iraq, has the government put the very existence of our military at risk?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the last three years we have increased the budget very substantially for the Department of National Defence.

A few months ago we had our troops in Afghanistan, with compliments coming from all the participants there about the Canadian soldiers, and the way that they were equipped was completely satisfactory. We are always following this situation closely. We have increased the budget in that last three years. We hope to be able to do the same thing in a reasonable way in the years to come.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, these increases were so inadequate that we had to pull out of Afghanistan before the war was over.

The government's neglect is making us ever more dependent on our allies. Canada requires foreign transport to get troops and equipment to international theatres. We even rely on American transport to transport our troops to domestic trouble spots such as the Manitoba flood or the Quebec ice storm.

How will the government ensure Canadian sovereignty and ensure that we are not completely dependent on our American neighbours for foreign and domestic military matters?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read what General Tommy Franks, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Central Command, said about our troops during the Afghanistan campaign:

As I look across the forces which have been provided by Canada... it touches every aspect of our business. We think about the naval forces... We look at the air forces... We look at special operation forces of Canada... We look at Princess Patricia Light Infantry and the remarkable job they have done.

I could go on and on.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that observation was made about our troops. It was not made about the support the government gives them.

On military matters, let me turn to today's Auditor General's report. The Auditor General told us that the government broke every rule in the book to award a sole source flight training contract to Bombardier. Not only was the contract sole sourced, but Bombardier provided less than half the training required under the contract.

Oral Questions

How can this kind of waste be justified when the military is so starved for resources?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have established in Moose Jaw is a great success. More and more countries are using it at this time.

Perhaps I can say to the Leader of the Opposition a quote from the member for Edmonton North who stood in the House in 1996 and said on May 6, "I attended a supper", blah, blah, blah, and:

They are studying the possibility of awarding a 20-year contract to Canada as NATO's flight training location.

She finished:

—we are convinced that our program could beat it out by a country mile.

It was the member for Edmonton North talking about—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert.

* * *

SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBERS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General says today that there are 5 million more social insurance cards out there than there are Canadians. One household has 225 cards which the government knows about and the department has not even bothered to investigate.

My question for the minister is, since social insurance numbers are an easy way to defraud the taxpayer of hundreds of millions of dollars, why did she not act when the issue was first raised four years ago?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been acting. Indeed, I welcome the recommendations of the Auditor General and agree with them.

Post-September 11 we are living in a different world and as such we need different measures. That is why today we have announced that effective today we will only accept original documents for applicants for the social insurance number. If a social insurance number has not been used in the last five years, it will be deactivated. I am seeking regulatory authority to put an expiry date on the 900-series social insurance numbers.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Too little and too late, Mr. Speaker, because up until today one could still get a birth certificate from the Internet and send it in and get a social insurance number. That was condemned by the Auditor General four years ago.

The Auditor General reported that illegal immigrants and bogus refugees are still working the system and still living in Canada by defrauding the government through abusing social insurance numbers. Since September 11 we have known that loose security and loose borders leave us wide open to terrorism.

My question: Why has the minister waited for over four years to close these loopholes and protect our citizens?

Oral Questions

● (1420)

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General talks about the progress that we are making. On the contrary, in the year 2000 the then Auditor General recognized that the strategies we were undertaking were the right ones, but today is a different world and as such I have announced new measures that I believe Canadians will accept.

* * *

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources will soon announce the federal plan to help the softwood lumber industry. For over six months, the Bloc Québécois has been asking for a plan that should, of course, include measures to help workers, but also small sawmills and other businesses affected by the softwood lumber crisis.

Could the Prime Minister tell us if the federal plan will deal with all these areas, that is workers but also businesses such as small sawmills?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Minister of Natural Resources will present the government's position this afternoon, in Vancouver. We intend to help the communities affected by the illegal action taken by the United States.

We also intend to ensure that our forest industry is competitive, both here and around the world.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it would have been a good idea to make the announcement here in the House. We must rely on leaks to get our information. It appears that only an amount of \$61 million, over a three year period, is going to be earmarked for workers, through the employment insurance program.

Will the Prime Minister admit that \$20 million per year is very little, considering that, in Quebec alone, thousands of workers are affected by the softwood lumber crisis? In fact, \$20 million is half as much as what the federal government is spending each year on sponsorships, mostly in Quebec, by the way.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not the first time that concrete and important measures are announced for the forest industry. We have already announced some \$90 million in funding. Today, the government will announce that about \$250 million will be allocated to the forest industry to help the communities affected and to ensure that this industry remains competitive, here in Canada.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, thousands of workers have lost their jobs in the softwood lumber industry, mainly in regions like Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, the North Shore, Abitibi, la Mauricie and eastern Quebec. Thousands of families have been directly affected by this crisis.

How can the government settle for such limited measures to help workers and their families, when really the whole issue of eligibility for employment insurance and the period of the benefits is what should have been reviewed in light of the drastic cuts this government has made to the employment insurance program since 1995?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the hon. member that the employment insurance system is working very well for workers in the softwood industry. I can also confirm that there is more that will be announced in a package in the very near future.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no doubt the minister believes in urban legends and thinks that everything is hunky-dory when it comes to employment insurance for softwood lumber workers.

Why has the government, after withdrawing several billion dollars from the employment insurance fund every year, not decided to make a bigger effort by targeting the regions that have been hit directly and re-establishing benefits, at least for the duration of the softwood lumber crisis?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an average of \$450 million goes to softwood or forestry workers through the employment insurance system every year.

Recognizing that we need to do more on the fact that we have this trade dispute, the government will do more. The hon. member will see what those initiatives are in the near term.

* * *

● (1425)

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Two hundred days it took, 200 days since the U.S. commerce department announced the punishing duties on softwood lumber. That is 200 days of inaction before the government finally introduced today's pathetic aid package for forestry workers, their industry and their communities. Months ago, the NDP set out a comprehensive plan.

Today's package will not make a dent in the problems being faced by 45,000 forestry workers and their families. How can the government not see that this package is too little, too late?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is entirely characteristic of the leader of that party that she would rise to denounce roundly a plan that she has not yet read.

Apart from that, I should point out that over the course of the last 200 days the Minister for International Trade has worked continuously to bring the Americans back to the table. He has worked with the forestry sector and provincial governments to right this wrong that has been done to Canada and its workers. Today's plan is the second step we have announced. We have already put \$90 million into important measures to help improve the competitiveness of the industry in Canada.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this inexcusable delay in the softwood lumber package has resulted from a bitter battle between federal and provincial Liberals. Who has paid the price, Mr. Speaker? I will tell you who. The hard-pressed forestry workers and their communities right across the country.

Once again Canadian workers are being punished for internal Liberal Party politics. Where is the fairness in that?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about things that are completely irrelevant to the package being announced today.

Today we are focusing on what is needed for communities, what is needed for workers and, frankly, what is needed in the long term to ensure our forestry sector can continue to sell products around the world without these illegal American actions. Opening new markets, creating new products, retraining, research and development, and support to communities; those are the principal elements of this package of which we are very proud.

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GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General pretends that his untendered contract with his official agent is simple and straightforward. The ethics counsellor reports that he and three other officials have not been able to get the information they need, so he is off to P.E.I. This is the same ethics counsellor who was able to judge the former defence minister in just 24 hours.

What is so complicated about the Solicitor General's case? Is information being held back in Ottawa? Have documents disappeared? Or, has the ethics counsellor been instructed to delay his report until after Parliament rises for a week on Friday?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor is doing his job. He decided to go to P.E.I. I have not talked to him.

I would like him to make his report today. We want to know all the facts. The minister has given excellent explanations to the House of Commons. The report will come and we will deal with it, but he will make his report when he is ready.

I have not asked him for anything but to do it as quickly as possible—well, not me, because I have not talked to him—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: No, I have not talked to him. If I had talked to him I would have said that I wanted the report yesterday.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can talk to him when he is homeless.

Oral Questions

During earlier investigations, the ethics counsellor did not feel obliged to travel to Denmark or even to Shawinigan. Why is he taking the unusual step of moving his investigation to Prince Edward Island? Is he investigating more than just the untendered contract between the Solicitor General and the firm of his former official agent?

Specifically, has his investigation broadened to include either the grant to the college where the Solicitor General's brother is president or to contracts awarded to companies owned or controlled by Tim Banks, the President of the Liberal Party of P.E.I.?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I see the leader of the fifth party I know why he is there. The more one throws mud, the more ground one loses. He is losing ground every day.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the softwood industry has been calling for \$400 million in assistance, and labour has been calling for an additional \$300 million. The government has fallen far short by announcing \$247 million, and it has failed to talk about the loan guarantees at all.

How does the government expect lumber companies to continue to pay 27% in duties until this is resolved in a year or two from now without a real package on the table and without talking about the loan guarantees?

● (1430)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this package has been prepared to provide assistance to communities and to workers, but at the same time to keep in mind the international law that applies so that we are not in a position where the Americans retaliate. We have been careful to design a program which is entirely consistent with international trade law.

It is designed to help the workers affected, to help communities affected, and to ensure that there are investments in research and development of new products and new markets so that we have a sector in the future that is competitive and successful.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it has been five years, a long time coming, and the government has announced nothing. By tabling a package without mentioning the loan guarantees the government is not addressing the problem at all.

Will the Minister of Industry tell the House and British Columbians precisely what he will do, what he is putting on the table, and why he has not done anything to address the concerns about the loan guarantees?

Oral Questions

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the details are quite clear. They are being announced this afternoon. There is \$71 million to help workers themselves, \$110 million for communities affected, \$40 million against the mountain pine beetle which has been such a scourge for the industry, and additional money for research and development.

As to loan guarantees, we have not ruled out the possibility. We will continue to look at the situation and respond as required. For the moment, this package will make a measurable difference in the lives of those affected and in the future of the industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the softwood lumber crisis, the problem for small sawmills is sustainability, getting through the crisis and still being there when the trade dispute is settled.

How does the government think the small sawmills, which are concentrated in the regions of Quebec and are affected by the crisis, will be able to survive without financial assistance from the federal government when, according to the Minister of Natural Resources himself, this crisis will last another two years?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, a program designed to help the workers and the communities affected was announced. To avoid complex problems with the U.S., we must take the principles of international law into consideration. We have respected these principles and are confident that the program we have announced today will help communities and individuals alike.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has always argued that financial assistance to small businesses would be contrary to WTO rules.

Why did the government turn a deaf ear to the Quebec government's proposals, which would have made it possible to provide assistance to businesses, yet avoid problems with WTO rules?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we carefully reviewed all the proposals put forward by the Government of Quebec and other participants in our consultation process, but we presented those elements announced today, having concluded that they are appropriate and efficient.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, by saying that David Nicholson did the work and by stressing that the contract was with a firm and not an individual, the minister is suggesting that his good friend Everett Roche did not receive any financial benefit in any way, shape or form. That is wrong. Mr. Roche is a partner and thereby benefits from all work that is received by the firm.

My question is for the Solicitor General. Why did the minister's friend receive a benefit from the Solicitor General's department?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware I issued a

statement last week. I indicated that the contract was issued according to Treasury Board guidelines. It was publicly posted.

It was awarded to a firm as my hon. colleague has indicated and not to an individual as he said many times. In fact, this contract was given according to Treasury Board guidelines.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as a senior partner in that same firm Mr. Roche benefits from any dollars that are received by the firm for any work, whether it is a \$140,000 contract or a bake sale in the front lobby.

I ask the minister again: Why did he break the rules by conferring a financial benefit on a close political friend?

• (1435)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is not correct. The fact of the matter is that this contract was given according to Treasury Board guidelines. Mr. Wilson is evaluating the situation. He is reviewing it and will give his report in due course.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the softwood lumber crisis lasts two years, as the Minister of Natural Resources says, it is inevitable that a sizeable number of small regional industries are going to become even more vulnerable to buyouts by major U.S. companies.

How can the federal government and the Minister for International Trade ignore this phenomenon, which is likely to worsen as a result of pressure from economic interests, the stumpage fees and the strong American dollar?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the measures announced today will assist individuals and communities.

It is our intention to continue to monitor the situation in future and to adjust the measures accordingly.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, right from the start of the softwood lumber crisis we were aware that, legally speaking, Canada had every chance of coming out on top in this trade war with the United States. There has been a concern right from the beginning, however, that the Americans were just trying to buy time so that they could get rid of the competition by the time the dispute was settled, predicting that no assistance for businesses in this sector would be forthcoming.

Is the federal government not shirking its responsibilities by leaving these lumber companies to fend for themselves and thus walking right into the trap set by the Americans?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques echo the optimism we have always shown when before the courts.

Oral Questions

We are well aware that the Canadians have a strong and solid case. We made it through the first hurdle in July with the WTO panel, which found in Canada's favour. I think Washington got the message.

That is why we at International Trade are engaged at the present time in trying to regain some of the initiative. Specifically, what we are going to do is to try to see, in light of the present circumstances, what U.S. law would allow. If circumstances change, the program might change accordingly.

Our approach is working. We are challenging them in court and at the same time holding discussions with a view to improving the situation and speeding up resolution.

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[*English*]**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General has been beating a path to the back door. If he has nothing to hide, I wonder why he is hiding.

Everett Roche, the minister's two time official agent and a partner in the firm that he hired to give him strategic advice, as a partner, gets a cut of whatever contract comes through the door.

Why did the minister's friend and two time official agent receive a financial benefit from this department?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times I have to tell my hon. colleague that this contract was given according to Treasury Board guidelines. The fact of the matter is that it was publicly posted and my hon. colleague is fully aware that it met Treasury Board criteria.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister has never told us what criteria were met. Partnership agreements, depending upon how the business is structured, give the principals anywhere from 5% to 30% of the business its employees do.

My question is really simple. How much of the \$140,000 contract from the minister's office went to his buddy Everett Roche?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said to my hon. colleague many, many times in the House, this contract was not given to an individual. It was given to a firm.

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[*Translation*]**FRANCOPHONIE SUMMIT**

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Francophonie Summit will be held next week, from October 18 to 20, in Beirut, Lebanon. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for La Francophonie will be in attendance to represent the interests of Canadians on that occasion.

Could the hon. Secretary of State tell us what the stakes and objectives of Canada will be at the summit?

● (1440)

Hon. Denis Paradis (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me first remind hon. members that Canada ranks second among partners in La Francophonie worldwide. One of the themes of the summit in Beirut will be "Dialogue of Cultures", a very important theme, especially one year after the events of September 11. Another theme will be youth, to follow up on the Moncton Summit. We will also talk about democracy, good governance and human rights.

We will also have the opportunity to discuss the new partnership for the development of Africa. The Prime Minister will have a chance to raise the awareness of our G-8 partners. The summit will provide a golden opportunity to reiterate our pride in being francophones.

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[*English*]**HEALTH**

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General today issued a scathing indictment of the government's inaction in enforcing the Canada Health Act. Not only does it fail to ensure that the principles of the act are applied, all five of them, but when violations do come to light, it sits on them, the majority for more than five years.

This issue is not about waiting for the Romanow report. It is about enforcing the law of the land. The health minister has a duty to uphold the law and protect medicare. Why is she not doing that?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Auditor General for her report today and her recommendations in relation to compliance activities around the Canada Health Act. In fact, as the Auditor General notes, a number of improvements have been made since the last report in 1999, including a dispute avoidance and resolution mechanism which the provinces, territories and federal government agreed to and which we all believe will enhance compliance activities under the CHA.

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[*Translation*]**WORKING CONDITIONS**

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister knows—at least I hope he does—that during the first session of this Parliament, there was a unanimous recommendation by the Standing Committee on Justice, calling on the government to introduce a bill respecting the accountability of businesses, in order to prevent tragedies like the one at Westray.

[*English*]

Could the Prime Minister tell us why that was not in the throne speech and will he commit to act on that unanimous recommendation in the life of this Parliament?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the hon. member is trying his wings as party leader. That is very good. Obviously, we cannot list every bill in the Speech from the Throne. Workers' safety is an issue that concerns the government. I am confident that, if legislation is required, it will be introduced in due course.

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[English]

SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBERS

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the RCMP arrested 15 people believed to be part of a human smuggling ring.

Last spring we learned that immigration forms were used to procure forged passports for illegal migrants. The Auditor General says that identity fraud is a growing concern. We know that 1.6 million social insurance cards were used by short term visitors, refugee claimants, seasonal workers and foreign workers and that 900,000 have still not been cancelled.

Could the Prime Minister or the minister for public security tell the House if any of the people arrested in yesterday's human smuggling ring were carrying false or not yet cancelled social insurance cards?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to say again to the hon. member that today we have taken specific action to improve the integrity of the social insurance numbers. We will no longer take certified copies of identity proof, rather original documents. We will deactivate social insurance numbers that have not been used in the last five years. We will put expiry dates on the 900 series social insurance numbers.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, the key word she just used was "today". The issue of SIN card abuse was raised four full years ago by the Auditor General.

Today's status report tells us 900,000 horses are out of the barn. There is no comprehensive plan in place to protect Canadians' safety and well-being and the HRDC minister is now scrambling to put forward new measures four years after the problem was flagged and a full year after September 11. It is not as if the minister has not experienced a full on disaster in her department before.

My question is simple. Why the delay: incompetence or neglect?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. I would point out to the hon. member that the Auditor General does talk about progress. I would remind the hon. member that in 2000 the then Auditor General said the measures that we were undertaking were the right ones.

We agree that today is a different day. As such, we will no longer accept copies of information, only originals. As of today we will deactivate social insurance numbers that have not been used in the last five years. As of today, I have asked for regulatory authority to put an expiry date on those social insurance numbers that are issued

to non-permanent residents and non-Canadian citizens. I believe Canadians are ready for these measures today.

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●(1445)

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, many of us here were involved in the battle against the Charlotte-town accord. It has many striking similarities to Kyoto. Both are top down deals made behind closed doors with very little public consultation.

The more Canadians learn about Kyoto, the less they like it. Is that not the real reason the Prime Minister is afraid to release the details?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Kyoto is being debated. We started after Rio talking about the question of climate change. It has been part of the public debate for more than 10 years. After Kyoto we had many discussions. People have raised it. We have been discussing it with the provinces and the private sector for years. There will be meetings with the private sector and the provincial governments in the weeks to come.

However there is a time when Parliament has to make a decision and it will be before the end of the year.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the one group the Prime Minister has forgotten about is the people of Canada. Canadians are now starting to engage and ask questions about Kyoto and what it means to them. Specifically they are asking why we would spend billions of dollars to buy emissions trading credits from countries like Russia when we could spend the money here in a made in Canada solution.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to Canadians, scrap Kyoto and develop a made in Canada plan?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing at this time. We are talking with everybody. We think that it is possible in working together that we will have a plan that will meet the needs of Canada and at the same time respect our international obligation to do something about climate change.

I know why the opposition is opposed to that. The very member said a few months ago "I think if we oppose Kyoto it will help our fundraising".

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during a speech to the American public yesterday, President George W. Bush declared that Iraqi generals could be tried for war crimes if they committed cruel and desperate acts on Saddam Hussein's orders.

Does the Prime Minister agree with President Bush, who would act as judge and jury by determining on his own who should be considered a war criminal?

[English]

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the president has continued to focus on the United Nations Security Council as the proper forum for discussion and debate. He also said and acknowledges as we do that is where the important decision regarding a new resolution will be taken, and it is from that body's actions that decisions will comply.

Our emphasis has always been that it is the Security Council that should be dealing with the Iraqi situation, multilaterally through the United Nations. The obligations of Iraq are to the Security Council. It is that body that should be taking the lead in ensuring the resolution is respected.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the answer should have been as follows: it is not up to the President of the United States to determine who is a war criminal and who is not. That is up to a neutral third party, namely the International Criminal Court.

Will the Prime Minister take advantage of this opportunity to speak to President Bush and ask him to recognize the authority of the International Criminal Court over everyone, including his own generals?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were one of the main powers behind the creation of this international court. We hope that the court will fulfill the role that it must in the future for all countries.

Right now, the Americans do not want to recognize the court, but I think they should reconsider, do as other countries have done and give us the opportunity to have an international court to settle this type of conflict. I think that the treaty offers sufficient protection to the citizens of a country to allow everyone to safely sign it.

* * *

● (1450)

[English]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, recent reports indicate that implementing the Kyoto protocol will inflict serious economic damage. Yet after an extensive search we have found that no studies have been completed to determine Kyoto's impact on agriculture in Canada.

Why is the government moving to ratify Kyoto without knowing the effect it will have on Canadian farmers and farm families?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. The impact of climate change on Canadian farmers will be dramatic. We are seeing this now, in fact, in Alberta where the drought situation has reached crisis proportions and the costs are about \$3 billion.

We are seeing it elsewhere where climates are the result of extreme weather events that are impacting Canadian farmers. The member asked what information there is. I suggest that he look at the table discussions which took place with agricultural producers over three full years.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I remind hon. members that while ministers appreciate help with their answers and other members with their questions, it makes it very difficult for the Chair to hear and I have to be able to hear in case somebody says something out of order. The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has the floor. We need a little order, please.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is rubbish. He would blame the 1930s on climate change.

Four years ago an American study determined that implementing Kyoto would increase farm expenses by up to 32%, depress annual farm income by 24% to 48%, diminish agricultural exports and put farmers out of business. It called the Kyoto protocol the single biggest public policy threat to the agricultural community today.

Why is the government moving to ratify Kyoto when our competitors have determined that it will devastate agricultural economies?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to my feet a little disappointed that the official opposition has been so jeering about the problems being faced by the agriculturalists of Canada at this time by reason of climate change.

True, these effects have been noticeable for some time but it is time they paid some attention to the damage being done to Canadian agriculture by the effects of climate change. I urge the opposition members to take this issue seriously on behalf of their constituents.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, four days ago Pakistan tested surface to air ballistic missiles. That same day India chose to respond by testing a conventional surface to air missile. Today Pakistan has again conducted missile tests.

Could the Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific please tell the House the response to these very disturbing developments?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after Pakistan's test last Friday, Canada expressed deep regret and urged a halt to nuclear development. Today we reiterate that as tensions in the region remain high, these tests are particularly counterproductive and serve only to undermine efforts by the international community to bring a lasting peace.

In the interests of regional and international security, Canada urges both Pakistan and India to de-escalate and resume dialogue immediately.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, an all party parliamentary committee came up with unanimous recommendations that would ease the burden on persons with disabilities in claiming the disability tax credit. The finance minister has ignored most of these recommendations and further angered the disability community in Canada by suggesting exactly the opposite.

Will the minister do the right thing and instruct his department to implement the committee's recommendations and help rather than hurt disabled people in Canada?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is interested in this issue, I am sure he knows that over the period since 1996 the amount of assistance that has been provided to the disabled community in Canada has increased by about 70%.

I am sure that like me he believes the assistance should go to those who are most in need. We look forward to working with him as well as with other members of the House to ensure that as we broaden and deepen access to these funds, in fact those who are most needy receive them.

● (1455)

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my physically disabled daughter who spends a lot of her life in a wheelchair, thanks for nothing, Mr. Minister.

By the way, I am absolutely appalled at our skewed tax laws that allow a businessman to write off 50% of a business lunch while disabled people are only allowed to write off less than 20% on the purchase of wheelchairs. And the finance minister wants to get tougher with people with disabilities, people like my own daughter.

Will he do the right thing and instruct his department to change these oppressive tax laws that hinder disabled people?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I personally object to the suggestion that somehow or other we have attacked the hon. member's daughter.

If there are particular rules that he wishes to question, then I would be happy to take them under advisement, but I think it is important in the House that we not try to personalize these issues.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs is recommending that Canadian citizens avoid travelling to Algeria, "due to continuous terrorist activity in some parts of the country", his colleague, the Minister of Immigration, is standing by his decision to lift the moratorium on removals of Algerian nationals on the ground that "there is no risk to citizens of Algeria who are removed".

How can the minister defend the lifting of the moratorium and explain that, in spite of a bloody civil war that has resulted in over 150,000 deaths, the government is allowing the removal of people who have been here for years, while their children, who were born in Canada, could, in principle, remain here?

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her very important question.

First, the purpose of lifting the moratorium is to regularize the system. Canada has no plans for a mass deportation, but it also has no plans to grant a general amnesty. Each case is different and must be reviewed with compassion and on humanitarian grounds. We will make decisions so as to properly deal with each case.

However, we also have a duty to implement a sound system that will allow us to strike a balance between vigilance and openness.

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[English]

ONTARIO HYDRO

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the finance minister.

The finance minister will know that Ontario residents are paying off more than \$17 billion of Ontario Hydro's bank loans through a debt retirement charge on their hydro bills.

Why will the finance department collect more than a billion dollars in GST simply because Ontario Hydro went into debt?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I will endeavour to obtain an answer for him and provide it to him in writing in due course.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we recently learned that several international agencies and organizations stipulate English as a first language as a condition of employment, rather than asking for a good knowledge of that language.

What concrete and quick action does the minister responsible for official languages intend to take to put an end to the discriminatory practice of certain international organizations to which Canada makes a financial contribution, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Tourism Organization and the NATO parliamentary assembly, which stipulate English as a first language as a condition of employment?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for pointing this out. We will look into the matter.

It is somewhat inevitable that English is the required language when one works at the international level. However, Canada has responsibilities toward the French language and I will look into the issue raised by the hon. member.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government is intentionally ignoring the fact that it is impossible to discriminate in favour of someone on the basis of race without unfairly discriminating against someone else because of their race. Doing so is racist.

The Liberals' embracing change program imposes a race based hiring quota on the federal civil service. Skin colour and ethnicity have replaced merit as the hiring criteria for jobs within the federal government.

Since the vast majority of Canadians oppose affirmative action programs and the Canadian Alliance is too spineless to raise the issue, I will ask. Why is the government imposing a racist hiring quota?

• (1500)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really unbelievable what I am hearing here today.

We want a public service that represents the population of Canada.

On the contrary, we decided not to have a quota system that would be mandatory and arbitrary. We decided to have a target system and it is not contrary to the merit principle. This is the first merit principle, but we should have a diverse public service.

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CANADA-U.S. BORDER CROSSINGS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian citizens travelling to the United States with a Canadian passport are being subjected to racial profiling.

Citizens from my riding of Windsor West have been stopped at the border, detained for as long as two hours, fingerprinted and photographed both when entering the U.S. and again when returning to Canada. All this was based solely on racial origin and country of birth, and they are Canadian citizens now.

Points of Order

Will the Prime Minister commit today to intervene with his friend, George W. Bush, to defend the rights of Canadian citizens and put an end to the racial discrimination that is happening?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the tragic events of September 11 of last year, both Canada and the United States have not only been on the highest state of alert but we have also enacted joint smart border initiatives.

I can tell the member opposite that the goal is to have a safe, secure and efficient border.

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POINTS OF ORDER

SOFTWOOD LUMBER ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we had a good example of what is wrong with the government's attitude toward Parliament. We were asking questions of some members of Parliament about the announcement that was made in B.C. with respect to softwood lumber and we were criticized for not having read the announcement. It seems to me that this would have been a perfect opportunity for the government to show some respect for Parliament by making that announcement here in Parliament in the form of a ministerial statement. That would have been the least the government could have done in order to show respect for Parliament and parliamentarians.

Instead, we were reduced to asking questions about a document that we had not seen, which, if the government had any respect for Parliament, we would have seen. We would have had it in the form of a ministerial statement and opposition spokespersons would have been able to reply to something that would have been given to them in advance.

Instead, the minister made the announcement to the media, once again showing disregard for Parliament and the democratic process after we had a throne speech in which the government talked about showing more respect for Parliament and democracy and all that rhetoric.

When it comes down to it the government does not show any respect for Parliament.

I want you, Mr. Speaker, if you would, to suggest to the government that at the very least it should table that document right now so we know what is in it, and it should make a statement right now. The Minister for International Trade is here. He can make a statement and we can respond to it.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the very impassioned remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona, the House leader for his party. The House will know that the minister in question was in Vancouver for the purpose of the royal visit. He remained there and made the announcement in front of a large number of people in his province who were affected by the industry.

Mr. Speaker, you will recognize that the announcement was made at 2:30 p.m. and that the records of the House of Commons will show that in fact questions were answered by the Minister of Industry on behalf of the government before that time.

Points of Order

While this is not a point of order, I would endeavour, as was requested, to table a copy of the document in question as soon as possible in the House of Commons. This is all the information that is available to me at this time. I will endeavour to find out more about it.

In the meantime, I will table the document as early as possible for the convenience of not only the member who raised the issue and who is not listening to my answer but for the benefit of other members as well.

• (1505)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to that of the future leader of the NDP simply to say that, when we reviewed the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, an intention was clearly stated by all House leaders, including the government House leader. This intention was to the effect that all major or significant statements made by federal ministers should, short of an absolute impossibility, be made before Parliament, that is before the representatives of the people.

On the softwood lumber issue, if there is one place in Canada where the thorny issue of this dispute with the U.S. was discussed, it is the House of Commons, through questions from the opposition parties. We repeatedly called for special debates on the issue, and some were held.

All members of this House are concerned, especially Bloc Québécois members from Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, eastern Quebec, the North Shore or Abitibi, who have in their ridings thousands of workers affected by the softwood lumber crisis.

Everyone in the Bloc Québécois has made relevant suggestions to the government and, day in and day out, we have been asking whether or not these suggestions would be acted on.

Can you tell me this is not contempt of Parliament to go and announce the softwood lumber policy in British Columbia, when in this place 301 members of Parliament are anxiously awaiting the decisions?

Mr. Speaker, I am saying this quite sincerely. To enhance the role of MPs, if the hon. member who aspires to one day replace the hon. member for Saint-Maurice as the Prime Minister of Canada wants to do so, he should ensure that his colleagues make their announcements in Parliament, where the elected representatives are, where we sit and represent the people, where there is no fear to be had of the press, the Canadian public and the affected workers.

I therefore add my voice to that of the future leader of the NDP to let you and the government know how disappointed and deeply distressed we are by the intolerance displayed by the Minister of Natural Resources today.

[*English*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, no question can be more important to the proper function and relevance of the House of Commons.

The government House leader said that he would be prepared to table the document, rather than it be presented here, for the convenience of members of Parliament. This has nothing to do with

the convenience of members of Parliament. This is about the rights and the fundamental purpose of Parliament. This is the place where the business of Canada is to be done. There can be no respect for Parliament if the business of Canada is announced and done somewhere else.

Today's example is not the first. This is part of a long and growing pattern, a pattern that was not followed by Liberal governments in the past, was not followed by governments of other parties in the past, but has become a characteristic of this government and is one that can be stopped, with respect, by only one person. That is by the Speaker of the House of Commons speaking on behalf of the most fundamental interests of the House of Commons.

Sir, you have it in your power to admonish the government for this action, to encourage it in the future to respect the fundamental purposes of this Parliament and to ensure that the business of Parliament is done here and not done elsewhere.

Sir, I hope you will recognize that this is not a small matter. It is not a matter that is of concern only to one party or to one individual in the House. It goes to the heart of our purpose as a parliamentary democracy.

• (1510)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as the others have expressed, I too express the outrage that we as ordinary members of Parliament feel when we are bypassed over and over again.

It is particularly ironic that the Prime Minister, who has now been at the helm of the Liberal Party for three elections and each time, especially in 1993, said that his goal was to make the role of Parliament more meaningful and to give more useful functions to the members of Parliament. Those were the promises in the red book.

In the throne speech we have had similar statements made. Yet what do we get? Nothing but contempt. I have come to the conclusion that to this Prime Minister Parliament is at best an annoyance and at least is of total irrelevance. It is just a hurdle that stands in his way of doing what he absolutely wants to. At every turn we have closure invoked. We have total contempt of the process of Parliament. We have the government controlling committees. This is but another symptom of that.

We should go a step further today. We should name the Prime Minister, as the leader of the cabinet, in contempt of Parliament for the fact that he has continued to behave in this fashion. I believe he should be called in front of the committee and should be asked to answer to that fact. How long has it been since the ministers have used ministerial statements in routine proceedings? I cannot remember the last time. Maybe it is because my memory is short, but I do not remember it. It is really contemptible that this should happen.

I would like to point out that we already raised the issue when we came back in the fall. Still, there is no positive movement on this from that party. I do not know if I can do this, but I would like to move a motion that the Prime Minister be held in contempt for this process.

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

The Speaker: Order, please. The Chair very much appreciates the assistance of all hon. members on this point of order. I must say that the outrage, if I may use that term, although the hon. member for Elk Island used it so I assume it is safe, which has been expressed by members of the opposition certainly has been expressed in terms that indicate the members' dissatisfaction with what has transpired.

I am sure in the old days when I had partisan views, I may have expressed similar concerns at one time or another myself. I am aware, however, that sometimes these statements, satisfying as they may be at the time, do not often reflect exactly the practice of the House.

I can only say to hon. members that there is no rule, and I say this specifically to the right hon. member for Calgary Centre, requiring that government announcements of new policies be made in this chamber. I note a recommendation in the report of the Special Committee on the Modernization and Improvement of the Procedures of the House of Commons tabled in June last year, which I believe is relevant on this point.

[Translation]

The committee's recommendation reads as follows:

First, it is important that more ministerial statements and announcements be made in the House of Commons. In particular, topical developments or foreseeable policy decisions, should be made first—or, at least, concurrently—in the chamber. Ministers, and their departments, need to be encouraged to make use of the forum provided by the House of Commons. Not only will this enhance the pre-eminence of Parliament, but it will also reiterate the legislative underpinning for governmental decisions.

● (1515)

[English]

The report goes on. I could cite more. I invite hon. members to read the report's recommendations, but they did not result in changes to the rules that made it a requirement that these announcements be made in the House.

The government House leader has indicated his willingness to table the document. Ministers are free to make a ministerial statement on the matter on statements by ministers tomorrow, or Thursday or Friday or with unanimous consent later this day. It is not in my view for the Speaker to insist on the application of a rule which does not exist. The rules do not provide that this is mandatory and, therefore, I cannot insist.

While hon. members today have expressed their dissatisfaction and while it has been expressed many times before by members frankly on every side of the House, because they change sides from time to time, I feel that I am unable to do anything in the circumstances but indicate the contents of the report and pass it to the House and to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, if they wish to consider the matter further and the possibility of rule changes that would result in the kind of action urged by certain hon. members today.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the Speech from the Throne last week reminded me of the reasons I initially decided to run for election as a member of Parliament. I entered public life believing that it was possible to change lives and change futures.

I share with my caucus colleagues the profound conviction that all Canadians should have an equal chance to participate fully in the economic, social and civic life of our nation and to benefit from its prosperity. We share a common vision of a society in which we provide every opportunity for every Canadian to fulfill his or her potential. We are convinced that, working with Canadians, we can help individuals and communities to overcome adversity.

I took the position as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development confident that by working in partnership with aboriginal people we could help to improve their quality of life. We can foster social and economic development with first nations and Inuit, creating opportunities to build the Canada we all want.

The Speech from the Throne reaffirms our commitment as a country to supporting aboriginal people and northerners as they strive to realize their aspirations, a commitment made not simply on behalf of one department, but by the government as a whole.

The throne speech sends a clear signal that first nations must be enabled to assume greater control over their own affairs and participate more fully in the Canadian economy. This local control is the very essence of democracy. It gives power to the people to determine what needs to be done and address their own needs and priorities.

Experience has taught us that there is no magic wand to wave that will instantly finalize all the outstanding land claims, unresolved treaty issues, self-government agreements and address the social problems facing many aboriginal people.

Members know that change does not happen overnight. In the meantime, aboriginal people must be able to move forward now with confidence and with hope. They need to be able to get on with the business of building their communities and creating hope for their children.

We cannot continue to wait for change to just happen. We must take the steps to make it happen. We cannot afford to wait decades for agreements to be negotiated or new treaties to be worked out. We cannot wait, and the younger generation of first nations and Inuit will not wait. The status quo is not acceptable.

First nations working their way toward greater self-sufficiency need the tools today that will allow them to get on with the job of building a better tomorrow. That is precisely what the Speech from the Throne promises.

The Address

The Canada we want also includes a part of the country we too often forget, the north, but not in this Speech from the Throne: the issues of northern Canada affect us all.

The throne speech identifies key environmental goals for the north where aboriginal people will face new opportunities, new challenges and new possibilities. Northern gas pipelines have the potential to create significant job opportunities, provide training and skills development for first nations and Inuit and offer further opportunity for northern aboriginal people to participate and to prosper. Streamlined environmental assessment processes to evaluate large scale projects, such as the northern pipelines, will help ensure that such projects can proceed in a way that is consistent with our commitment to northern sustainable development.

The throne speech also calls for the conservation of wilderness areas, clean water sources and species and habitat protection. These are important initiatives to northerners to protect the fragile northern environment. We will also accelerate the cleanup of federal contaminated sites and continue to work with international partners to improve air quality and to respond to important northern priorities.

● (1520)

Our plan to improve the lives of aboriginal people is one of the most activist agendas a person could possibly imagine. The government-wide initiative led by a Prime Minister who has made it his life's mission to close the gap in life chances between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people represents a progressive step forward to a stronger Canada in the 21st century. The Government of Canada is taking action to ensure that aboriginal children do not grow up with less opportunity than their non-aboriginal peers.

I am excited about this agenda. It allows us to build on the progress already made by the government to improve the quality of life for aboriginal people. Investing in basic community infrastructure like clean water, supporting children and their parents, and helping first nations take advantage of economic development opportunities not only will make a difference to individuals and families in the near term, but will provide a solid foundation for future growth, health and prosperity.

I want to reassure first nations that my department will continue to work with first nations, Health Canada and other partners to ensure a supply of clean and safe drinking water in first nation communities. Together we are currently finalizing a first nations water management strategy, based on a set of clear and enforceable standards. The strategy will provide the coherent and structural approach to managing water quality on reserve.

The Speech from the Throne makes this fundamental statement:

The most enduring contribution Canada can make to First Nations is to raise the standard of education on-reserve.

In this context we all know the tremendous potential offered by the young, growing aboriginal population. Aboriginal workers are key to our future prosperity. We must address the unacceptable gap in the education of aboriginal people as compared to other Canadians. To improve this situation we have established a working group on education to research and make recommendations on first nations education, where we should focus and how we should proceed.

It is these bread and butter issues, such as water, education, support for children and their parents, and economic and social development that will enhance and advance our agenda of building both stronger, healthier communities, and a better quality of life for aboriginal people.

Taking action in these priority areas will establish the foundations for a better future in first nations. The foundations do not stop there. Our plan is built on legislative foundations; foundations that contribute to the necessary framework for economic and social development. These legislative foundations include the proposed first nations governance act, the proposed specific claims resolution act, building on the existing first nation land management act, and the proposed first nations fiscal and statistical management act.

I would like to highlight for the House the benefits of each of these foundations. Let us start with the most fundamental, that is, sound governance.

Good governance practices are the foundation of any strong and stable government. Open and transparent decision making ensures fairness and equality, and it inspires confidence which encourages business investment.

There is increasing evidence, both academic and empirical, that the ability to pursue economic development, to create strong government with adequate infrastructure and to develop the skills and potential of people all depend on good governance.

● (1525)

That is why the first nations governance act would enable first nations to equip themselves with the modern tools and the power to make and enforce laws which would reflect their priorities; powers that would help first nations to prosper. It would put decision making powers the Indian Act took away 126 years ago back into the hands of first nations people, where they rightfully belong.

Despite widespread misinformation, the new governance act would not be intended to affect treaty rights, nor to infringe on the inherent right to self-government. Neither would it threaten reserve lands or turn band councils or band governments into municipal corporations. What it would be intended to do is act as the bridge to the future. It would explicitly aim to equip those first nations operating under the outdated Indian Act with the missing and necessary tools for fostering effective, responsive and accountable governance; a vital step along the road to self-government.

The Address

An equally important measure is the proposed specific claims resolution act, which would provide a firm foundation for settling specific claims more efficiently and fairly. The Canadian centre for the independent resolution of first nations specific claims would improve first nations access to land and resources so that they could get on with the business of developing their own economies by attracting investment and shaping their own destinies.

The Indian Specific Claims Commission, which would be replaced by this new independent centre, was created in 1991 as an interim measure while Canada and first nations examined the best way to proceed toward resolution of these claims.

While we are proud of our track record over the past decade in settling specific claims, there is still a long way to go. Under the present system, claims drag on far too long, depriving hundreds of first nations of opportunities for economic development and impeding partnerships with first nations in other areas.

Given first nations understandable frustration and cynicism about the process, we are determined to resolve more claims more efficiently and fairly. The new claims resolution centre we propose would operate at arm's length from government and would consist of both a commission to facilitate negotiations, as well as a tribunal to finally resolve disputes.

The commission and tribunal would have distinct divisions to prevent undue influence and bias. They would be overseen by a chief executive officer whose responsibility would be to manage the day-to-day administration of the centre and its two divisions.

The primary objective of the centre would be to approach negotiations in a cooperative rather than confrontational manner. It would provide modern dispute resolution techniques that would help both parties to reconcile their differences so they could more effectively reach agreements.

The centre would provide access to facilitation, mediation, non-binding arbitration and, with the consent of the parties, binding arbitration.

Members should consider the time and effort both sides put into developing and researching their cases when they go to court. Then consider that every dollar spent on researchers, witnesses, judges and courtrooms as one dollar less spent on housing, health and economic development. It is clear that the specific claims resolution act would represent a significant improvement over existing processes to deal with specific claims.

• (1530)

It would set the stage for economic development and much needed social and economic security for first nations. I look forward to debating this particular piece of legislation in the House of Commons in the weeks and months ahead.

For years first nations have said they need the flexibility and responsibility to manage their own reserve lands, natural resources and revenues, in a way that worked best for them. They pointed out that they cannot run a government if there are no means to plan how the community will use its land.

In today's competitive economy, investors will not wait around while bureaucrats and politicians wrangle over jurisdictional issues. They will move on, taking their money and jobs with them. In 1999 we passed the First Nations Land Management Act. The act enables first nations to develop land codes, pass and enforce laws with respect to issues like the environment and matrimonial real property, clarify the legal capacity of bands, and establish relationships with provincial and municipal governments. It re-establishes the tools first nations need to manage their own lands and their own revenues in their own ways.

One of the most direct benefits of this legislation is that it would shorten the distance to self-government. That is because first nations under the Indian Act must negotiate land use planning, but a first nation that manages its own land under the First Nations Land Management Act comes to the table with those issues already sorted out.

In the short time since the First Nations Land Management Act was introduced we have seen that when decisions about land are made by the community, it can attract investment. Where there is investment, there is opportunity. Opportunity in turn means a chance to break the cycle of poverty, to create hope and build better lives and stronger communities, the type of life that many of us here in the House take for granted.

This approach has proven so successful that we have opened up the First Nations Land Management Act so more first nation communities can take advantage of its progressive land management tools.

A further measure to promote economic development and to improve the quality of life on reserve is the suite of four institutions. The proposed institutions include a financial management board and a statistical institute, all run by first nations for first nations. The first nations fiscal and statistical management act would provide first nations with the needed fiscal tools to improve their quality of life, tools that every other level of government takes for granted, tools to help build basic infrastructure such as sewers, roads and water systems, the key ingredients to a higher quality of life, those bread and butter issues facing communities.

I can speak extensively about these four institutions, but it is safe to say that when we think about the realities of government, one of the most important is having the fiscal institutions to generate other source revenue, whether real property tax or other tax measures. Those are the institutions that are not available to first nations that this new legislation would provide.

I ask hon. members to think about it for a second. The first nations authority would allow first nations to raise long-term private capital at preferred rates for roads, water, sewer, et cetera. They would do so by securitizing a portion of their real property tax revenues or similar stable long-term revenues.

The Address

It is estimated that \$125 million in debt financing would be raised over the first five years by securitizing real property tax revenues. Without these basic tools and institutions that other governments take for granted, now we know why first nations have not been successful in the past and why we have to change the agenda in the future.

• (1535)

In conclusion let me say that this will not go without a big debate in the country. When we change the relationship between aboriginal communities and the Government of Canada that of course necessitates a debate about governance and what governance will look like. I look forward to that debate in this place because it is high time that we moved away from the status quo, from the dependence we have created, which first nations children have to live with, to a more dynamic building of an economy for first nations people.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, first I wish to compliment the minister for his fine speech. This is a significant departure from what has gone on before. Many parties in the House have actually tried to push the government in this direction.

The minister spoke about water. My first question deals with the Walkerton inquiry. There were a number of very constructive solutions in the Walkerton inquiry. If employed across the country, they would give clean, potable water to everybody. Will the minister pursue his colleagues' adoption of a national standard for drinking water modelled under the Walkerton inquiry findings?

Second, on the issue of governance he quite correctly said that the way to change the institutional apartheid we have actually fostered on aboriginal people is to separate them from the rest of the country. Therefore, I am asking the hon. minister if he will pursue a course of action of integration, not assimilation, whereby individual aboriginal people would have private property rights on reserves.

Hon. Robert Nault: Mr. Speaker, I want to make very clear to the member my comments as they relate to water. We were moving to put in place the kinds of federal standards necessary to assure first nations citizens, at least in the jurisdiction that I work in, that their standards, regulations and quality of water will be the highest this country can offer. I can commit to the member today that he will very soon see the kinds of standards and the kind of quality necessary to assure ourselves that first nations people, like other Canadians when they take a drink from their tap, will be assured that they are drinking safe and healthy water.

I also want to say to the hon. member that one of the things I have found in my work as a member of Parliament over the last number of years is that unfortunately the standards did not include guaranteed certification of the operators that work in the water treatment plants. We have already moved in the last year and a half to train and certify all water treatment plant operators in first nations, with the objective of having them all certified within the next three years so that there will be no dispute as to the capacity and capability of first nations communities to assure their citizens of safe drinking water. That is in the works as we speak.

The other issue he speaks about is a fundamental discussion that has been going on in our country as long as I have been a member and, I am sure, for a lot longer than that. That is the unique and

special relationship we have with aboriginal people. I think the country has gone by the debate that the member is wishing to have me comment about today, that is, under our Constitution we have already agreed and committed ourselves to recognizing aboriginal and treaty rights.

What that means in practical terms is that we accept that aboriginal people will have their own form of government, whether it is through the inherent right to self-government, under section 35 of our Constitution, where we will negotiate, or improvements under the changes that we are making through delegated authority, section 91(24) of the Constitution, which allows us to delegate authority to first nations of particular law-making powers. That is a debate that is ongoing today as to what kind of governance structures are necessary for first nations to be successful in building an economy.

As far as the question from my hon. colleague is concerned, as a Canadian society we have long been past that, past whether we are going to try to assimilate first nations into the general milieu of the country. We have already agreed that it does not work, that it is not appropriate and that we must have a respectful relationship, government to government. That is the direction in which we are heading.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister told us that he knew that the bill on governance would trigger considerable debate, both in this House and across the country. That is what he said.

What guarantee can the minister give that he will listen to the representations, the concerns and, above all, the objections that his bill will raise? So far, even though these objections are already known and these concerns have been voiced rather aggressively and directly, in particular by the Assembly of First Nations, the minister has ignored them. If, so far, he has not taken into account the objections raised by the Assembly of First Nations and other aboriginal groups, and if the past is any indication of the future, how can we believe the minister when he says that he will listen to objections and to what is said during the debate, since he has not done so until now?

[*English*]

Hon. Robert Nault: First, Mr. Speaker, I regret that the member and other members in the opposition have not risen above partisan politics to get on with the very important discussion we need to have. Somehow there is a perception by some opposition members that every first nations citizen right across the country has the same view. First nations citizens are no different from non-native citizens. They all have very strong views of how and what we shall do together to improve the lives of their communities. To suggest that one group or another represents all first nations citizens would be a stretch of the imagination here in this place.

The Address

Let me tell hon. members what we are attempting to do as a government. I think we all agree in this place that the status quo is not acceptable, that the status quo is not on. If we take a look at the statistics it does not take much to realize that the status quo in the next generation, particularly in places like western Canada, will cause us tremendous difficulty as a nation because of the fast-growing young aboriginal population that wants in to the economy, that wants in to Canada as part of their heritage. We cannot get there by using a piece of legislation that is 126 years old as our template.

What we are asking for from first nations citizens and from Parliament is not to get into the rhetoric but to get into what kind of legislation we would put forward to improve the lives of first nations citizens. How have we assured ourselves of a respectful debate? We had probably the largest consultation in the history of our government, in which 10,000 first nations citizens participated in the last year. More important, we put in a joint ministerial advisory council that was led by first nations and advised the minister on what kind of legislation we would have.

Finally, just to make sure that we would have a respectful debate, I as a minister in the government sent this legislation to committee before second reading. Those who might be new to the House, who did not spend as much time on the backbenches as I did as a member of Parliament, will know that when we send a bill to committee before second reading we send a message that we are allowing the committee to make fundamental changes to that bill if it is the wish of the committee. That is the direction I would like to see the committee take if it believes this legislation is not good enough and needs to be improved. The reason for this is that we cannot afford to get it wrong. We need to get it right for first nations citizens in the next generation.

• (1545)

The Deputy Speaker: Time is running short in the questions and comments period so I will ask members to be slightly brief.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that in responding to both questions so far the minister has taken a jab at the members asking the questions, asking them to be respectful. I heard nothing that was not respectful. The minister should stop that political nonsense himself, answer some questions and take part in this serious debate, because this is a serious issue.

In his presentation the member said that the Prime Minister has spent 40 years of his political career working to make things better for aboriginal people. The minister himself would have to admit that this simply has not happened. The gap between the level that the aboriginal people lived at 40 years ago and where they are today actually has widened. Things have gotten worse over the past 40 years rather than better. The strategy taken by this government and others over the past 40 years has not worked. I would appreciate it if the minister would recognize that what has happened over the past 40 years has not worked—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The Chair understands the importance of the subject matter on the floor. I take note of the interests, but I only have so much latitude given the large number of members who want to participate. I would ask that the questions and the responses be as concise as possible and we will go from there.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the Indian Act is outdated. I would like to ask the minister if that means he will scrap the Indian Act and replace it with something else. If so, what?

Hon. Robert Nault: Mr. Speaker, I want to be somewhat kind but one of the things about aboriginal affairs is that it is not a simple matter. To come into this place and make the statement that in the last 40 years there has been no progress with first nations people, all I can say is that if we have spent a significant amount of time in the communities we are able to see the improvements, as slow as they might have been.

I will give one example to verify that. In the early seventies, when the Prime Minister was the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, there was no program for post-secondary education for aboriginal students. Today, there are 27,000 children getting post-secondary education every year. That is a vast improvement over virtually no students getting post-secondary education when the Prime Minister created that new program. That is just an example of how off the mark the member is.

Let me get on with explaining to the member what I said in my speech in case he missed some of the points. The Indian Act itself is being replaced by one process and another and another and another. Those processes are the following. In 1999, under Minister Irwin and the present Minister of Human Resources Development, we passed a bill called the First Nations Land Management Act to take land use planning out of the Indian Act and allow first nations people to develop their own land use planning, which is a prerequisite for building an economy, as those of us who have been municipal leaders at one time know. Of course we have now brought in the first nations governance act to look at elections, financial administration and administration of governance in order to look at conflict of interest, transparency and the kinds of issues that we all take for granted as government in this place. We are also moving forward with fiscal institutions, which I mentioned to the member, which allows first nations to develop their own economies by collecting tax and/or real property tax in their own communities. That is a prerequisite for any government at whatever level.

These are the changes we are making to the outdated Indian Act, which we think will make an improvement in the lives of first nations people.

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: I am in the hands of the House. Obviously the time has lapsed on the question and comment period. I know that the hon. member for Dartmouth and the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord have been seeking the floor since the minister spoke. I will ask both members not to take a question beyond one minute, please, and I will ask that the minister respond in a similar fashion if possible.

The Address

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has worked hard in supporting aboriginal land claims and in supporting the vision of self-government for native people in this country. I refer to Chief Joe Gosnell's comment that it took nearly three decades and \$50 million to reach the historic treaty that gave the Nisga'a people self-governing status in northern British Columbia.

Today, native people, Chief Gosnell included, are very worried that in fact the minister is warning them, threatening to walk away from as many as 30 negotiating tables. My question for the minister is this: Does the government intend to undertake full negotiations with first nations and all interested parties before reintroducing a revised Indian Act?

Hon. Robert Nault: Mr. Speaker, we are at about 170 tables across the nation. Those 170 tables are not all treaty tables or self-government tables. Quite frankly, we are at about 80 tables that are in the modern-day self-government realm or, of course, there are the sectoral tables that deal with specifics as they relate to wanting to build the self-government agreements.

What I announced last January I will repeat in the House. This minister and this government are not prepared to stay at negotiating tables that make no progress. It is very politically pleasing, I suppose, for members across to be able to say we are all engaged in treaty-making when in fact with some tables we are making no more progress than we have for a number of years. The assessment we did at the tables was to see if there were no progress how we would make progress. If we could not, we would look at ways to improve our relationship from a different perspective. I think that is the way we will proceed.

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for his commitment to a most important challenge for the future of our country, since it concerns first nations.

In Quebec, particularly in the eastern part, on the North Shore and in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean area, negotiations on what is called the “*approche commune*” or common approach are going on right now. These negotiations have raised many concerns, and I think that improvements should be made with regard to both communications and content.

I would like to ask the minister what steps will be taken over the next few months so we will have a better understanding of what is at stake?

[English]

Hon. Robert Nault: Mr. Speaker, the member is right to indicate that in all parts of the country, including in his own region, we are at negotiating tables which involve ourselves, the aboriginal people and of course, the province of Quebec in this case.

The *approche commune* as we refer to it is intended to negotiate a modern day governance agreement between the aboriginal people in the Lac-Saint-Jean region and ourselves.

When we are in negotiations there is always a lot of talk by people about what will happen and what will not happen. It is necessary for the governments and the aboriginal governments as well to have a

communication strategy to explain exactly where we are in negotiations.

In this case with the *approche commune* there have been no decisions made. We are still at the agreement in principle stage with a long way to go in discussing the final agreement. It is our objective to arrive at an agreement that is fair to both native and non-native people. In the end, building a relationship in modern day treaty making and governance is intended to be a win-win for all of society. It is not intended to be a lose for the non-natives and a win for the natives, or vice versa.

We work very closely to communicate the importance of those agreements. I look forward in the weeks and months ahead to working with my colleague to see that is what happens in his region.

• (1555)

[Translation]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, had I had the opportunity to take part in the questions and comments period following the speech by the Minister of Indian Affairs, I could have asked him, after these consultations with 10,000 members of aboriginal communities and after all these fine words and wishes on what he intends to do to support these communities, what he has done with the Erasmus-Dussault royal commission's report, which contained clear, specific recommendations. They were tabled four or five years ago, and we have yet to see a sign from the government that it intends to follow up on these recommendations. The answer would probably have been that the consultation process was still going on.

The Commissioner of Official Languages used this analogy, which I do not want to claim as my own. If they used this principle in hospitals when someone who is seriously ill arrives, if they analyzed, if they consulted and took that much time, they would probably be better off calling the mortician, because they would not have time to act after finally making a diagnosis.

The same kind of thing seems to be happening with aboriginal people, unfortunately for them and for the government.

Before getting into the subject of the throne speech, I will expand on what I said during oral question period, because it appears there may have been a misunderstanding by some people. It is important to keep in mind, to underscore, what I said and to spend a few moments on this within this address in response to the Speech from the Throne. I will be splitting my time with my colleague and friend, the member for Matapédia—Matane.

Even if there is little reference to it in the throne speech, the federal government does contribute financially to some one hundred international institutions. Earlier, I gave the names of three of these, the World Tourism Organization, the High Commission for Refugees and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Year in and year out, the federal government contributes financially to these organizations.

In these three organizations, and several others I have not as yet named, one of the prerequisites for candidates is that they must have English as their mother tongue, along with a knowledge of French or another language.

The Address

In other words, although all francophones in Canada pay taxes to the federal government, and a portion of those taxes goes to these huge international institutions, whose merit we all acknowledge, they cannot apply for a job with these huge international institutions because they have the misfortune of having been born to a French-speaking mother or father.

More than seven million Canadians who pay federal taxes are denied access to jobs with these institutions.

If a satisfactory or excellent knowledge of English were required, or perfect bilingualism, trilingualism or knowledge of four languages, there would not be a problem. However, everyone not born anglophone—for it is not only French-speaking Canadians who are penalized, but all non-anglophones in this country—cannot apply to these large international institutions for jobs. Canada will, however, continue to pay its contribution, take part in major international forums and pat itself on the back.

This is a very important matter the government needs to address. It is specifically mentioned in the throne speech. On page 12, it is stated:

Linguistic duality is at the heart of our collective identity.

In this case, linguistic duality means affording equal opportunity to the English-speaking and French-speaking people of this country, everywhere. I have, however, just cited a concrete case, one that is with us every day and is very pertinent, to prove that there is no equality, no employment equity, as far as linguistic duality is concerned when it comes to employment opportunities in major international institutions.

Further on in the throne speech, the following statement is made:

The government will implement an action plan on official languages—

Allow me to comment briefly on this action plan.

●(1600)

The last Speech from the Throne, two years ago—in April 2001 if memory serves me well—mentioned appointing a person, an official languages coordinator. The supposed saviour in this important area came in, the minister responsible for official languages coordination, and promised us that an action plan would be presented in short order, an essential, vital and important element to ensure the vitality of minority language communities.

There were some very humble acknowledgments from the minister. He said that he was given this responsibility by the government, by the Prime Minister. However, in committee, he admitted candidly that he had no additional staff in his office to help him work on the issue and that he had not been given one cent more in term of his budget to put toward dealing with the enormous challenge. He also admitted that he had no action plan, and that he had not started work on anything, and that he had not even established a timeframe. However, he assured us that he would be presenting a plan soon.

I think that someone should do a master's thesis, or a doctoral dissertation on the definition of soon as used by the Liberal government. For two years now, the Minister of Transport has been saying soon with reference to a highway; for four years now, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has been

saying soon with regard to the Erasmus-Dussault report; for 14 years now, the various ministers responsible for official languages have been saying “we will soon be providing a specification to section 41 of the Official Languages Act”. So, we are justified in at least wondering what the true, etymological significance of the word soon is, when used by our friends opposite.

But we are still waiting for this action plan from the minister responsible, who does not have money, resources or people to implement it. Last year, in 2001, the minister told us that he would release his action plan. But then he backed off and said, guess what, “I need to hold more consultations”.

This is what he did. Last June, he said, “I will release the draft of my action plan, the initial version, to find out if minority communities are living under satisfactory conditions”. The minister showed up in Whitehorse and said, “I am not ready. I will release my action plan in the fall”. He arrived here in Ottawa at the beginning of the parliamentary session and told us, “I will table my action plan in October or November”. Then, surprise. The minister said, “Come to think of it, perhaps I should wait until after the budget, to find out if I will have the resources to do what I set out to do in my action plan”.

Everyone is anxiously awaiting this action plan, and expectations are high. The minister is well aware of this, which is why he keeps postponing his plan from year to year, month to month, week to week, with the result that we will have to wait longer.

Elsewhere in the throne speech, it says that the plan will be released and will focus on minority language and second language education. Reference is also made to doubling the number of high school graduates. Everyone recognizes—and the minister was told so in Bathurst, New Brunswick—that this is a provincial jurisdiction.

We have nothing against encouraging this with the provinces' consent. But stepping in and invading an exclusive provincial jurisdiction across Canada is out of the question. The minister should focus on entitlement. Fifty per cent of those entitled to French schooling do not have access to it. Why not pay closer attention to them instead of interfering in matters that concern the provinces?

Further on, it has this to say about the government, and I quote:

It will support the development of minority English- and French-speaking communities, and expand access to services in their language in areas such as health.

They say they will wait for the Romanow report. We are still waiting for a report or some form of consultation. I am still quoting from the throne speech:

It will enhance the use of our two official languages in the federal public service

I conclude by reminding hon. members that more than 30 years after the enactment of the Official Languages Act, approximately 30% of positions designated as bilingual within the public service are held by unilingual individuals. Still today, over 30% of positions designated as bilingual are held by individuals who speak English only.

The Address

•(1605)

The Speech from the Throne was very well written. So was the previous one, in 2001. However, what minority communities expect is for these words to be acted on, because there is an urgent and immediate need for action. The Commissioner of Official Languages keeps repeating, as do the Bloc Quebecois and the committee, that action is urgently needed, and that a concrete plan, along with resources for its implementation, is expected.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague from Repentigny for his excellent speech, particularly as far as official languages and the francophones who are directly affected by the policies of the present government are concerned. I should perhaps say who are not affected, or who are not sufficiently supported by the present government policies.

It would have been excellent if my colleague had been the one to write the throne speech. Judging by the way he gave his speech, he would certainly have been able to add some very positive and necessary elements, including some things for our regions.

I took the time to look at the previous throne speech, not just the one of September 30, 2002. What I saw was that basically what they served up to us on September 30 was almost the mirror image of the previous one.

What does that mean? Probably that the government has not managed to put into practice what it proposed to us two years ago, particularly as far as the regions are concerned.

I can characterize the throne speech as totally remarkable, but remarkable in a negative way. It is remarkable for what it does not contain, what it omits, what it leaves out, the non-presence of large sectors of our society, the regions in particular.

This speech contains absolutely nothing about the regions, their problems, the phenomenon by which the wealth of our society is concentrated increasingly in the major centres.

I found about a dozen points on which the government could have taken action to help the regions. But the impression one gets from this throne speech is one of a greater focus on what I would call the major centres, or when infrastructure is involved, the small centres. That is one example.

I would like to start by talking about child poverty. In 1989, if memory serves, the House adopted a unanimous resolution to fight child poverty. In each and every throne speech since 1989, particularly 1993 and thereafter, the government has told us "We are going to fight child poverty so that it becomes less acute".

According to Statistics Canada, since 1993, child poverty has remained a problem. It has somewhat diminished in some families. But about two weeks ago, Statistics Canada told us that 983,000 children were still living below the poverty line in Canada and in Quebec. In every throne speech, we hear that the government will be fighting child poverty. Child poverty exists not only in urban areas, in large cities, but also in rural communities like mine. This is especially true since cuts were made to employment insurance.

I wish to remind the House, and this is my second point, that less than 40% of all contributors are currently eligible for EI benefits. This is a very serious issue in an area like mine or in Newfoundland or throughout the maritimes. It is a serious issue because most of the work there is seasonal. For part of the year, workers need some kind of income support, which they are not getting right now. They do not have a decent living, because the government has kept on slashing EI benefits.

If the government were serious about fighting poverty and providing a decent living for families, it would have to change the EI system to ensure that people have a decent income. They could receive an income 52 weeks a year.

The other point I want to make is about protecting agriculture in the regions. We have heard about it, although the throne speech made no mention whatsoever of it. There are international negotiations under way. In the last few weeks, we have learned that the government has agreed to put supply management on the table. What would it mean for a region like mine and for all the regions in Quebec and in Canada if the government were to put this on the table and negotiate it away?

•(1610)

Right now, even though the situation has changed over the past 25 or 30 years, or more, farming in our regions is still a predominantly family business.

What would happen if supply management was revisited? It would mean, once again, that the regions would be more affected than large centres. It would also mean that large companies would buy agricultural productions and could concentrate them around large centres, thus deserting the regions.

It would have been a good idea in the throne speech for the government to have reaffirmed its intention to protect supply management and to protect agriculture.

There is another issue on which the throne speech is totally silent and about which the regions are very concerned. I am referring to fishing, which is a very important industry in regions such as mine, in the Maritimes and in regions such as the riding of the hon. member for Skeena, who sits on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

The federal government has really mishandled this issue since assuming responsibility for it. Once again, we are told about the possibility of a moratorium on groundfish in our regions. This means that current fishers, whose income is already insufficient, would have more problems.

This government should at least have mentioned the issue of fishing in the throne speech, because of the concerns of fishers, people in our region, and the general public. It should at least have stated its intentions regarding the future of the fishing industry, and its desire to protect our resource and support fishers in our regions.

I want to talk about the development of exporting businesses in our regions. It seems that, in all likelihood, the federal government would rather see exporting businesses develop in and around major centres.

The Address

Some businesses tried to settle in my region, including in the Gaspé, but there were so many hurdles and problems, including in the negotiations with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, that they gave up and decided to settle in large centres, because this is what they were advised to do. This is what they were told by public officials.

Before closing, I would like to touch on the issue of softwood lumber. We learned today that there will be a program of assistance for the softwood lumber industry. However, again, this program is only half of a program, because it does not help companies. It only helps, it would appear according to the information available, workers and obviously the communities involved.

I fully agree with helping workers and the communities that have been affected. I think that is right, and admirable. However, we must also support the businesses, because if they close their doors, other workers and other communities will be affected. I would have liked the Speech from the Throne to express a real desire to support businesses in our regions.

In closing, I would like to add one last comment regarding air transportation in the regions and the federal government's complete abdication when it comes to both air and rail transportation, which, as we know, is only available three days per week for passengers in my region.

To close, the Speech from the Throne really does not contain anything for regions such as mine, and we were very disappointed with it, as we were with the previous Speech from the Throne.

• (1615)

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member for Matapédia—Matane to continue to enlighten us on what should have been included in the Speech from the Throne, in particular as it relates to the many regions, including his own, that are affected by agriculture problems, by softwood lumber problems or by demographic problems.

What would he have liked to see in the throne speech that this government has not included?

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Had I had a little more time, perhaps I would have talked about what I call the right to live in the regions.

The federal government has totally abandoned the regions, particularly with regard to transportation infrastructures, which used to be its responsibility. It has turned over ports and airports to municipalities and corporations. At this time, many of these infrastructures are in very bad shape. This approach on the part of the federal government has a negative impact on all regions.

I think that the throne speech should have contained at least one sentence saying something like: "The government recognizes the right to live in the regions. Living in the regions is not a privilege, it is a right. It is very important for the economic survival of Quebec as well as the rest of Canada that the regions be occupied, that people live there and have access to adequate services".

As a regional journalist commented following the Speech from the Throne, "We have had it with being offered the minimum in the

regions. What we want is the same quality of life, the same services available elsewhere in Canada, particularly in large urban centres".

We are not asking for fancy shows. We are asking for the same services, for instance decent transportation services, which we no longer have. What we want is for the federal government to maintain its infrastructures, to take its responsibilities and maintain these infrastructures, so that we can live in our regions.

[*English*]

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, in light of my friend's recent remarks, does he believe that if the government or any government believed that strong regions or strong provinces would eventually create a much stronger unit, a much stronger country, we would all be much better off?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Mr. Speaker, I will tell my hon. colleague that, at present, the federal government has withdrawn completely from the regions. This is particularly true in my region, and I know it is also true in his.

This government has withdrawn from just about every program. The economic development programs currently available are totally inadequate.

In terms of economic development, to expect us to meet the same criteria in St. John's, Newfoundland, or in my region as in Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal, is totally unacceptable. We do not have the same economic structure in our regions. It is completely different from that of Toronto or Montreal. Yet, the same criteria are applied. It makes no sense.

The regions are said not to have projects, but that is a fallacy. There are thousands of projects, but they cannot qualify because of the different economic structure and the criteria that are applied. Should the government decide to take action, I do wish for my hon. colleague's sake that it will make for a better country.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Niagara Centre.

The Speech from the Throne was, in essence, a speech on social justice which is the kind of thing that motivated me to get into public office in the first place.

I will begin by talking about the issue of health. I was quite pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne that health care is being given prominence and that the government intends to move quickly after the Romanow report. However I want to underline a few things.

First, it is important that the government ensures that universal access to health care continues to be the case and, in fact, improves the system as we speak today. We cannot afford not to afford a universal health care system.

The Address

The other thing I want to point out is the issue of privatization. I do not support and never will support any form of privatization in the health care system. In fact, I believe we have gone a little bit too far in some areas as we speak. If we look at other countries, such as the U.K., Italy or others where privatization has been allowed, private clinics begin to have all the equipment because they are for profit and general hospitals end up doing less and getting less and less money. People are being encouraged to go to the private clinics if they want better health care. A two tier health care system in this country is not acceptable. Privatization has already crept into our system.

Accountability is another issue that is extremely important. We must demand that accountability is put back into our system. In the health care agreement of September 2000, the Government of Canada transferred \$1 billion to the provinces for diagnostic equipment. Not all of that money was used for that purpose. In many cases it was used for things like mattresses, pressure cookers and other things. In Ontario some of the money went to other things and a lot of the money went to the private sector. One company in Ontario is registered in the stock exchange. Ontario just recently announced the opening of 20 new private clinics.

As we saw, the House leader of the Canadian Alliance was quite happy to pay \$775 to get ahead of other people in line. However that does not shorten the line. It just allows people with money to get ahead of everybody else. Quite frankly, it is time that kind of thing stopped. It is absolutely appalling what is going on in the country with the Alliance encouragement and support.

The Canada health and social transfer does not work because there is no accountability built into that program and it must be changed. We used to have the Canada assistance plan which had some accountability, and I think it is time we brought that back.

I would like to go on to the issue of children and families. Child poverty in a country such as Canada is not acceptable. We cannot continue to tolerate it. I am glad to see in the Speech from the Throne that the government intends to increase the child benefit plan. Currently, with the work of MPs, including myself, we have \$2,500 in income support for low income families for the first child and \$2,200 for every child thereafter by 2004. That needs to be increased and I support that wholeheartedly.

Early learning and quality child care are also extremely important. We all know that the development of the brain starts from the time the child is in the womb, but certainly from the moment the child is born the development is very rapid. Without proper stimulation, care and early learning, the development of a child from zero to six years does not happen properly. Many children do not have the proper start in life. This is very important.

Many other countries in the world have already brought early learning down to two or three years olds in full time care. Quality child care is essential to eradicate poverty in our society.

When we look at the issue of affordable housing, that again goes to the eradication of poverty. Without child care and affordable housing we cannot really address poverty in our society. It is time we looked at universal access to child care and not piecemeal approaches to the issues of early learning and quality care.

The targeted measures for low income families caring for severely disabled children to meet the needs of the child and family is an extremely important part of the Speech from the Throne, and I am very pleased to see that.

The throne speech also talks about cities and infrastructure. The cities in our society need to be financed in a sustainable way for the long term. I am glad the government is prepared to finance infrastructure for a 10 year program and that it is making a commitment to affordable housing.

•(1625)

Transportation and public transit are two important issues but I would like to see some discussions being held on a long term, sustainable financing arrangement between the Government of Canada, the provinces and the cities. This is fundamental to the survival of the cities and the programs they offer people.

We have been dealing with the issue of terrorism. We have had speeches recently from the President of the United States with respect to Iraq and our soldiers have been in Afghanistan. Development, however, is the only way that I believe we can in fact eradicate terrorism in the long term. We cannot address terrorism unless we eradicate poverty in the world.

If we look at some countries in Africa, thus far AIDS has killed more people than all of the wars put together, the first world war, the second world war and the Korean war.

Assisting countries in the world and making them stronger is important. The assumption sometimes is that they are all corrupt and therefore why waste the money. Yes, there is corruption and weaknesses in governments. In Africa many countries are moving toward democracy. Some of them are weak but, nonetheless, they are moving in that direction and we must be there to work with them. It is not an issue of charity. It is an issue of partnership. We must give them the kind of assistance and support they need to ensure they can take their people out of poverty.

If we had not abandoned Afghanistan to the rule of the warlords I do not think the al-Qaeda would have been able to do what it did with that country. I commend the government for doubling the funding for development and for going in that direction. It is extremely important that we continue to commit ourselves to equity in our world because we cannot continue to ignore the suffering, poverty and desperation that some people in our small global planet live in. That is not acceptable.

I am glad to see that finally we will be able to begin to address the issue of credentials of foreign workers. We talk in the House a great deal about the brain drain but we never talk about the brain waste. We bring thousands of immigrants into Canada, and so we should, but we bring in people with skills, university degrees and with extremely high levels of education and training who cannot get their credentials recognized.

The Address

We have a shortage of doctors and yet we have hundreds of doctors in Ontario who cannot practise medicine, even though they have passed the exams in Ontario, because they cannot get internship space. It is appalling when we have people in parts of the country who do not have access to proper medical care and assistance.

I wholeheartedly support the ratification of the Kyoto accord. Climate change and the environment is not a minor issue. It goes to our health care and to the very core of who we are as a society on the planet. We cannot afford to lose the future of the country.

There are people who say that Kyoto will denigrate or destroy our economy. We used to say those things when welfare was brought in. We said that it would destroy small businesses. When we brought in other measures to minimize pollution in the past again we said that it would kill business. The reality is that if we are innovative, inventive and if we truly want to do this, we can create jobs and be ahead of the game by selling technology and innovation from Canada. Other countries are beginning to do it and we must be ahead of the game if we truly want to succeed in what we are doing.

I therefore wholeheartedly support the ratification of Kyoto and encourage the government not to back off on that one.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was practically left breathless by the amount of stuff that the member covered, from Kyoto to credentials of workers coming into the country and so on, but there is one point that I want to talk about.

I believe she raised the issue of the House leader of the Canadian Alliance and the fact that he had to access private medicare in an emergency because the public medicare system failed him completely. He needed emergency surgery and fortunately was in a position to access private medicare. Without that he perhaps could have lost his leg or even worse. Who can tell?

The point is that the public medicare system is in need of radical reform. Accountability has to be brought in to ensure that medicare is there to serve all Canadians when they need it. When it fails Canadians, be it the House leader of the Canadian Alliance, or any other Canadian for that matter, that is when the government should stand up and acknowledge that there are serious problems with health care rather than glossing over that and denigrating people who have to access private health care by virtue of the fact that the public health care system is not there for them.

• (1630)

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, it is easy to talk about losing a leg and how this was an emergency but that is why we have an emergency department. Is it not wonderful that we have hospitals with emergency services?

I went through three difficult years with my mother, who passed away last year. I was in and out of the emergency department a great deal. She was treated well and we received service. Yes, there are problems, there is a shortage of funding and, yes, I will say that I noticed a great deal of stress on some of the staff, especially the nurses. The system does need reforms but it does not need privatization.

What the member is saying is that when people with money have an emergency they can go to a private clinic and be served. It was

\$775 but maybe next year it will be \$1,000 or \$2,000. It is for profit, after all. It is there to make money. Let us face it, it is not about health care, it is about profits. That is why we have a health care system.

He could have easily gone to the emergency room at the hospital where he eventually ended up because he had to have surgery. He would have been treated properly, just like anyone else who goes to emergency. It is quite evident that they prefer to have a private for profit, pay as you go system because those who have money would be able to go to the head of the line. If there are 10 people who have \$1,000 each and another 10 who do not, guess who gets to go first to get this kind of treatment? It will not be the ones who do not have the \$1,000.

The health care system in this country is a pure gem. If we were to talk to the American people, we would discover that they and other people around the world envy us. Health care is not totally broken. We must make some reforms and we must bring in some accountability measures but we must at all costs maintain a universal health care system in this country.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to hear the government say that the system is a pure gem when the government has routinely underfunded the system and basically put the whole health care system into the position where people are so desperate they will go to these private options. Twenty private clinics were created in Toronto because people are so desperate from the lack of support they receive that they are willing to do this.

I would like to ask a simple question concerning municipal funding for infrastructure for 10 years. Will the cities be gone in 10 years? Why does the throne speech only identify 10 years of sustainable funding when we know they have been underfunded for the last dozen years?

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, first, on the issue of diagnostic equipment, it is not necessary to open up 20 clinics in the private sector because the money that was transferred from the Government of Canada should have gone to hospitals. I can tell everyone that the hospital in my riding, the Toronto East General Hospital, has been waiting for 10 years for an MRI. The people who go to the hospital cannot access an MRI because the government chose to give up that money to the private clinics. With all due respect, I do not accept that argument.

Second, I said quite clearly in my statement that while I commend the government for the 10 year commitment, I believe that we must start negotiating and looking at long term sustainable financial assistance for the municipalities. I believe we must start looking at municipalities and the kinds of services they provide to make sure they are properly financed.

The Address

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is very important that from time to time the government issue a statement of intent as to its priorities as part of an accountability exercise between itself and the people of Canada. A throne speech should also be seen as a road map for everyone to review to ensure that we as a government are on course, arriving at the same goals set for all Canadians.

Today I rise in response to the message that the government delivered to the people of Canada, and more particularly the constituents of my riding of Niagara Centre.

It has been almost two years since all of us in this great place were elected or re-elected to serve our constituents in this vast land. In that time, we have assembled here on numerous occasions to debate and to vote on various issues. Although we have had, and I am certain that we will continue to have our differences, the one thing that I am certain we can all agree upon is that presenting oneself as a member of Parliament is indeed a privilege and that in the area of public service there is no higher calling in this land. The decisions we make not only impact on our local ridings and regions but also help to shape the national landscape. Therefore, I am grateful to once again return to the House for this, the second session of the 37th Parliament.

As I make my way around the parliamentary precinct, speaking with other members and their staff, Hill personnel and security, and I mention that I from the Niagara area, it seems to automatically conjure up images of open space, green fields, orchards filled with fruit trees, vineyards and wineries, tourist attractions and bed and breakfast retreats. It almost seems to create the image that in Niagara life is good and without issues, almost the utopian part of our country. Although to some extent that may be true, in many ways Niagara, and in particular my riding, is not without its share of difficulties, its setbacks and its challenges.

What used to be large manufacturing giants in the steel, pulp and paper industries at one time have now been reduced in size. Increased competition, globalization, automation, the just in time inventory and reducing the need to stockpile have all led to the downsizing mirroring similar transitions that have taken place in the rest of Canada. The riding of Niagara Centre is home to one of the man-made marvels of the world, and that is the Welland ship canal.

The St. Lawrence Seaway authority describes the Welland Canal as a vital artery bypassing Niagara Falls, connecting the major industrial areas of the North American heartland and providing a valuable link with the world's trading nations. It generates an economic impact of \$222 million each year in the Niagara region and is considered one of the biggest employers in the region. Thus far in 2002, 1,330 marine vessels have passed through its 8 locks.

I would now like to speak about the two post-secondary institutions that are located in my riding. Assisting and preparing for the new technology environment are Brock University and the Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology. Employers, in partnership with the federal government, are working hand in hand with post-secondary institutions to ensure that graduates are well prepared with practical training that will more readily benefit both the company and the future employee.

I was happy to hear the subject of skills, learning and research mentioned in the Speech from the Throne and to know that the government will continue to increase its funding to granting councils offering students more support for graduate studies.

I was also pleased to hear that this government will continue to work with universities on the indirect costs of research and on strategies for its commercialization. As an example, this program has resulted in a \$1.4 million grant to Brock University for a research chair for plant biochemistry and biotechnology, under the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, to define the most appropriate times to harvest the grapes for the making of wine. In the words of Brock University president, Dr. David Atkinson, "This is wonderful news for Brock University. This support from the Government of Canada will play an important role in strengthening the university's position as a major research centre and ensuring that Brock faculty researchers and students continue to achieve the highest levels of research excellence".

● (1635)

Niagara College on the other hand received an \$800,000 grant from the CFI to help establish its centre for advanced visualization which features one of only three virtual reality labs in Ontario.

These are also very challenging times for the municipalities in my riding. From the city of St. Catharines which I share with the member for St. Catharines, to the cities of Welland and Thorold or the town of Pelham, provincial downloading of responsibility and dwindling resources are taking a toll on the member communities of Niagara Centre. However as a result of the Canada-Ontario infrastructure program, my riding has benefited from this federal initiative which leverages federal money in partnership with provincial-municipal funds to help, as an example, to improve the quality of drinking water or the treatment of waste water.

This program also qualifies those submissions which deal with sports, culture and tourism opportunities. In terms of short term planning, this program has proven to be very successful. However, as we know, municipalities need to plan for the long term in order that they may continue to be dynamic cities and communities. Therefore I was again pleased to hear in the throne speech that the government will put in place a 10 year program for infrastructure to accommodate long term strategic initiatives, essential to competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Equally, I was pleased to learn that the government has stated its intention to extend the supporting communities partnership initiatives, or SCPI. I doubt that there is a municipality that does not have a homelessness issue. This is therefore an initiative that will provide support to every riding with this most serious issue.

When we speak of issues affecting every municipality and indeed every individual, there is no more important issue than health care. It is the one area, the one service, that all of us at one time or another will require. Hopefully most of us will require less. Even if it is in our final days or hours on this planet, we will require health care.

The Address

This summer I took some time to visit my constituents in their neighbourhoods, at their front doors, because I felt it was necessary to hear directly from them and to listen and to understand what was on their minds. Sure enough, and I am certain that this comes as no surprise, the one issue that was repeatedly mentioned was health care.

In my hometown of Thorold we are fortunate to have as one of our citizens a dedicated registered nurse and a mother, Mrs. Kim Stasiak. Mrs. Stasiak chairs the Niagara Health Coalition, which is a citizens for health care group whose membership consists of local labour unions and community organizations such as the Council of Women and the Council of Canadians. This group is supportive of the course of action that the government has taken by the creation of the Romanow commission. The Niagara Health Coalition forwarded some 10,000 signatures to Mr. Romanow. Mrs. Stasiak stated in an e-mail to me:

I have a lot of hope for Mr. Romanow. He listened sincerely...he responded warmly and asked questions appropriately. I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the minister (of health) at the time of its conception.

Again, I was happy to find reference to health care in the throne speech. We are all anxiously awaiting the release of Mr. Romanow's final report expected later this fall. While Canadians support the fundamental principles, we agree that our health care system will require change. The throne speech commits to the convening of a first ministers meeting early in 2003 to put in a plan that will include the necessary changes in which the federal government will establish the federal long term investments that will be required and include those dollars in the next budget speech.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, the throne speech should be viewed as a road map laying out the path and outlining the priorities of the government on behalf of Canada. Although I am certain that there will always be those who felt it should have included this or perhaps it failed to mention that, overall, based on what the people in my riding of Niagara Centre feel are the issues of the day, and based on what I have heard presented and debated in the House during the past 20 or so months, I believe that the throne speech achieved the goal that it set out to achieve.

• (1640)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, when the government prepares the prepared text for the backbenchers, who get up and praise government, how much detail does it give to the members in relation to the topics they talk about?

The member just talked about the investment in health care. Would he tell us if the government will be looking at the discrepancies which exist in the country? If he was around last night, he would have heard me talk about the problems being faced right now in our province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Doctors are on strike, mainly because there is not enough money to pay them competitively with doctors in Atlantic Canada, not to say the rest of the country.

We get the bulk of our health care funding through the CHST formula, which means on a per capita basis. Every other province has either a stable or an increasing population. Newfoundland has a rapidly declining population. This means fewer dollars compared to everybody else to maintain the same plan. Not only that, the people

who are leaving are the young and healthy. Those left behind require greater expenditure. We get fewer dollars, have greater expenditures and a big, rough geographic area to service.

Will the government address discrepancies such as this as it moves ahead with its health care plans?

• (1645)

Mr. Tony Tirabassi: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his comments and concerns. I must say that previous to this summer, the furthest east I had travelled in Canada was Montreal. I made it a point this summer to take 10 days to visit the eastern provinces.

The member refers to the problem of the shortage of doctors in Newfoundland. For a different reason, we have those same issues in my area of the province. Doctors are retiring but they are not being replaced. Believe it or not, one of our most successful initiatives has been with local municipalities. They have been taking on doctor recruitment teams.

Do I feel comfortable that it has been left up to the municipalities with their dwindling resources to undertake this exercise? Absolutely not. Do I think that there should be more assistance from the province? Absolutely. Do I think that the federal government should play more of a role? Absolutely.

As I mentioned in my speech, we are looking forward to the Romanow Commission's report, which has widespread support in my area of the riding. We want to look at what the commission has to say about the scarcity of professional medical resources such as nurses and doctors. Hopefully, subsequent to the release of that report, a first ministers meeting will be convened to take that report and implement some of the changes that are needed.

We stand in the House of Commons and speak to Canadians about changes to health care, and there will have to be changes. However, I caution that with changes come a price and one way or another we will have to be prepared to pay for those changes.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to continue on with the health care theme, I think we all recognize the investment that was made in September 2000 by the government, in particular, the envelope of money that was made available for the acquisition of major medical equipment. I know it certainly had an impact across the country. We have seen the number of MRIs grow from around 52 to 106.

I know that my home constituency of Bras d'Or—Cape Breton is in the process of obtaining an MRI in our regional health facility. As well, we have been able to acquire digital X-ray equipment in some of the rural hospitals. We have had great success with that. Again, it reduces the lineups.

My question for the member is this. Does he believe that there is merit in the strategy outlined by the Prime Minister that we wait for the Romanow commission and then meet with the first ministers?

Mr. Tony Tirabassi: Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that when we see the results of the Romanow commission there will definitely be some merit in what was proposed by the Prime Minister.

The Address

There is one thing I would like to see improved. We talk about the procurement of specialized equipment like MRIs. In the province of Ontario we transfer money through CHST and through tax points. There is a gap in accountability between the federal government transferring the money and how the province accounts for it.

I hope that in the future we can get better accountability between the federal government and the provincial government so that when we transfer money we will know that those moneys are going exactly to address the particular areas they were designed to address. I hope this will also be addressed in the first ministers' conference when it is convened.

• (1650)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville. That is one of those Saskatchewan ridings and a very good one I might add.

I am here to respond to the Speech from the Throne, as are all the members who are speaking today. Being the official opposition defence critic, I will talk about the military. If I were to talk only about what was in the throne speech about the military, I would have to sit down right now. There was one sentence, and it did not say much. It was a motherhood statement. That was in the written text.

The Governor General did make a few comments which I thought were important and which were added in, on the efforts of our soldiers and the marvellous service of our army, navy and air force in the area of Afghanistan. But that was it. There was nothing concrete at all about the military in the throne speech. That omission tells an awful lot about the government, as did a report presented by the Conference of Defence Associations and the Auditor General's report on one aspect of military spending.

After the Conference of Defence Associations made its presentation today I responded to it. Eric Sorensen, a reporter for the CBC, asked some tough questions about defence funding. They were very interesting questions. He did not back off. He asked me if I were the Minister of Defence would I spend more money on health care or on the military? My response was that it was a bogus question.

First of all, the Canadian Alliance identified in the past more than \$7 billion of low priority or completely wasted spending by the government every year. That is money spent on political friends for projects that are not productive and other types of programs. The taxpayers' association identified about \$11 billion in low priority and wasted spending.

However there is something even more fundamental than that which has to be said. Defence and other security spending is different from any other spending in the government budget. It is different for at least two reasons.

First, it is the first responsibility of the government, above all else, to provide security for the nation, to protect the sovereignty of the nation, and to ensure that the citizens of the country are safe and secure. The government has forgotten that with its lack of effort over the last nine years and the way it has allowed our military to deteriorate.

There is something else as well which has to be considered. We have members talking about more money going to health care and other important social programs. We have the government with all of these ideas that were thrown out in the throne speech, and granted we do not know what they really mean, but it looks like an awful lot of spinning. Liberal members must ask themselves how will they raise the money for these programs.

I would like the members opposite in particular to think about how that can happen because Canadians are starting to recognize this. If it were not for our military and other security provided in the country, I would argue that our economy would not be able to operate in a way which would produce the money that funds all these social programs. Without a strong, capable military, and without the other security spending, there would be so much unrest in our country that our economy would not function in a way that would allow us to maintain our status as a wealthy nation. That is something that the government has forgotten. It has not been talked about by the government and I have come to the realization that it does not understand that.

That was the first question from Eric Sorensen. The second question he asked me was: if the government refuses to put substantially more money into defence then how would I reallocate resources?

• (1655)

If we look at the military, there is no area that we could tear out and throw away and still maintain an effective military. There is no large, substantial area we could cut out of our defence budget and not put our overall military at risk of collapse, even more than it is. Those are the facts. There is no area we can cut out.

However, there are ways that money could be better spent. That is the case for any department. It is the case in the defence department as well. The Auditor General did a good job of pointing out one of those areas. The Auditor General put out a report today on NATO flying training in Canada. It is in chapter 4 of her report. This NATO flying training program was intended to provide training to Canadian and international military student pilots to fly helicopters, F-18s and various other types of planes that our military has and that other NATO allies have.

This untendered \$2.8 million contract was given to Bombardier by the government. We talked about that at the time. The government tried to justify it, but it was unjustifiable. It was a sole source contract, untendered, given to its political friend, Bombardier. That is bad enough, and it is unacceptable. The government should answer to that.

We find out today from the Auditor General that only 41% of the training that was paid for by Canada was used. That means 59% of the pilot training that was paid for by the government went unused, and yet the payments still had to be made. That is \$65 million, according to the Auditor General, in the first two years of operation which were completely wasted.

The Address

The contract was set up so there was no requirement to perform or deliver. That is the government. I do not blame the military for that. I blame the government and its political process through Public Works, a process that it uses all too often to award contracts to political friends and does not require those friends to deliver. That is exactly what happened here. We can see that there are areas where the money must be better spent, though there are no areas that can be completely cut out.

Mr. Sorenson went on to ask: If the government will not spend more money on the military, then what would I do? My response, and the only response, was “I would elect a new government”, because that is the only thing we can do.

The government has refused to provide adequate funding to the military. We all know that. Various groups have made that point clear. Many Liberal backbenchers have made the same point, to the extent that the House of Commons committee has asked for a 40% to 50% increase in the military budget.

Approximately \$5 billion to \$6 billion a year must be added to the base budget three years from now. That is a lot of money added to the budget, but that is what the Liberal dominated House of Commons committee came up with. That is what the Canadian Alliance has proposed for some time, that we increase spending on our military, with \$2 billion immediately added to the base budget, and move it toward the NATO average. Yet the government has not responded to that.

The government has been dishonest in the way it has presented spending on the military. I want to refer to the Conference of Defence Associations and what it says in its report. It is absolutely right. These are things that our party has pointed out before. Of the \$1.2 billion that the government talks about that it spent for security, it talks about it all the time and the defence minister in his answer says that, only \$510 million was assigned to supporting Canada's military. So the real number is \$510 million, and some \$200 million of that was to fund the war in Afghanistan.

The government often says that it allocated \$5.1 billion to defence since 1999. This is the Conference of Defence Associations saying this. What the government did not say, according to the Conference of Defence Associations, is that much of this amount has been assigned either to non-military objectives or to the services and operations deficit. Only \$750 million has gone to military use over the past five years.

• (1700)

Canadians deserve honesty in reporting what spending actually has gone to the military. The government has not provided that and it should do that as a bare minimum to show some respect to Canadians.

There is virtually nothing in the throne speech. One motherhood statement on defence is not enough. We need \$2 billion in the next budget and then let us talk about what we want our military to be. It is going to take more money in the future.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was following attentively the comments made by our colleague from the Alliance Party. He said the first job of a nation is to defend itself.

Let us be reasonable. Canada is a huge country, the second largest land mass in the world. Our population is 31 million maximum. How does the member suggest that we defend this huge land militarily? We could draft every other person and I do not think there would be enough soldiers in the country to defend Canada's land mass.

As my colleague mentioned, the only enemy we have is nature. The country from coast to coast is about 5,500 kilometres and north to south it is about 4,800 kilometres. How much money can we pour into the system to defend this land mass which is impossible to defend?

If the member has suggestions besides saying increase the money, throw the money to the military, perhaps he could make them so people could hear how he proposes to defend the land mass.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Madam Speaker, the way the member asked the question, I would ask him what he wants to do. Does he want to give Canada away? Does he want to give the whole north away? Is that what he wants to do? Is the member saying that somehow we should not try to defend our nation? Is that what he is saying?

The way to defend the sovereignty of the nation is first to build a military that can make substantial contributions to our allies, our NATO allies or Norad allies and the United States. We should work with them but have a military that can stand on its own and provide units as needed to make a substantial contribution. That is the way to protect the sovereignty of our nation.

Then we work with our ally the United States in defending our country. We do not do it by allowing our military to collapse as the government is doing. The member's question demonstrates the thinking of the government. It is saying that it simply cannot spend the money needed to defend this country.

This is how bad it is. We had to beg the Americans. We had to hire large planes from the Americans for a strategic airlift to move our men and their equipment to the ice storms in Quebec and eastern Ontario and to the floods in Manitoba. Even within Canada we have to depend on our allies to get our men and their equipment to where they are needed.

What type of security is that providing to the citizens of Canada? It is unacceptable. Canadians more and more as they understand the situation are saying that it is not good enough. The government should provide more.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that my colleague just brought out the lack of heavy lift capability and the inability to even move our troops around Canada for domestic purposes. The other issue of course is with our peacekeeping role internationally. The lack of heavy lift makes it very difficult for us to get over there without hitchhiking a ride from our American neighbours. Would the member comment on that?

The Address

Further, the government cancelled the EH-101 contract leaving our forces with the rather old and embarrassing Sea Kings. They are now 40 years old and have very poor performance yet the Prime Minister has \$100 million to make sure his new aircraft is state of the art. Does that not put our servicemen as well as Canada's security and infrastructure at risk?

Mr. Leon Benoit: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. By cancelling the EH-101 contract and not replacing the Sea Kings, the Prime Minister has put our men and women in danger.

On more occasions than not the Sea Kings are not capable of fulfilling their missions. That means the frigates they are on are put in danger because they cannot fulfill their missions. I had a nephew who flew the Sea Kings until he got married and had children. Then he thought it was a risk he really did not want to take anymore.

It is completely unfair of the government not to provide the equipment needed to allow our men and women to do their dangerous jobs as safely as they possibly can.

In terms of strategic airlift, the defence minister just committed on behalf of Canada, or at least he has indicated he is going to, to a NATO rapid reaction force of about 20,000. It is a good idea. We should be committing to do that. There is no doubt we will have to buy strategic airlift and C-17s are probably what we will have to buy. If we make this commitment to NATO we had better be able to deliver because with the rapid response requirement, there will be no welsching on our promise under this circumstance.

Then we will have the planes for the earthquake in B.C. which is going to happen sometime, and it could be in 200 years, it could be next year. The people in that area deserve to know that should that happen at least we can get our military people in there to help deal with the disaster and the mess that follows a situation like that. At least then we would have the ability to get our troops and their equipment to the next ice storm as needed.

• (1705)

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I listened to the throne speech a while back and I have to begin by asking the government, why did we even have a throne speech? By their very nature throne speeches should signal that the government is initiating something new, that it is articulating some vision for the future. The lack of anything substantive really makes a joke of Parliament and what should transpire here.

The throne speech was in total contrast to the speech given by the leader of the Canadian Alliance. He articulated a vision for the future that made the throne speech appear like mindless babble. The power struggle within the Liberal Party has resulted in a complete paralysis in the introduction of new legislation or ideas to take Canada forward. The Canadian Alliance and its leader have offered the citizens of this vast country something that will benefit them all and leave their descendants in a better position than they are in now.

How would we as the Canadian Alliance do that? By getting the fundamentals right. We would redirect the focus of federal legislation to correct the problems that exist in our country. The Liberals simply tinker with a few symptoms that are the result of the problems we have.

We have problems with the Canadian economy. The Liberal approach to poverty, the lack of investment, a job deficit, an impoverished aboriginal population and the loss of our young people, our brain trust for the next generation, is to put more of the same policies in place that have already created these problems. Instead of higher taxation and more big government programs, why not put in place plans and policies that have proven to work in other jurisdictions? Lower taxes result in more investment and more jobs.

Let me emphasize this throughout my speech: strengthening property rights across Canada for everyone is one fundamental that we do not have right in our country. Property rights are absolutely essential in ensuring that the incentive to produce wealth and improve one's lot in life are not discouraged.

The obstacles facing our aboriginal population will not be overcome until they enjoy fundamental property rights. Property rights also help poor people improve their lot in life. They allow farmers and ranchers to pursue their livelihood without being hassled by wealthy multinational lobby groups. Property rights would allow agricultural producers to process their grain into value added products that would greatly improve their financial return.

Instead what do the Liberals do? At the beginning of a new session they recycle legislation that will have the opposite effect to what is intended because property rights are not respected. Examples of this type of legislation are Bill C-5 and Bill C-15B that have just been reintroduced without putting in amendments to ensure that property rights are respected. Liberal legislation to protect endangered species and prevent cruelty to animals will not be effective because the fundamentals are not right, that is, property rights are not in place.

Let me also note that one of the biggest flaws in Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, passed by the Liberals back in 1995, is that it does not protect the property rights of firearms owners and because this fundamental right is not properly protected, it will never work. It has resulted in a high level of civil disobedience. Non-compliance with gun registration is so high that to date, approximately only one-quarter of firearms are registered, despite the fact that it should be fully implemented by January 1, 2003.

Another serious fundamental flaw in the Canadian justice system is that criminals have more rights than their victims. Many examples abound and I do not have time to go into them, but Bill C-68 is one of them. Canadians want violence control, not a gun registry.

Another basic fundamental characteristic that Liberals do not have right is effective administration of government programs. The Auditor General's revelation today that there are five million more social insurance number cards issued to people over 20 than there are people in that age group in Canada is unbelievable.

The Address

• (1710)

This is four years after the government was warned that this was a huge problem that would lead to great abuses of the system and millions of dollars flowing to people who are not qualified to receive it. By the way, this occurred under a finance minister who is now touted to be the next prime minister of Canada. I do not believe Canadians should reward this kind of mismanagement.

Another example of gross government mismanagement is the firearms act. This boondoggle has now gone 11 times over budget. It will never be of any use to the police. It will never control crime or improve public safety in any way. The error rate is so high that even if the Liberals did lay a piece of paper beside every gun in the country, the information collected would not be useful in any way.

Another fundamental aspect of Canadian life that the government has totally backward is respect for privacy. Again legislation passed without proper respect for privacy will endanger Canadians, put them at more risk as a target for criminal activity and diminish their quality of life.

I must also mention another basic aspect of Canadian life and culture that the government is undermining. That is respect for the family.

Taxation policy undermines a couple's choice to have one parent stay at home and provide care for their children. Overtaxation is also forcing many couples to have both parents work. The basic exemption should be raised.

Marriage as the union of a man and a woman needs to be properly protected and encouraged as the foundation for a family. Under the Liberal government that protection is eroding the right of parents to raise their children in the way they feel will result in well-adjusted, happy and productive citizens of Canada. Liberals do not understand that children live in poverty because their parents are poor. What children need most is their family, not institutions or programs. Liberal values may sound good, but they do not work.

We see many examples in our society where if people are robbed of their incentive to better their lot in life, they will not. That is a basic fundamental aspect of life that Liberals just do not grasp or protect. It is leading to a serious decline in the quality of life in our nation.

The government is failing to protect farmers from foreign government policies that have a negative effect upon them. The Liberals failed to grasp the fundamental fact of international trade that the freer trade is, the more wealth that will be produced. Also not only will it help our country, but it will be better for any foreign country that is involved in this as well. It would be better than any foreign aid program that ever could be put in place for these countries.

We are losing our young people to other countries because the Liberals do not have the basic fundamentals right. In trying to protect certain corporations, they tax other businesses until they die. Those that need the jobs are devastated and move out.

The problems I am discussing basically are there because of a lack of understanding of the importance of property rights and respect for them. Liberals do not understand the fundamental laws of economics

and because they do not, they can never put in place policies that will reinvigorate our economy and standard of living. In fact the throne speech signals that they will put in place more big government programs that will have the opposite effect. We saw that mistake in the Speech from the Throne.

One of the best examples is the Kyoto accord. Not only is it based on unproven scientific theories, but the economic repercussions will in fact impoverish companies that will then be less able to practise environmentally friendly policies. This will be especially true in agriculture. Farmers who are squeezed even further financially, as the Kyoto accord would do, will resort to practices that will be more harmful to the land, air and water.

Let me conclude by saying that my experience here in Parliament has made it very obvious that there is another basic fundamental aspect of Canadian life that Liberals do not understand, and that is the essence of democracy. The corruption that exists within Liberal ranks strikes at the very heart of a free and open society that respects everyone equally. By giving handouts to their friends, Liberals at election time receive kickbacks that allow them to buy advertising and influence people to support them. This violates democracy.

• (1715)

Also, secrecy in government and dictatorial prime ministerial control do not allow the people of Canada to have their proper voice in how this country is run. This creates apathy and cynicism and within that atmosphere Liberals can continue to run roughshod over the citizens of this country.

I wish I had time to talk more about an elected Senate, free votes and private members' business.

This throne speech could have gone a long way in correcting some of these fundamental problems. It did not, so it should be soundly rejected.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciated the comments of my hon. colleague and his observations regarding the throne speech. He touched on the Kyoto accord and also mentioned the government's neglect of international trade agreements.

The area I come from in British Columbia is suffering under the effects of the softwood lumber dispute. I would like to link some ominous events. Five hundred jobs have been suspended for at least a month now in Port Alberni in my riding as mills have shut down. Even more ominous is the fact that in Fort Langley, B.C., a mill closed down permanently and moved its 56 jobs south of the 49th because of these tariffs, which are costing \$800,000 a month.

The Address

Interestingly enough, in the little U.S. town of Sumas right across the border there are two gas-powered electrical generating plants. One has to wonder what it would mean for an industry that moves to this little U.S. border town. I am thinking of our first mill, with 56 jobs going south of the border, and what that might mean if Kyoto is signed when our largest trading partner does not sign the energy accord. Will industries simply move across the 49th and set up on the other side, taking the jobs and the investment with them? I wonder if the member could comment further on what he sees as the potential threat for farmers and other industries with this accord being signed.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, I think the member has enumerated and described the problem very well. It does not really need further comment.

Because Liberals do not get the fundamentals right, they do not understand that free trade must be free trade. Liberals do not understand that when we engage in international agreements they have to be such that we will not be put at a disadvantage when compared to our competitors. Equality must exist between nations. Because they do not seem to understand that, we will be hurt in the softwood lumber industry, in agriculture and in many other areas. These repercussions will flow throughout the entire economy.

In answer to my hon. colleague, let me reiterate exactly the points I was making in my speech. Unless the Liberals begin to establish a society based on these sound principles, everything they do will fail. It has failed in the past, it is failing now, and it cannot be corrected until the policies and the legislation are based on sound fundamental principles. This is the failing we have with the softwood lumber industry. The basic principles that have to be right are economic principles that respect property rights, and those property rights run across borders. There have to be sociological and cultural principles that respect the family. That is not in direct relation to what the member has raised, but that is a basic fundamental that we have to get right. The third one I brought up I think really ties in with this indirectly: We must have democratic principles that respect all Canadians equally so that they will have their views respected and heard and defended at international bargaining tables. Too often the government favours certain groups and ignores others. That has created a lot of the problems in the international agreements that have been negotiated.

The member has raised some key problems that affect a lot of Canadians and I wish to thank him very much for his question.

• (1720)

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I know that my hon. colleague from Yorkton—Melville, like me, would abhor any kind of family violence. In the throne speech it sounds like the government is going to be protecting children from forces within the family. I would like to ask the hon. member if he agrees that there should have been more specific references to the protection of children from forces outside the family when in fact they are relatively safe within most families.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Madam Speaker, yes, the answer is simply that they need to be protected from things that are happening outside the family. Parents care for their children. There are exceptions and I think the law is in place for that kind of thing, but we have new problems facing us and our society. Pornography,

especially child pornography, is a serious problem. I think the government needs to address it. Restrictions need to be placed on the criminal activities that are having a very negative effect on the family.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mississauga West.

I am pleased to respond to our government's throne speech because it gives me an opportunity to outline some of the ways in which Hamiltonians and my constituents of Hamilton Mountain will benefit from the agenda the government has outlined.

The government has indicated its commitment to the values and institutions that Canadians hold dear and has introduced a socially progressive agenda. It is an inclusive vision which demonstrates that the government intends to follow through on its commitments to create opportunities for all Canadians and to ensure that no individual or family is left behind, while at the same time continuing to be fiscally responsible as we move forward in the new millennium.

There were many good programs announced in the Speech from the Throne. I will talk about several of them. I would like to highlight infrastructure, affordable housing, a commitment to alleviate child poverty, and long term investment in health care.

Cities are vital to our economic growth and well-being. Many of the residents of Hamilton, the ninth largest city in the country, live and work within the core of the city. The local politicians are working hard to make it a dynamic and safe place to live. Because of a restricted tax base, cities cannot do this alone.

Hamilton Mayor Bob Wade has particularly welcomed the government's plan to continue investment in urban infrastructure. The government has pledged to put in place a ten year program for infrastructure development. As an older city facing much needed repairs and upgrades in sewer, water and road systems, the City of Hamilton will benefit from this commitment.

In the Speech from the Throne, homelessness and affordable housing is another area the government pledged to address. Since 1998, homelessness in Hamilton has increased dramatically. The number of people staying in emergency shelters on a given night has increased from 172 in 1998 to 343 in November of last year. To date the government has invested \$753 million over three years in the national strategy to alleviate homelessness.

The supporting community initiatives project is administered by the Minister of Labour and Federal Coordinator on Homelessness. I must congratulate her. She has done a great job. She has allowed emergency housing services in Hamilton to meet the needs of a growing clientele by increasing the capacity of organizations in the city to provide these services. The federal government will be extending funding for the program.

The Address

It is hoped that the need for these programs will be temporary. The government has committed to work with our provincial and other partners to address shortages of affordable housing. There are approximately 3,600 families on the waiting list for affordable housing in Hamilton, with average waits of up to five years. We need affordable housing urgently. In addition to \$680 million that the government has already invested over the previous five years to address shortages of affordable housing, the Prime Minister has announced that the government will increase its investment in this area.

While a strong economy has improved conditions for many Canadians, including many Hamiltonians, there are some individuals and families who have been left behind. The government is committed to rectifying this situation. According to the Social Research and Planning Council of Hamilton, approximately 20,000 children in the city of Hamilton are living in poverty. This is an unacceptably high number.

To date, the Government of Canada has committed \$2.2 billion to the early childhood development agreement in partnership with provinces and territories. The agreement provides education and funding for healthy pregnancies, births, and infants, parenting and family support, and early childhood development. We have reaffirmed our commitment to continue working with our partners to increase access to early learning opportunities and to quality child care, particularly for poor and lone-parent families.

● (1725)

Currently the national child benefit supplement introduced by the government in 1998 provides \$2,444 for low-income families at the birth of a first child. In the throne speech we committed to increasing this amount. We will also put in place targeted measures for low-income families caring for severely disabled children and will work to improve services and education for first nations children.

Another issue that greatly concerns my constituents is the future of our health care system. Last June I sent out a survey to every household in my riding asking them for opinions on the current health care system and their priorities for the future. Over a thousand people took the time to respond and many of these same individuals also came to my town hall meeting on health. We heard that Hamiltonians want a public and universal health care system that addresses their health care needs in the doctor's office, in the hospital, and at home. They want more doctors and nurses, more home care, support for caregivers, a greater focus on overall health and wellness, pharmacare, and accountability of government money spent on health care. Responses from the questionnaires and the public meeting were sent to Mr. Romanow, the chair of the federal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, which reports to Canada next month.

The government has been listening to the concerns of Canadians regarding health care and has acted on their priorities. Last year, total Canada health and social transfer contributions amounted to \$34.6 billion: \$18.3 billion in cash transfers and \$16.3 billion in tax point transfers.

The Prime Minister has announced that he will convene a first ministers meeting early next year to discuss a comprehensive plan for the reform of the health care system. This will include long-term

investment from the federal government to ensure that Canadians, including the citizens of Hamilton, get the health care system that they want and deserve.

At my public forum on health, we listened to the stories of several people caring at home for ill spouses, parents or family members. The personal difficulties of caring for a loved one are often compounded by financial constraints placed upon individuals who may have to quit or decrease their hours of work to take on this task. In 1998, the government introduced a tax credit for caregivers to ease this aspect of their problem. In the throne speech last week, the government further pledged to modify existing programs to ensure that Canadians can provide compassionate care for a gravely ill family member without putting their jobs or incomes at risk.

I would point out to my hon. colleagues that there exists a tremendous opportunity here for us to move forward to address the priorities of Canadians and to implement a progressive and socially inclusive agenda for our country. The throne speech illustrates our government commitment to the values that Canadians hold dear: universal health care, the reduction of child poverty, functioning cities, and homes for the homeless. I look forward to working with our partners to implement this agenda for the betterment of all Canadians.

● (1730)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for her dissertation with regard to the throne speech. A couple of things gave me concern. It has been well noted that there has been an increase in child poverty. The government and the House, unanimously, promised to eliminate it. It concerns me that it has not really been a top priority of the government in terms of bringing action to words.

The hon. member mentioned homelessness. I was actually on the homelessness task force in Windsor. Her comments with regard to these being temporary measures concern me because there is no credibility. The situation with the food banks was supposed to be temporary, but what ended up happening? There has been an explosion of them in our communities and they are actually a social crutch due to the fact that the government has cut back on so many programs.

With that, there was mention of the tax credit. I would like to ask the hon. member whether she agrees or disagrees with the Minister of Finance, who is now narrowing the scope of those who can claim the disability tax credit. Does she agree with the minister in terms of narrowing that scope so that fewer persons with disabilities can actually claim it or does she oppose that?

Ms. Beth Phinney: Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member takes his job as a member of Parliament very seriously. The role of the opposition is very important but it is not just to criticize, it is to take part and help with solutions for the government as well. I hope that between now and when the budget comes out, probably in February, the hon. member will take part in the prebudget discussions and help with his ideas.

The Address

I have had some problems in my riding with the disability tax credit. People have spoken with me about it. We have been able to straighten out the problem for those who have approached me. They were able to get the amount they had before. I am not sure whether I am just lucky in my riding and have been able to solve the problems.

I hope it is not being cut back, unless people do not meet the criteria. That may be the case where a criteria was set up by the government and maybe some bureaucrats let people through who did not meet that criteria. Now they now are tightening up the procedure. That is the best I can answer the question for the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague who talked about the homeless. Maybe we need to remind her that seniors account for a large number of the homeless in our big cities, and that their number keeps increasing. While there are homeless young people, there are also homeless seniors.

I have not seen anything in the throne speech that would improve the way the government distributes the guaranteed income supplement. In the last few months, before Parliament was reconvened, we heard a lot about it. Many older low-income people did not have access to the guaranteed income supplement, partly because the forms were very hard to fill out and partly because the government had sometimes failed to contact the people who were eligible. In every region of Canada, some of the poorest people were being denied the guaranteed income supplement.

Does my colleague think that the government should consider full retroactive payment for those entitled to the guaranteed income supplement who did not get it?

[*English*]

Ms. Beth Phinney: Madam Speaker, there was a problem where some people did not realize they were eligible for the guaranteed income supplement.

The government has done a very good job of finding out where these people are, finding out who has not received this money in the past and ensuring that they get it. It did not have to be in the throne speech because the government did a good job of correcting the issue.

• (1735)

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to have an opportunity to continue. I have addressed the amendment to the throne speech and now I have an opportunity to finish what I was saying when my time ran out, and that is to put forward some thoughts on the Kyoto protocol.

First, one thing I find fascinating is that no matter where we are from, as members of Parliament, we are expected to be experts on all these various subjects. The Kyoto protocol of course involves some very scientific and technological information, stuff that not all of us necessarily would know firsthand, so we have to do some research. We have to try to listen to both sides of the equation.

I recently had the opportunity to travel to Calgary. I met with some of our crown corporation officials during the day and in the evening I attended a dinner at which the Prime Minister spoke. Of

course everyone was quite astounded that close to 900 people would be in attendance at that dinner.

I got to talk to a number of oil company executives, people who, generally speaking, are afraid of the impact of the ratification of Kyoto. They had spent some time during the day meeting with the Prime Minister and putting forward their concerns. They shared those concerns with many of us that evening.

I use this example because these are fairly learned individuals. I am not talking about people who, as some suggest, may be some charter members of the flat earth society and who may from time to time speak on this issue from this place. They are individuals who have done their homework and have had their staff and various companies do the analyses. They are expressing concerns, and I do not take them lightly. We have to listen to their concerns.

One thing I heard from them was that we could not put the burden of the war on climate change on the oil industry. I agree with that. In fact that evening the Prime Minister said in his speech that it was only one part of the solution, one part indeed of the problem.

I received a letter today which highlights my point about people who are learned and who know the situation. I will not mention the gentleman's name but he is a professor of geology from Kelowna, British Columbia. The letter identifies the real issue in Kyoto. He says that he believes climate change is the result of the melting of glacial ice which occurred 10,000 years ago. This is a professor, so I assume he knows a little of his stuff and has studied the matter.

His answer to what causes climate change is that naturally occurring events result in changes in solar radiation which lead to climate change: the eccentricity of the earth's orbit; the tilt of the earth's axis; the procession of the earth's axis; and sunspot cycles. He does not believe that human action, the things that we do in the production chain in our daily lives such as driving our vehicles and building our homes, is causing climate change. I do not know.

It seems to me that the average kid in grade three thinks that what comes out of the smokestack or the back of an automobile tailpipe, or burning coal or that kind of thing does something to the atmosphere. Yet we have a professor who says that the problem is caused by naturally occurring issues around the axis of the earth, which obviously we have no means of controlling.

I look at that and ask if that makes any sense. I am not a professor of geology. I have not studied the scientific impacts of this. However, in terms of common sense, it leaves me somewhat frustrated. We all know there are things we can do to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

The Address

● (1740)

I was in Calgary recently and I met with the president of Nascor Inc. I would invite anyone to see this company's operation. It builds prefabricated walls, floors and trusses for homes that are very highly insulated with byproducts, by the way, from the oil industry. It is right in Calgary and it has done studies showing that if its housing systems were used in the construction of a home it would increase the cost of an average home by \$500 but that it would reduce the cost of heating that home by 50%.

Nascor Inc. has a system which, if it were used nationally across the country in the construction of housing, would probably on its own meet the Kyoto requirements that we are talking about. However we are not about to institute a national building requirement that says that we must use this company's product. The company has to go out and promote its particular product, and it is doing that in the housing industry.

What we can do, and I say this to those who are opposed to the Kyoto protocol, we as the national government can ensure that any of the housing projects in which we are involved will at least be insulated to the same level that Nascor's housing system would insulate and therefore reduce the cost of housing. The natural benefit of doing that would seem obvious. We could save people money in heating their homes and we could meet the Kyoto protocol requirements.

There is another aspect to saying that what we do has no impact. There is the impact on transit and how we move people. Again I go back to Calgary. In the area of Garrison Woods, a community with which some in this place might be familiar, a project was developed by Canada Lands Company Limited, a company that is a crown corporation of the Canadian government. Sixteen hundred units have been built in this project and not one door is more than a five minute walk away from municipal transit. It is a very creative project and is celebrated as a true success story in municipal planning and development. Once again, if people can walk five minutes to get to a bus, maybe if that bus is available, on time and reasonable, they will use that public transit vehicle and leave their automobile at home.

That is another area where obviously the government has led the way in terms of Canada Lands and one in which we can lead the way in working with municipalities, with our partners. I received a news release today about the \$250 million that was given to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for green infrastructure. This is another area I submit that would lead to us meeting the Kyoto requirements in the Kyoto protocol.

We have to make a decision as parliamentarians. Maybe it is because it is the opposition's job to be a little obstreperous and to oppose the government, because that is what it is told to do every day when it goes to a caucus meeting, but there are some thoughtful people in the opposition. There are some thoughtful people in the oil fields. There are some thoughtful people in Kelowna, British Columbia. I have to say to them that they cannot possibly believe that human activity does not have a serious impact on the quality of the air that we breathe. It is just not reasonable to suggest that it is all a part of the ice age, the melting of the glacial ice cap. It is just not reasonable to believe that.

I have heard criticism after criticism from members opposite and from the media that there is no leadership being shown. By announcing that there will be a vote in Parliament on the Kyoto protocol before the end of the year, contrary to the statements being made in somewhat emotional ways that there will be no plan, there will be a plan put before Parliament before the vote is taken.

● (1745)

Will it dot every *i* and cross every *t*? Will it solve every problem? I doubt it. We need to take the time to study the issue fairly in an unbiased way. We need to recognize that there is a serious problem in pollution and work together with the industries in Alberta and right across the country so that we leave a better climate and a better atmosphere for our children.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like my friend across the way to clarify a couple of things.

He talked a lot about the rhetoric around the debate and the vision for the future and leadership. We do not want a leadership that is foolhardy, that says we all jump off the cliff together.

When he talks about Kyoto, we want to make sure that he is honest with the public, that there is a clear distinction between pollution and climate change. I often hear them mixed up. Everybody is against pollution.

Do we have any cost benefit analysis for anything that we do and the investments that we make? To penalize behaviour through disincentive taxes, to perhaps reduce gasoline consumption, to change industrial activities or whatever would be done through some subsidies that would cost. Also, penalty taxes to shape behaviour would be tremendously disturbing to the economy, but perhaps that is what we need to do.

However, the cost of that versus the benefit has never been laid before Parliament. In fact it has never been laid before the Canadian people anywhere. We need some kind of cost benefit analysis. Canadians are prepared to dig into the issues, look at them and make a judgment, but the scenarios are being kept away from them. It is all on emotionalism. It is much like what I would describe the member was trying to promote this afternoon, that it is the patriotic thing to do, or it is the reasonable good thing to do, because it makes us feel good.

We all want to feel good about doing right for the environment, but where is the cost benefit analysis? Tell me why some of those things were even denied his caucus. When they were discussing the issue, they were kept from that caucus.

I am suggesting that we had better be very careful before we spend a lot of money which would have very little benefit for climate change, because that is what it is all about, climate change.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, normally one gives the answer he or she wants to give to the question and does not answer the question. I will answer the member's question by giving him two examples of actual savings that have occurred.

Point of Order

Sterling Pulp Chemicals Limited has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by almost 95% in its facility in Buckingham, Quebec by turning waste into fuel. After it made an initial investment of \$1.1 million this company now enjoys a \$2.28 million per year savings in lower energy costs. That is number one.

Number two, British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell have made long term commitments to make the transition out of fossil fuel, which is what we are talking about. They are spending large amounts of money on renewable energy. BP, whose new slogan is "Beyond petroleum", has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by nine megatonnes in just three years and has added \$650 million U.S. to the value of its operation through energy efficiency.

These are facts. These are from the private sector. These are companies that have taken the lead. They are not sticking their heads in the sand and saying, "We are not part of the problem". Instead they are saying, "We want to be part of the solution".

Everybody should be honest and recognize that it is not the melting of the ice cap that has led to the problem we are facing with climate change but in fact it is human activity. We should change it, not because it is patriotic, but because we owe it to our kids to change it. The first way to change it is to start admitting there is a problem, which is exactly what we have done by signing the Kyoto protocol.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has talked tonight about honesty and leadership.

My question is simple. With regard to his position, are they still seeking credits with regard to the signing of Kyoto?

The Prime Minister has stated to the world community that he will sign the agreement and implement it. At the same time, he has come back to Canada and said that there is a credit system that he will unilaterally introduce to the whole actual agreement.

With regard to the actual credit system, is that something they will complete or will they actually live up to the Prime Minister's world commitment?

• (1750)

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, first, let me say that when this country exports clean fuel to the United States, which allows it to not have to use another source of fuel, we should get credit for that because we are working with our partners in the United States, which is all I hear about from over there, to ensure there is compliance.

I also have heard that one of the the biggest problems is the fact that George W. Bush, who happens to come from Texas, no small wonder, is opposed to ratifying Kyoto and yet he has approved over \$3 billion in American money toward meeting the Kyoto commitment. There is no question that this is a joint effort but Canada will show the leadership that is required by having a vote in this place. It is my hope that we will ratify Kyoto and get on with the commitments the Prime Minister made.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank you for correctly identifying the four regional county municipalities that

comprise my riding. I will be sharing my time with the member for Châteauguay.

To take part today in this debate on the throne speech seems almost bizarre. A Speech from the Throne is usually a sign of major changes, of a significant shift in government measures. In this case, one week after the throne speech was delivered, we have already gone back to the old routine.

This Speech from the Throne contained no major changes; there was nothing significant indicating to Quebeckers and Canadians that the government would try to find ways of solving important problems quickly.

Why do we find ourselves in this situation? Because, within the Liberal Party of Canada, which is currently in office, there is a huge debate as to who will succeed the current Prime Minister. Will it be the former Minister of Finance, who left the cabinet and now seems to be playing the role of leader of an opposition party that does not exist? This situation even has an impact on the throne speech that was delivered to us, which was nothing more than a collection of very loosely related statements that provided no vision, when we would have liked to see a clear vision in this throne speech.

Today, we may have had a more concrete example of that. Members will remember that the throne speech contained very little on the softwood lumber issue. There were very few clear indications that the Government of Canada would defend the workers and the industries and would see them through these rough times until we win the fight against the Americans in this dispute.

The plan presented today reflects this kind of wishy-washy throne speech that offers no indication that the government has the energy and the determination to get through this situation.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS—SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt the member, but I had promised to table in the House, before the end of the day, the document released earlier by the Minister for Natural Resources.

I just got it and since I only have five minutes left to table it, I wish to do so at this time.

Again, I apologize to the hon. member for interrupting his excellent speech.

*The Address***SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

● (1755)

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I would like to indicate to the hon. member that he has until 6 p.m. to complete his speech. No one will speak after him. The vote on the amendment to the amendment will be held at 6.15 p.m. The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I find it very impressive that this action plan on softwood lumber would be released in Vancouver this afternoon when debates on this very issue, including an emergency debate requested by myself, have taken place in this House. The government did not see fit to table it in the House. This is consistent with the two lines in the throne speech concerning softwood lumber and agriculture.

It is becoming obvious that the government is taking a piecemeal approach to management. It has come up with very few comprehensive solutions that would make the regions feel supported by the Canadian government in our dispute with the Americans.

I would also like to touch briefly on the infrastructure program for urban centres. I think that the issue of urban transportation is interesting but there is a major shortcoming in that all rural areas in Canada and Quebec also need substantial investments. Initially, funding was provided to each municipality under the infrastructure program, and projects were carried out across Quebec and Canada.

With respect to urban transportation, the new infrastructure program is designed exclusively for large urban centres. While it may be well targeted, I cannot understand the need to exclude those who want to make sure that our rural areas have appropriate transportation, water and sewage systems, in order to make life easier.

In the throne speech, not enough attention is paid to the important segment of Quebec and Canada that the rural community represents, or to rural life and to the support this community needs.

An hon. member: What about air transportation?

Mr. Paul Crête: There is obviously the entire issue of air transportation where, while we are talking about the Speech from the Throne, regional air routes are systematically being dismantled. It has gotten to the point where it will no longer be possible to fly between Mont-Joli and Quebec City, a service that has existed for more than ten years.

This is another example of what the Speech from the Throne should have included: measures to offset the incompetence encountered in the current market. There is also the fact that Air Canada, among others, which has stopped serving several locations, is getting off scot-free. It has to deal solely with market realities.

This is a very clear sign of the government's apathy when it comes to the issue of market regulation.

We have also witnessed a very weak response when it comes to the use of milk byproducts. This has led to the situation today whereby a significant share of Canada's dairy market, 2% or 3%, has been lost because of the systematic importing of American products, which get by because they contain less than 51% milk products. I think that it is important that we have every opportunity to save our supply management system. In addition to talking the talk, there needs to be real action. That is what farmers expect from us.

In closing, the Kyoto protocol must be signed as soon as possible because if there are costs, if there is a price to pay for action, there is an even greater price to pay for inaction, and the generations yet to come need us to make these choices now. Moreover, in the region I represent there is an extraordinary potential for wind power and that will be able to be exploited if the Kyoto protocol is signed and implemented.

Today I was reading an article about a number of companies in Quebec and in Canada that have taken steps to improve their energy-related practices. I personally believe that, once Kyoto is signed, there will be some very dynamic and energizing action in a number of industrial sectors. The catastrophic scenarios painted for us, the huge job losses, will be replaced by a scenario of job creation, significant job creation in fact. As well, we will have succeeded in improving the condition of the planet.

I will close on that note because it is indeed 6 p.m. I think the government has missed the boat. It has given us a throne speech that lacked the content the public was expecting of a mid-mandate throne speech.

● (1800)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It being 6 p.m. it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment and of the amendment now before the House.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): In my opinion, the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Call in the members.

The Address

● (1830)

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 6)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Breitreuz	Brien
Brison	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Clark	Crête
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Elley	Epp
Fitzpatrick	Forseth
Fournier	Gallant
Gauthier	Godin
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Harper	Hearn
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Masse
Mayfield	McDonough
McNally	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Nystrom
Obhrai	Pallister
Pankiw	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz	Robinson
Roy	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Toews
Tremblay	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylcia-Leis
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)
Williams	Yelich — 102

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Caplan	Carignan
Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chrétien	Coderre

Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cotler
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Duplain
Easter	Efford
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Folco
Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Mathews
McCallum	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pacetti	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood — 142

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Cauchon
Dhaliwal	Drouin
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Girard-Bujold	Graham
Laframboise	Lincoln
Owen	Pagtakhan
Rocheleau	St-Hilaire — 14

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.
[*English*]

The next question is on the amendment.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House that the vote just taken on the subamendment be applied to the amendment.

The Speaker: Is there consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 7)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Breitkreuz	Brien
Brisson	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Clark	Crête
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Elley	Epp
Fitzpatrick	Forseth
Fournier	Gallant
Gauthier	Godin
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Harper	Hearn
Herron	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Lalonde	Lancôt
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Masse
Mayfield	McDonough
McNally	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Nystrom
Obhrai	Pallister
Pankiw	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz	Robinson
Roy	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Toews
Tremblay	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)
Williams	Yelich — 102

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Caplan	Carignan

The Address

Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chrétien	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cotler
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Duplain
Easter	Efford
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Folco
Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Matthews
McCallum	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pacetti	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood — 142

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Cauchon
Dhaliwal	Drouin
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Girard-Bujold	Graham
Laframboise	Lincoln
Owen	Pagtakhan
Rocheleau	St-Hilaire — 14

The Speaker: I declare the amendment negated.

It being 6:32 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:32 p.m.)

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