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HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a long tradition of active involvement within the UN field of human rights. This tradition started with the late John Humphrey, one of the architects of the international bill of rights and the first director of the UN human rights division.

Canada continues to play a prominent role in promoting universal human rights and in strengthening international human rights mechanisms.

Since the establishment of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1993, Canada has sought to integrate the activities of the high commissioner and other human rights institutions into the UN's political, security and developmental activities and into the early warning and preventive work of the organization. This is an indication of Canada's overall emphasis on addressing root causes of instability which is consistent with the vision UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali outlined in his "Agenda for Peace".

As we welcome the UN Secretary-General to our nation's capital, let us reaffirm Canada's commitment to promote human rights in the community of nations and to strengthen the United Nations.

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LINCOLN AND WELLAND REGIMENT

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment from St. Catharines have recently received two additional and long overdue battle honours from World War II.

The medals are in honour of the exceptional conduct and courage of the members of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment while part of the 10th Infantry Brigade of the Canadian 4th Armoured Division during battles in Kustan Canal and Bad-Zwisch, Germany in April 1945.

Colonel Don Muir, a major in command of a rifle battalion during both battles, noted that fighting was very intense in those last weeks of the war. Roy Adams, the regiment's president and also a veteran of those battles noted that his only regret is that many of the men who helped them earn these honours have passed away.

I would just like to say how proud I am and all Canadians are of our veterans. Their dedication, discipline and sacrifice made an allied victory possible in the second world war.

Congratulations to the Lincoln and Welland Regiment on this well earned, overdue honour.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, western Canadian farmers are frustrated by the manner in which the WGTA payout is being handled. The lack of direction in providing formulas for sharing of the payment by landowner and tenant producer has caused confusion, tension and in many cases bitterness at the farm gate. Farmers who have financial agreements with the Farm Credit Corporation are particularly upset with its handling of the WGTA payout.

The minister instructed the FCC in March 1995 to pass along the benefit to producers. That benefit has mysteriously shrunk over the last eight months to a whopping 25 per cent of the benefit. Their questionable rationale was that holding back 75 per cent of the benefit would result in lower lease and sale agreements. The fact is the Farm Credit Corporation lease agreements and buyback asking prices have actually increased by as much as 20 per cent.

● (1405)

Farmers are demanding that the agriculture minister and the Farm Credit Corporation honour their original commitment to the producers of prairie grain.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's thinly disguised threats to the CBC, which he accuses of not fulfilling its mandate as a promoter of Canadian unity, are an attack on the freedom of the press.

It is therefore not surprising that the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec has launched a petition aimed at preserving the independence of this crown corporation. The FPJQ feels that the Prime Minister has questioned the corporation's independence from the government.

For the Bloc members, there is nothing ambiguous about the message between the lines of what has been said by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the minister of fisheries: the CBC is vulnerable to government pressure.

Now one wonders whether the scope of the budget cuts is not a form of reprisal by the Prime Minister, who has never accepted the change in the CBC's mandate and sees it as nothing more than a propaganda organ.

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LEADER OF THE BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the election of the Parti Québécois in September 1994, the people of Quebec have been held hostage by a handful of power hungry politicians with nothing better to do than to govern by referendum.