

S. O. 31

● (1410)

Mr. Bélanger's willingness to serve augers well for the future of this House. The positive results of all last evening's byelections auger well for the future of Canada.

Bienvenue and welcome to the new member for Ottawa—Vanier, Mauril Bélanger.

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[Translation]

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, many representatives of national cultural institutions and arts organizations are participating in a cultural sector summit to discuss the future of the artistic community.

In the meantime, the federal government seeks to help spread Canadian culture through its foreign policy. How can it make such a claim when, at the national level, it is slashing the arts and culture budgets, in particular at Telefilm and the CBC?

This government even has the nerve to undertake phoney, improvised and botched consultations through the Canada Council to ask artists where it should make further cuts.

The heritage minister's complicity speaks volumes about this government's respect for culture and the artistic community.

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[English]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending and speaking at a tax rally alert last night in St. Catharines sponsored by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

The event drew an overflow crowd of some 800 concerned taxpayers with a strong message for the finance minister: "No new or increased taxes". Several of those in attendance spoke about where they felt spending cuts could be made and how important it was for the government to understand it has a spending problem and not a revenue problem.

As a result of this addiction to tax and spend, our debt clock this morning was \$549,892,000,000.

The crowd's reaction to the reported comment of the revenue minister that the government will not be influenced by protests was one of the loudest of the rally, second only to a demand for cuts, not scrapes, to our MP pension plan.

You choose to ignore the people we work for at your peril. No longer are Canadians prepared to roll over and take it from politicians who are not listening.

[Translation]

SAINT-HENRI—WESTMOUNT AND BROME—MISSISQUOI

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud and happy today to draw attention to the fine victories achieved by Lucienne Robillard in Saint-Henri—Westmount and by Denis Paradis in the by-election in Brome—Missisquoi last night.

In addition to underscoring the hard work by the members of his team, Mr. Paradis' victory is a strong warning to separatist forces. It is also a good indicator of the mood of the people of Quebec in this period before the referendum, whatever one might say. Quebecers will not be fooled by separatist rhetoric. They are well aware of the issues in this debate. The many still unanswered questions about an independent Quebec in year one contributed as well to this victory by the Liberal Party.

This message the people of the ridings of Brome—Missisquoi and Saint-Henri—Westmount have given to the separatist forces should encourage the Quebec minister of finance to present his famous year one budget. Quebecers will then have an opportunity to see the hidden face of independence for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, the third period is well underway, and Canadians are in the lead.

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[English]

LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an historic day for all residents of the Yukon, indeed for all Canadians. Today the Yukon Land Claims, Self-Government and Surface Rights Board Acts come into effect marking the culmination of a process that began exactly 22 years ago.

For Yukon First Nations this means a secure land and financial base, and greater control over their own affairs. For the Yukon territory as a whole this opens an era of greater stability and opportunity.

Today aboriginal and non-aboriginal Yukoners alike stand in partnership to celebrate this long awaited achievement. I am certain that hon. members will join me in extending congratulations to all residents of the Yukon on this historic day.

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BYELECTIONS

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):

We watched with great interest three byelections here;
Showing to Canadians that Liberals have naught to fear.
The seats were all so safe no one else need apply,
The rest should just watch hockey
No sense to even try.
Ha! we've got them on their haunches,
We'll drop the writ when no one's here.