

*S. O. 31*

Again, this goes to show that, in Quebec, there are exceptional people prepared to face exceptional circumstances, and the Bloc Québécois salutes the extraordinary solidarity displayed on this occasion.

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[English]

**ELVIS STOJKO**

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate Elvis Stojko on winning his second world figure skating championship.

Elvis displayed unbelievable athletic ability, the grace of a true champion and the humility of a real sportsman. Residents of Barrie in my riding are especially proud as Elvis trains at the Mariposa Figure Skating School under coach Doug Lee. We all have something to be proud of in this young man as he demonstrates the spirit and rich culture of Canada, something our Secretary of State for Multiculturalism would do well to note.

Elvis Stojko, Brian Orser and Kirk Browning, all Canadian and all world champions have placed Canada number one in the world, seven in the last nine years and the tradition continues.

I am sure all members will join with me in paying tribute to this outstanding young Canadian.

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**UNITED STATES BORDER CROSSING FEE**

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my grave concerns on President Clinton's budget proposals to charge a \$3 per vehicle and \$1.50 per pedestrian border crossing fee to enter the United States. The proposal has not been withdrawn as we were led to believe but has been altered to put undue pressure on U.S. border communities to encourage implementation.

These proposed fees violate the spirit and intent of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA. These proposed fees would stifle economic development and economic integration of communities and regions on both sides of the border to the detriment of us all.

These proposed fees would seriously discourage tourism and open travel between our respective countries. They would hamper visitation between families who in a literal sense straddle the border.

These fees are questionable economics and questionable diplomacy in an era of increased trade and goodwill with our friendly neighbour to the south.

I strongly urge the Prime Minister to advise the President of our strongest objection to this unwise, counterproductive and unacceptable tax.

Retaliation is not an answer. Friends do not treat each other this way. Withdrawal of the proposed fees is the only solution. The constituents of Erie riding, of the Niagara peninsula and indeed of the whole country deserve and demand nothing less.

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**TAXPAYERS BILL OF RIGHTS**

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House of my private member's initiative which I have called the taxpayers bill of rights and is currently being drafted.

Summaries of this legislation have been submitted to professional bodies and interest groups across Canada. I would like to thank them for their comments and suggestions. People from British Columbia all the way to Newfoundland have written to me and expressed their support for this initiative.

Greater financial accountability for existing and future programs, the protection of taxpayers from the onerous powers of collection authorities and the establishment of a taxpayers' ombudsman are part of this bill.

Finally and most important, it establishes a cap on the amount of taxation an individual can be subjected to and it provides for refunds over this threshold amount. A gradual reduction of thresholds by 1 per cent per year over the next 15 years will give taxpayers the assurance that we have put limits on the tax grab on disposable incomes.

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[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, March 8 was a perfect opportunity to remember that, over the years, Quebec and Canadian women have made great progress in their efforts to reach equality. All women should be pleased with the progress made, and we should take the means available to us.

I want to salute every woman who quietly goes about her task but whose contribution is essential to our common well-being. I also thank the pioneers and those who played, and continue to play, an active role in women's organizations, so as to ensure better conditions for their fellow women.

Finally, I want to express my solidarity and my admiration to all the women, in many countries, who fight to have their most fundamental rights respected. To those women, I wish to send a message of courage and hope.