

Oral Questions

safety education training. It would appear that there has been inadequate consultation and instruction among the federal justice department, the chief provincial firearms officers and the RCMP.

While the Canadian public supports firearms regulations and gun owners are the first to agree with the necessity of safety, if the confusion and misinformation currently being distributed causes law-abiding citizens who own firearms to decide not to register, what has the law achieved?

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SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, today is the 328th birthday of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th guru of the Sikh religion. He sacrificed his father, his sons and himself to preserve the faith of his people.

It is the Sikh duty to walk in the footsteps of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji for the welfare of all human beings.

Let us remember the 10th guru by his belief that all persons are the same though they appear different: the bright, the dark, the ugly and the beautiful.

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• (1420)

BROCKVILLE

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, here in the capital a few weeks ago my home town, the small city of Brockville, was presented with the national municipal award for environmental leadership.

Brockville was chosen for the prestigious award over 15 other Canadian cities. Brockville was chosen for its pioneering of a successful recycling program several years ago. This successful program and other measures have resulted in an extension of several years to the city's landfill site. It is truly a success story.

I want to extend my congratulations to Mayor Doran, all the councillors, as well as all the citizens of Brockville who participated. They improved the environment and brought positive recognition to the city of Brockville.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, let me offer my personal congratulations and those of the constituency I represent, Thunder Bay—Nipigon. Our congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and our very best wishes. May I, on behalf of the people I represent, welcome you to visit with us in Thunder Bay at your earliest convenience.

There are many issues facing this government. I can think of no more serious issue than the protection of our natural resources, particularly our forestry industry.

The forestry industry is Canada's largest industry. There are over three-quarters of a million jobs as a direct result of our forestry industry which creates over \$40 billion in wealth in this country. It is our largest single export commodity.

I ask all members of this House, my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, the Reform Party and the New Democratic Party to strongly endorse a policy of reforestation in this country that will protect the forestry industry in Canada, not only for our generation but for generations to come.

The Speaker: Colleagues, the Chair takes note that I have gone overtime because I used extra time at the beginning. It would be the intention of the Chair, with your agreement of course, to cut off the statements precisely at 2.15 p.m. I propose to do that tomorrow.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the federal debt went above the \$500 billion mark. In general, people were disappointed with the Throne Speech in that there was no mention of any true resolve on the part of the government to address with determination the issue of deficit reduction. The Throne Speech confirmed all of the fears about the threats facing our social programs.

Are we to understand from the Throne Speech that the government, lacking the courage to make the hard choices that are necessary, has decided to reduce the deficit at the expense of the less fortunate by cutting funding to social programs?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the Leader of the Opposition once again that the government has a very clear program for deficit reduction and that the Minister of Finance will be tabling a budget next month. When the Minister of Finance met with his provincial counterparts and when I myself met with the provincial premiers in December, we made it very clear that we had no intention of reducing transfer payments to the provinces.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I take what the Prime Minister just said as a commitment from the highest-ranking law-maker in the land. But how can we take this commitment seriously when we contrast it with a statement made recently by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who publicly said he would like to see health care