

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 21, 1990

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for months I have been asking the Quebec government to finish work on Highway 117. When the Liberal Member for Lasalle—Émard visited Abitibi—Témiscamingue, he said on the Radio Nord station, on March 12, that Highway 117 was in terrible shape and that Quebec was prepared to speed up repairs on the highway.

I find that surprising, to say the least, because on March 7, 1990, the Minister responsible for Transport in Quebec, Mr. Yvon Vallières, answered my letter dated January 18 in the following terms:

“Further to your letter of January 18, 1990, in which you support requests by the regional county municipalities of Vallée-de-l’Or and Antoine-Labelle to speed up work on Highway 117, I am sure you will understand that considering the present budget situation, I can make no commitment to speed up repairs, and this applies not just to Highway 117 but to the entire province.

However, I intend to set aside \$850,000 in 1990–91 for work on Highway 117 within the boundaries of the Abitibi—Témiscamingue region. Work on Highway 117 will continue according to the initial schedule, always allowing for the availability of funding in the years to come”.

[*English*]

RURAL VITALIZATION DAY

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, Rural Dignity of Canada has proclaimed today as the second annual Rural Vitalization Day.

It is a time to pause and pay tribute to all those Canadians living in rural Canada who supply us with our food, our forest products, our mineral wealth, a good part of our recreational spaces, as well as a lot of other goods and services.

Unfortunately, much of rural Canada is in crisis today. Farming and the fishery are presently going through a catastrophic economic period so severe that the very future of thousands of farm and fishing families is at immediate risk.

If urgent government action is not taken, these families will be forced out of business and their communities will wither and die. We must stop closing rural schools, post offices and hospitals. Instead, we must take steps to ensure economic and social stability for the rural communities of Canada.

It is time we recognize the immense benefits this country derives from our rural resources, and return to rural Canadians a fair share of those benefits.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, racism divides communities and leads to discrimination, which can destroy the fabric of a just and compassionate society.

As Canada celebrates the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, I salute the Canadian Ethnocultural Council for its noon program on Parliament Hill, which called to the consciousness of all today’s celebration.

It is fitting that this House sets the tone for a national policy on racial equality and hears once more the words of retired Supreme Court Justice McIntyre: