

The Address

but I hope we will not be penalized because of the October 25 election.

Several municipalities in Quebec cannot afford to pay a third of the costs. Will the government include, in the agreements with Quebec, rules or specific clauses in order to help small municipalities, maybe through the labour market, maybe by allowing them to pay on a half-time basis since, in some cases, spill-overs from the tourist industry bring additional revenues to municipalities, but only six months a year. For the smaller municipalities, it could also mean—one third, one third—if they want to take advantage of the program, it could force them to borrow the necessary money. Already they cannot support their poverty rate. Will the government think of additional revenues that could help small municipalities? Will each municipality be the local project manager, will they be able to encourage the local economy and local workers?

[English]

Mr. Alcock: Madam Speaker, I am not going to begin to respond to the specific question about some municipalities in the member's riding because I am not the minister responsible for the infrastructure program.

I would like to point out a couple of things to him. The previous member for his party who spoke on this issue made a comment that this sort of tripartite arrangement, federal-municipal-provincial, was unheard of. Certainly that is not the case in my province.

This kind of arrangement where the three levels of government come together to jointly share responsibility for major public works is quite common. Municipalities, Indian reserves and others are all participating in it.

On the allocation of funds, the one thing that is different about this government from the previous government is that these decisions are made on an open rational basis. In this case, it was a mixing of population and unemployment. There was a criteria set and not: How many Liberals did you elect?

This is unlike the previous government. I think we are further ahead for that kind of decision-making.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Time has terminated for questions and comments.

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to stand in the House today as the member for Essex—Windsor.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the residents of Essex—Windsor for giving me the privilege to represent them in the House of Commons. Indeed, it is a privilege to have this opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment and to congratulate the Speaker on his election. You have your work cut out for you to reform this House and I pledge my full support to those efforts.

One of the primary reasons that I decided to run for public office was that I was concerned and I believe that Canada's tax system needs to be reformed. That is not just our tax policy but our collection system as well.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, I have been given the opportunity to be closely involved in such reforms. I want to thank the Prime Minister for that opportunity and for appointing me. I intend to make the most of it.

During the election, we all know that we promised to replace the GST. The throne speech repeats this commitment, the same commitment I made to the residents of Essex—Windsor. This tax which was introduced by the previous government has been disastrous for Canadian businesses. It has fuelled an under-ground economy that threatens to destroy Canada's social fabric. Some critics have expressed concern that the throne speech fails to identify the GST replacement. But for the throne speech to identify the replacement would be a betrayal of the Canadian public.

● (1705)

The Prime Minister told Canadians over and over during the election that in the first session of this new Parliament he would mandate an all-party finance committee to consult Canadians and provincial governments on all options to the GST. That is exactly what the Prime Minister has done.

I would encourage all residents of Essex—Windsor who want their views on tax reform to be made available to the committee to send their letters, their briefs, their charts directly to myself and I will make sure they are presented to the standing committee.

I mentioned that one of my primary reasons for running and entering politics was to tackle tax reform. I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to acknowledge and pay tribute to the people who, through example, showed me the value of public life. I speak of my parents.

My father, Eugene Whelan, as many members know, spent a considerable part of his life in this House. Indeed, some of the members in the present House served with him. I want you to know that my father was not alone in his endeavour. My mother was always at his side. They were truly a team. Both were raised