

The Address

The Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and of the amendment.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, my speech began at 1.52 p.m. and was closed off at two o'clock. I would like two additional minutes to conclude my remarks before we have questions and comments, if I may.

The Speaker: All right. Finish off.

Mr. Regan: As I was saying, I am pleased that we in this House will help to save another \$5 million by doing our part. I am also in favour of reforming the MPs' pension plan.

Canadians are watching to see whether we are here to serve ourselves or our country. I believe we are on the right path.

• (1510)

What a thrill it is to be here to serve my country, Mr. Speaker, for I believe that politics is and must be about building a better Canada. In spite of all the challenges we face I still see Canada as a beacon to the world. I still see Canada as a country that shows the world how to live in peace and harmony. It is plain to see that right now the world needs the shining example that is Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member and I certainly have some comments and especially a few questions for him.

I listened to the speech of the Minister of the Environment, but as I did not have the opportunity to ask her a question, I will ask it of the hon. member who dealt with the same issue, that is the conflict between the Environmental Quality Act passed a few years ago in Quebec and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act passed a few months later. Because of the differences between the two acts, whenever an environmental assessment is required, we must make two, one for the Quebec government and one for Canada.

Here is another example. The top executives of Hydro-Quebec, who want to go ahead with the Grande-Baleine project, realized that they cannot bring to the same table Quebec and federal officials when discussing the environmental assess-

ments to be made. I would therefore like to ask the hon. member whether he could seek from the Minister of the Environment amendments to the act to make it more flexible, so that environmental assessments could meet the needs of both acts, in order to help our companies to expand and go ahead faster with their projects? That way more jobs could be created in Quebec more rapidly.

[English]

Mr. Regan: Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a question for the Minister of the Environment. I am not the minister but I am aware of many cases of provincial-federal overlap in legislation. There are many areas, for example, in Nova Scotia that we are concerned about. I am sure we would like to see legislation changed in both places. We know this government is committed to working with provincial governments to find ways to bring our systems together so that they work more reasonably and rationally and do not have the present overlap in legislation.

If the hon. member wishes to ask the minister the question in question period tomorrow, she would be happy to answer.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Halifax West. I too grew up in Halifax West and went to Halifax Municipal High School. I have relatives all through that area.

With regard to the infrastructure program, I would like to ask how much do you think the program will add to the economy of your area. Will it get people working—

The Speaker: Order. All questions should be directed through the Chair.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I think I got my question across. I would like to find out how much employment the hon. member thinks this infrastructure program will actually add to long-term employment in Halifax West.

Mr. Regan: Mr. Speaker, I had discussions with municipal and provincial representatives in my riding about this very question and about the things they feel are needed in the area, obviously not just for a short-term boost but to lay a long-term foundation for business to succeed in our area.

It is my view that some of the projects I would like to see come forward in Halifax West would respond to that need and help business be more successful. For example, there are a couple of business parks that do not have adequate access to highways. If they had that access they could be much more successful because transportation needs for any business are absolutely essential.

• (1515)

If trucks on the road are going over potholes all the time or if they cannot get access to highways quickly, that is a cost they are paying.