

### Tributes

In opposition the Prime Minister opposed the Tory vision of health care. He opposed cuts to the transfer payments to the provinces and territories. He opposed Bill C-91 which has sent the prices of prescription drugs sky-rocketing. He said he would protect Canadian health care with more than just rhetoric.

Unfortunately some Canadians believed him but we have seen no changes to Bill C-91. We have seen reduced transfer payments. The real problems with health policy are Liberal government policies.

Will the Prime Minister stop letting the Minister of Finance set health policy, present a vision to Canadians and ensure stable funding for provinces and territories so we can have a truly national health care system?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly tell the Minister of Finance the member for Yukon is not very happy with him.

As the hon. member for Yukon has resigned as the leader of the NDP, I take this opportunity to congratulate her on behalf of everyone for having served her party and the House of Commons very well. As the leader of her party, her contributions were always of a very high level and extremely useful to the House of Commons. Of course I did not agree with her all the time and I did not expect her to agree with me all the time.

On behalf of everyone, I congratulate the member on a job well done.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

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### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Jozef Skolc, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

• (1505)

**The Speaker:** We also have present in the gallery a delegation of South African Provincial Speakers and Deputy Speakers.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** As a lead in to the tributes to the member for Yukon, I wish to draw to the attention of the House the presence in the gallery of Ms. Alexa McDonough, member of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia and the new leader of the federal New Democratic Party.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

### THE HON. AUDREY MCLAUGHLIN

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure today to pay tribute to the Hon. Audrey McLaughlin, an outstanding human being, a wonderful spokesperson in the interests of our society and always very measured but very convinced in her observations and in her remarks.

Audrey McLaughlin is one of the outstanding leaders and role models of Canadian politics and female politics. She has strengthened us all by her presence. She has been symbolic of all we are about and why and what we wish to achieve in terms of equality of opportunity, equality of access, equality by the very right of our competence our skills and our personalities. She is a woman who has all of those attributes.

In every way she symbolizes why we are all here. She has contributed in very significant ways to the changing of the tone and the substance of debate. That has been one of the most significant observations I could make as we shared the other side of this floor for many years. Audrey always had the ability to present her point of view in a very deliberate and measured way. She did not agree most often with the procedures of the House but she was never disagreeable in her approach to her point of view and expressing her firm conviction which she holds from depth of heart which becomes very obvious.

It was a privilege to have the Hon. Audrey McLaughlin on the trip we recently completed for the fourth annual conference in Beijing on women's issues. Her presence was a symbol to the host country as we travelled with four different parties representative of the diversity of this country, not only the diversity of political opinion but the diversity of our geography and the diversity of our people.

She is an eloquent spokesperson for the aboriginals of her region, the people who have elected her to the House; not only the aboriginals but certainly those she represents with such sincerity and depth of commitment to their interests and to their well-being. For this we owe her a very strong vote of thanks.

When Audrey would stand to make a speech or to pose a question she did it in a very holistic way. It was never with the finest of lenses, which I appreciate perhaps more than most. I like that approach because it puts an issue into the context of daily human life, of living. Living is so daily and, Audrey, you bring that to our attention so succinctly and effectively.

As a woman she is a trailblazer. In 1989 she became the first woman to lead a national political party in Canada, in fact in all of North America. Sixty-eight years after Agnes Macphail, the first woman was elected to the House of Commons. As a woman she bears the legacy of womanhood, having many and diverse roles which are rather in competition at many times. She is of course a politician but say she belies the phrase "you are too nice to be a politician".