

30 The Toronto Sun, Wednesday May 11, 1988

## Dutch queen makes a gaffe

OTTAWA (CP) — Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands raised a few eyebrows yesterday when she praised the 1839 Durham Report, which supported the assimilation of French Canadians into English culture.

It wasn't known if the queen, on a nine-day state visit to Canada, was aware of the controversial nature of the 147-year-old report by Lord Durham. An External Affairs spokesman said no background information about Canada is provided for visiting royalty, except for those from Britain.

Queen Beatrix, in Ottawa with her husband, Prince Claus, mentioned the report as a positive development toward responsible government for colonists during a speech in the House of Commons.

"I was very surprised," Transport Minister Benoit Bouchard said later outside the Commons. "I did try to take it in the positive sense in which she intended it.

"But the report is a very touchy thing for Quebecers. It did suggest that we should all be assimilated to the English."



PRIME MINISTER Brian Mulroney applauds Queen Beatrix, speaking in the Commons yesterday as part of a nine-day state visit.