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All in all, to sum it up because my time is coming to an end, it would be fair to estimate that if the major tax concessions presently existing in the Canadian tax system were to be eliminated the federal public revenue would go up by several billions every year. It is a matter of political will.

If we are to reduce the deficit, I submit in conclusion, then eliminating tax expenditures is a good way of doing it. It could be done without penalizing ordinary Canadians who presently bear the brunt of a taxation system which has, over the last 10 years, been allowed to become regressive, unfair and a burden in order to help the privileged.

Our taxation system cries to heaven. It is in desperate, urgent need to be modernized, made fair and progressive and to be one in which Canadians can have faith. If we do that then the underground economy will gradually reduce and eventually disappear. In doing that also we will not see the need for cutting the social programs which are the product and the result of the architecture of successive Liberal governments over the past 50 years beginning with Mackenzie King in 1939 when unemployment insurance was introduced and moving on to St. Laurent, Pearson and Trudeau.

The Canadian social security system is the result of a Liberal ideology. It is a good one. It needs to be strengthened, not weakened. It is one which will make our economy better and stronger. I submit that we should be proud of it and reinforce it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being one o'clock p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

(The House recessed at 1.01 p.m.)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House find it disturbing to note the lack of specifics in the throne speech on a number of vital national issues. However, we did not expect the government to neglect so completely a subject of utmost importance to rural Canada, and that is agriculture. In fact, its absence is conspicuous. We can only hope that this is not an indication of the government's intention to put agriculture on the back burner.

Farmers like myself are anxiously waiting on that back burner. We are the ones who stand to get burned. This while

government chefs cook up higher deficits and more bureaucracy using a recipe they dug out of an old Keynesian cookbook.

The government of today cannot afford to ignore vast regions of our great country. Rural and urban Canadians all deserve equal treatment. All opposition members will require it of this government.

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FORESTS

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, over time forests have been reduced from 34 per cent to 12 per cent of the world's land mass. In much of the world deforestation continues causing soil loss, land slides, shortages of water, damage to fish and wildlife. Forests provide habitat for biodiversity and absorb carbon dioxide. Life on the planet is threatened when forests are threatened.

However, the world community increasingly recognizes the value of forests. Forests must be given high priority on the international agenda, both politically and scientifically. The proposed royal commission on forests and sustainable development patterned on the Brundtland commission would be a good first step. Unfortunately, in Rio in 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development issued a weak statement.

Therefore I urge this government to lead like-minded nations toward the establishment of an international forest commission. Such a commission would report on how to sustain forest biodiversity, ensure environmentally sustainable forest management and protect social-ecological systems.

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[Translation]

PIER AT GRONDINES

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, the municipal pier of Grondines, in the riding of Portneuf, is deteriorating. The municipality proposed to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to award a contract for the laying of rocks to protect the jetty, which would solve the problem for several decades to come. As well, Hydro-Québec has agreed to provide the rocks free of charge. Those rocks will be available following the dismantling of a structure used to cross over the waters. The municipality hopes to acquire the pier and use it for recreational purposes.

This project would allow the department to give a new life to the facility and save about one half of the amount it would otherwise have to spend, while at the same time freeing itself of recurrent costs.

Since Hydro-Québec intends to deliver the rocks no later than next summer, I want to co-operate with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans so that his department and the municipality of Grondines can immediately benefit from this unique opportunity.