

INDIAN AFFAIRS

CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS—CALL FOR SECURE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis in funding for the delivery of quality native child welfare programs in Canada to which the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs (Mr. McKnight) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) seem oblivious. The combination of poverty, housing shortages and chronic unemployment in native communities across Canada places excessive demands on existing child welfare agencies.

In Manitoba, native child welfare agencies are carrying case loads double the level acceptable within the province, and this Conservative Government has failed to make any attempt to remedy the situation. Instead, the consistent record of underfunding continues with no scheduled negotiations in sight.

Social development groups across Canada, including the Canadian Council on Social Development, the Catholic Pastoral Centre, the National Association of Friendships, and family services groups from every province join with me today in calling on the Conservative Government to make this issue a priority and work with the agencies in Manitoba to devise a plan to secure funding so that our native children will not be faced with futures shrouded in a cycle of poverty and despair.

Of course, on-reserve housing shortages aggravate the child welfare crisis. The Minister must wake up to this reality and seriously look at increasing the level of funding for housing generally and the Bill C-31 housing program.

Adequate housing is a prerequisite to improving the quality of life for all peoples. The Minister has displayed an incapacity in grasping this somewhat important fact.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

PLIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR FISHERY WORKERS

Mr. Morrissey Johnson (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, for several months now I have been keeping various Ministers informed that there are hundreds of fishplant workers and fishermen who have not had sufficient earnings this year due to low in shore fish landings to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits at this time.

I make the request again, and I beg the Government to institute a program immediately to alleviate the financial hardships these people are suffering, not only in my own riding but in other areas throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

S. O. 21

[Translation]

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY WEEK

NEED TO EMPHASIZE COLLECTIVE EFFORT

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Highway Safety Week. The theme of this thirty-second annual campaign is particularly well chosen: "You can improve highway safety", and it puts the responsibility for highway safety squarely on the shoulders of each one of us.

In Canada last year, 3,123 motor vehicle passengers died as a result of highway accidents, while 258,808 people were injured. Although the statistics are depressing, people still think it can't happen to them. I know from personal experience, Mr. Speaker, that highway accidents can happen to anyone, and that is why I would urge all Canadians to practise defensive driving, to abide by the traffic regulations and to buckle up, because we must make a joint effort to reduce the number of accidents on our highways. I want to congratulate all organizations and individuals who are actively promoting highway safety, and I maintain that by keeping up this joint effort, we will be able to say, truly, that it will not happen to us.

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[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

SUPPORT FOR NEW CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, it is not often that one has the chance to participate in an event which will clearly be of great significance in parliamentary history. I believe that the introduction of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in the House of Commons today is such an event.

The message of this Act is strong and very clear. It affirms the multicultural reality of our society. It says that cultural diversity enriches the communities of this land. It says that this diversity makes us more interesting and compassionate people while providing opportunities for our future prosperity in a global economy.

It is interesting to note that Canadian communications expert Marshall McLuhan first coined the term "global village". Canada is that global village, welcoming people from all parts of the world and making them part of our unique Canadian family. Now we are going beyond that early definition to become not a global village but an international nation.

The sights and sounds of our multicultural identity can be found not just in the vibrant neighborhoods of our cities but in towns, villages and remote hamlets throughout Canada. We are a people of many different origins, traditions and heritages. Therein lie the strength of our country and its greatness.