

IRANIAN NEW YEAR

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Iranian Canadians a happy *Nowruz*.

This occasion, the Iranian new year, is celebrated on the first day of spring and marks the start of the Persian calendar.

I am proud to honour this special day and the 150,000 Iranian Canadians who will join in the celebrations. This day officially recognizes their significant contribution to Canada's unique cultural mosaic.

• (1410)

I know this is an important day for the Iranian community of Canada, and Dr. Sy Kazemi of Markham will be leading the *Nowruz* celebrations.

* * *

POVERTY

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, children are our nation's future. Despite repeated highlighting of the pathetic circumstances of over one million Canadian children who are living in poverty in this country we continue to witness government policies which aggravate the problem. We see a growing number of poor children become poor youth, who are not only unemployed and despairing but are highly costly to our Canadian society.

Instead of providing basic necessities to poor children and providing productive employment opportunities to our abandoned youth we have instead an abundance of expensive government programs to study the problems, words rather than action, and cuts, cuts and more cuts. Social and health agencies in Northumberland are being forced to decrease jobs and thus services to our most needy.

When will the government change its priorities and put people first? When will the government recognize that this country and its future belong to our children and youth? Federal government cuts to social program transfers are resulting in long-term, unsustainable social and health costs.

S. O. 31

Canadians care. Why does this government not care?

* * *

[*Translation*]

AMEUBLEMENT TANGUAY

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, Ameublement Tanguay opened a \$7 million distribution centre in my riding on February 24.

The president of this furniture company, Maurice Tanguay, has risen to the challenge in a very dynamic way and this venture will provide economic benefits which the Quebec City region needs.

For the Conservative government, the growth of small and medium-sized businesses is very important. This distribution centre is another example of the ability of entrepreneurship to develop Quebec and Canada.

I thank the shareholders and employees of Ameublement Tanguay and welcome them to Québec-Est.

* * *

[*English*]

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my concern about the glaring lack of competition for the Tory leadership race.

After much deliberation, after consultation with my handlers, after discussion with my family and friends and after considering the odds, I have decided to enter my horse, Slip Chaser. I am convinced that he will make an ideal candidate. He has no political experience and is in no way connected to the Tory government's policies. At age three, he is youthful. He was born and raised in western Canada. He has a winning record when it comes to constitutional matters. Just last year he won the Halton—Peel Conservative Association's own Constitution Pace. Moreover, he recognizes the importance of grass roots.

He can truly put a new face on the Tory party and nobody can deny that he truly represents change. I am confident that my Slip Chaser is the dark horse who can win the triple crown, which the present Prime Minister failed to do.