

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Marchi: Congratulations are also in order for the National Congress of Italian Canadians, particularly its outgoing president, Anna Maria Castrilli, for her perseverance in advancing this special cause.

The wounds borne by the former internees and their respective families were greatly soothed yesterday, soothed by words they longed to hear.

We in the Liberal Party welcome this progressive and just step. We share in the pride felt by the community. We urge the Prime Minister to bring the matter formally before the House of Commons in short order so we may successfully close this one chapter of the Canadian experience.

There will be those who say we cannot and should not take the responsibility to right the wrongs of our past. Why not? Is not our nation and people made stronger by such acts? This apology should not be interpreted as an act of weakness but rather as an initiative that reinforces people's belief in and commitment to Canada. It serves to remind all of us in this Parliament that the protection of basic human rights is something that we should be vigilant about every day.

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ALBERTA WOMEN IN POLITICS

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate former Senator Martha P. Bielish on the publication and distribution of the book that she commissioned entitled *Alberta Women in Politics*.

To quote the author, because of her lifelong involvement in politics and with women's organizations in the province, most notably the Alberta Women's Institute, the senator was acutely aware of the inaccessibility and lack of information on women who have contributed so much to Alberta's public life.

I must commend Mrs. Bielish's initiative as well as her dedication in working for equality. Education and information are crucial. As a former school teacher, she recognized and contributed to raise the awareness level of the plight of women and their goal of both gender and economic equality.

S. O. 31

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister Employment and Immigration to implement a simple solution to what has become a democratic nightmare, namely, to allow new parents simply to avail themselves of the new parental benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act as of January 1, 1990. She said no. Her refusal clearly shows how out of touch is the minister.

Reports from all over the country indicate the severe confusion taking place. New parents do not know what to do and, simply put, neither do the employment centres.

We ask again that the minister clarify the situation once and for all. It is bad enough she has taken away crucial benefits from working families during a recession by gutting the UI program. They should not be made to jump through a hoop to get what little benefits are left.

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CITIZENS' FORUM ON CANADA'S FUTURE

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Sir, speaking as one proud Canadian and as a former broadcaster, I am genuinely excited about the electronic process which is available to the 12-member Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future.

I know that our private broadcasters have always been very supportive of ways to help soothe the wounds and foster greater understanding between Canadians. Within some sort of realistic framework, they and the cable community channels could grasp this window of opportunity to provide up-link satellite feeds. It would enable the greatest possible participation by Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

It would be wonderful to watch simultaneous town hall meetings in, say, Dundas, Ontario; Whitehorse, Yukon; and Corner Brook, Newfoundland, with the commissioners located in Trois-Rivières.

It can be done. Canada is an improbable nation. Keith Spicer and this commission face an improbable task, but our forefathers did it. In the name of our children, I feel a tingling sense of optimism that this citizens' forum will help keep Canadians united.