

Can you imagine if all of us who wear glasses went without them for a day or even half a day? That would put us in the position of those I am addressing today.

Many Canadians cannot read well because they cannot see well. Children will not learn to read if they cannot focus on the chalkboard or on the words in a book. One in six children has a vision problem.

Not all vision problems are easy to detect, therefore the earlier problems are detected and corrected, the better. Prevention is the key. The fact is that three-quarters of adults with poor literacy skills also have problems with their vision.

As literacy critic for the Reform Party, I join Canada's 2,800 optometrists in reminding Canadians that good vision is necessary to become a good reader.

* * *

INTEREST RATES

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now that the federal government has tabled its 1995 budget, a tough budget that will suit the wishes of international investors, it is time to get down to the serious business of controlling our financial destiny.

The federal government must instruct the Bank of Canada to bring the effective interest rate down from the present superficially high level. A lower interest rate will result in increased job growth for Canadians. It will greatly assist small and medium sized businesses.

Interest rates should be brought down by at least 2 percentage points. One result of this move would be lower interest payments to foreign investors. Another would be that small and medium sized businesses could afford to borrow money for expansion, thereby creating jobs.

We need a made in Canada interest rate. We have to control our interest rates in order to achieve a balanced budget in the long run.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, International Women's Day falls during our week off. That is why I rise today to pay tribute to all Canadian women from coast to coast.

Let us look around us. There are now 54 women sitting in the House of Commons. We have come a long way since Agnes McPhail became the first woman elected to the House of Commons in 1921; since the judiciary committee of the Privy Council finally recognized, in 1929, that women were persons in the eyes of the law; since Carine Wilson became the first woman appointed to the Senate in 1930.

S. O. 31

Women have left their mark in all their fields of activity despite the obstacles that keep springing up in their way, simply because our society is still tainted by widespread and offensive sexism.

To our mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, colleagues and friends, to all women in Canada, I say thank you.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

RODGER DUSKY

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today in the House to Mr. Rodger Dusky from my riding in London, Ontario.

On February 16, Mr. Dusky received the Prime Minister's award for teaching excellence in science, technology and mathematics. This award recognizes teachers across Canada who have had a major proven impact on student performance and interest in these areas. Mr. Dusky was nominated for this award by one of his former students.

Mr. Dusky has been a teacher for 32 years and has been teaching science and chemistry at London Central Secondary School since 1987. Most notable in his achievements is "The Mentor Connection". This program twins high school students with professionals from the community in order to support and enhance the autonomous learning projects of the students.

This program has been a tremendous success locally. Mr. Dusky is presently in the process of trying to expand the program so more students can benefit from this unique opportunity. It is through these types of initiatives and teachers such as Mr. Dusky that our children have the skills and knowledge to effectively compete in the constantly changing workplace.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC'S CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the past two days, the Bloc member for Louis-Hébert and his colleague from Chicoutimi have missed their chance to make amends for the racist and discriminatory remarks they made about Quebec's cultural communities.

After their leader had rebuked them, these two members found nothing better to do than issue releases stating that they regret any embarrassment their remarks caused the Leader of the Opposition and any harm they have caused their colleagues in the Bloc Québécois or those involved in building a sovereign, open and profoundly democratic Quebec.