



— Wayne Cuddington, Citizen

Queen Beatrix of Holland spoke at Parliament Tuesday

Royal remark raises eyebrows

Citizen staff and CP

Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands raised a few eyebrows, including those of a cabinet minister, when she praised the Durham Report during a speech to Parliament on Tuesday.

The 1839 report by Lord Durham suggested that French-speaking Quebecers should be assimilated into the English majority and had little culture of their own. For Quebecers, it was long a symbol of domination in the struggle for self-affirmation.

Queen Beatrix, who is on a nine-day state visit to Canada with her husband, Prince Claus, mentioned the report as a positive development toward responsible government for the colonists in Canada.

"In Canada in 1839 Lord Durham laid the foundations for a democratic form of government in his Report on the Affairs of British North America," she said.

"I was very surprised," Transport Minister Benoit Bouchard said later outside the Commons. "I did try to take it in the positive sense in which she intended it."

As well, Canada and Holland must continue to make valuable contributions to the world, she told a joint session

of the House of Commons.

"Backed by the confidence they have gradually managed to inspire in the world, the very countries that are not among the super powers may thus play a sometimes disproportionately important role," Queen Beatrix said.

But emergency aid and charity are not enough when it comes to international development, she added. Capital and know-how must also be transferred to underdeveloped countries, and developed nations must leave markets open to them.

"Protectionism is ultimately bad for everyone, but the poor countries are the victims — they are the first and the worst affected."

Queen Beatrix also laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, planted a tree at Ottawa City Hall and opened a special exhibition at the Canadian War Museum.

Later, she thrilled 2,000 cheering and flag-waving members of Eastern Ontario's Dutch-Canadian community with a walkabout during a garden party at RCMP headquarters.