

The Address

from red to blue, colours we are very familiar with in this House. At that point, get up and turn the heating back on, otherwise the cold will get to you and you could face amputation, with only two members in your house. Now, this is something we have seen before.

You will then understand your mistake; you will realize that your coolness toward the poor has left you totally incapable of doing anything except implore. Honourable members opposite, I realize that the red book has become your bible, but other books exist. For your information, I can tell you that the Messiah is no longer with us and, in any case, was not from the riding of Saint-Maurice.

Let me tell you that we Bloc Quebecois members are going to keep a close eye on you; we are constantly going to pester you regarding social housing and other social programs. We are here not only to promote Quebec's sovereignty, but also to protect the interests of the poor.

The disengagement of the federal government is an inhuman act. The government uses the public debt to justify unjustifiable cuts. It keeps telling us, like the Prime Minister did, that we have to live within our means. There is not enough money. Yet, the government grants numerous tax exemptions which cost billions of dollars every year and which profit the rich. Canadians obviously want changes in this area. We mentioned it clearly before October 25 and people supported our message on tax reform.

In the long run, additional funding for social housing will translate into very significant savings in sectors such as health and social services and will have a major impact on the economy, for example as regards job creation.

I am disappointed by the throne speech as regards social housing and in fact many other issues. We were hoping for new initiatives from the new Liberal team which was announced during the election campaign. Unfortunately, originality, creativity and new ideas do not seem to come easy to that new team. Quite the contrary. Its program is flat and bland. We are part of the federal system. Quebecers will soon decide about their future. In the meantime, we are here to promote sovereignty and to protect the interests of Quebecers and those of the poor within our community.

● (1055)

I do hope that each hon. member in this House will have a thought for the poor in his or her riding and in our society.

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs)): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Laurentides for her speech and I can assure her that the members on this side of the House will certainly have special thoughts for the underprivileged and the people who need housing.

The hon. member wants to protect the rights of Quebecers and of all Canadians. She also said in her speech that the Canadian ship is, in fact, sinking. She mentioned a lifeboat they were trying to inflate. I find it a bit hard to understand how the members opposite can claim to act in the interests of all Canadians when they use their separatist argumentation like a torpedo to try to sink the Canadian ship. Does the hon. member not know that her speech is not helping and is not in the best interests of Canadians?

Mr. Duhamel: He is right, you know.

Mrs. Guay: Madam Speaker, when we say we want to work in the best interests of the underprivileged in Canada, we mean it. I maintain that the Canadian ship is sinking and I think the government managed to do it without our help.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Guay: We are now trying to save the underprivileged and Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you, the government and all other members of the House on their recent successful elections. I would also thank the residents of Comox—Alberni for allowing me the honour of representing them in the House.

Comox—Alberni is a large resource based riding on central Vancouver Island. The key natural resources are forestry and fishing. In addition there are several retirement communities located on the east coast of the island, as well as the Canadian forces base located at Comox.

I thank my family, my wife Karen and my son Cameron, for without their help I would not be here today.

● (1100)

I would like to address some concerns shared by many Canadians about anticipated actions of the government regarding natural resources, in particular issues concerning forestry and the environment.

Forest products are not only British Columbia's main export but Canada's as well. Forestry is Canada's number one industry as many members here today will be able to attest in their own ridings.

For example, in British Columbia the forest sector provided 270,000 jobs, paid \$2.4 billion in taxes, and exported \$11 billion worth of products in 1992. However the forest sector is facing losses both in jobs and in profits and will continue to do so until a balance is struck between forest conservation and forest development.

The Speaker: It being eleven o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to statements by members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.