

If individuals had been contributing into a self-managed fund, they would now have more security. The proposal we are putting forward gives the poor people a lot more security than they presently have with the mismanaged pension fund run by the government.

Does the hon. member feel it is worth exploring a means by which we could make a transition from the present unsustainable system to a more secure system that gives individuals more control over their future? Does she not think this concept is worth exploring?

Ms. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I guess the hon. member was not listening. In the budget the finance minister talked about the fact that we need to review our programs for our seniors.

We have a system in Canada developed by Liberals, a system that met the needs of the 1960s and the 1970s when it was introduced; a system we are trying to up date that will meet the needs of the 1990s and the 21st Century. That is what this Liberal government does and that is what this Liberal government is about. That is what we will do.

The hon. member is not aware, obviously, how programs work in other countries. I am very familiar with how they work. I have an aunt who lives in the United States. I know what happens when you become a senior citizen. I know what happens to programs you have paid into for four years and benefits that are cut off over time. I understand how that system works because I live with that system every day due to a family member who has an illness.

I ask the Reform Party to do a little research into its suggestions before it puts them forward and that it realize what the Liberal government is trying to do.

We recognize things have to change. We started the social security reform and we started the human resources consultations over a year ago. Members on that side took part in them. We are not afraid of that. We are aware of that. We mentioned in the red book that we would deal with the systems and that we would make changes and that is what we are going to do.

The Speaker: It being almost 11 a.m. we will now go to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

JEREMY FREIBURGER

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week a young man in my riding, while driving at night, was in collision with a trailer portion of a tractor trailer which had turned across the highway. He had no chance to apply the brakes and hit the trailer squarely in front of

the rear wheels. The crash impact squashed the roof of the car flat and it took a crane to free it from underneath the trailer.

Firemen who arrived at the scene did not believe that anyone could have survived. Inside the wreckage, jammed beneath an air bag and squeezed on all sides by twisted metal, 18 year old Jeremy Freiburger still lived. Not only did he still live, but when at last he was cut out of the vehicle by the jaws of life, he was uninjured, save for a few cuts and bruises.

His parents were ecstatic with joy. Let this story remind us that life is precious and miracles do happen.

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[Translation]

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, March 17, is St. Patrick's Day and we want to share the pride of those hundreds of thousands of Canadians and Quebecers of Irish descent whose ancestors left their country in often difficult circumstances to find a new home among us.

With the intermingling of people over time, many of us now have friends and relatives of Irish origin. Their presence has enriched our lives and our societies.

We salute the invaluable contribution of the Ryans, Lanigans, Regans, O'Reillys, Johnsons, Kirkpatrick's, Rowans and many others to the development of Quebec and Canada.

Happy St. Patrick's Day everybody!

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[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia we have just completed multicultural week, a week of immersion into the understanding of other cultures, a week of sharing with people of all backgrounds.

Next week on March 21, British Columbia and the rest of Canada will celebrate International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. On March 21, 1966 in South Africa, a group of people holding a peaceful march were shot at and killed.

[Translation]

March 21 has therefore been designated by the United Nations as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Next week, all Canadians will celebrate that day with special ceremonies, and people of all cultures will meet again to learn from one another.

Today, despite the visibility of human rights at the international level, too many tragedies occur throughout the world and discrimination continues to exist.