

*Oral Questions*

**Some hon. members:** More, more.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Macleod.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that applause was a nice farewell.

Informetrica did a study which states that by the end of the EPF freeze in 1995 the federal government will have offloaded \$29.4 billion unilaterally on to the provinces, \$10.4 billion on to Ontario alone. Some Canadians think this is a big problem.

What will the minister do? I ask her to stand up and answer if she has an answer but if not to stay seated preferably in the backbenches.

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** The hon. member can quote whatever studies he wants but Mr. Speaker, perhaps you can give this message to the hon. member. There has not been one study that says we need to spend more money in our health care system. Everyone knows we need to spend it differently and more effectively. That is the exercise every province has undertaken. It is not easy but it is necessary.

At the same time we should not ever forget average Canadians who need health care. We never want to go back to the days when people could lose their homes at the same time as they lost their lives.

• (1445)

If the hon. critic would go four seats over and speak to his leader he might be able to get the policies of the Reform Party right in terms of what it said during the election.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

As of January 1, 1995, the United States will impose new restrictions on Canadian sugar exports. Because of this unilateral decision to change the classification of products with a high sugar content, Quebec and Canada stand to lose almost 2,400 jobs. Since the change was made before GATT was signed, the federal government now claims that it cannot intervene in this issue.

Can the minister explain to us why the Canadian government let the United States unilaterally change the classification of products with a high sugar content, when it knew full well that this would have disastrous consequences for the sugar industry in Quebec and Canada?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the United States is proposing to take certain actions effective January 1 with respect to the importation of products containing sugar into the United States.

As the hon. member knows, Canada takes strong exception to the position being taken by the United States. We have made those representations abundantly clear at the officials level in dealing with the U.S. department of agriculture, the U.S. trade representatives office and the White House.

Representations by Canada to the United States continue to be made. In the past 24 hours the Minister for International Trade has been in touch with his U.S. counterpart to make the Canadian position abundantly clear. We will continue to pursue that position in the best interest of all Canadians, including those in the province of Quebec.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the minister has confirmed that Canada is no match for the United States in bilateral trade negotiations, will he undertake to refer the issue to a GATT panel?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government will pursue all its options in defending the Canadian position in the face of U.S. action with which we may disagree.

However I want to make it fundamentally clear that in the process we will not engage in any game of trading off one region of the country against another or one commodity against another or one group of producers against another.

All these are separate and distinct issues. They must be dealt with separately and distinctly on their own merits and we will not trade off the Canadian—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the infrastructure program.

The recession hit Canadians hard, including the residents of my riding of Saint-Denis, and reduced their employment opportunities. Over the past year, the situation seems to have improved and people are starting to go find jobs again.

[English]

Could the minister responsible for the infrastructure program give us an update on the status of the program?