

the Opposition are opposed to securing that kind of a stable and secure trading environment with the U.S. Our Government's record is clear. It means better times for all Canadians in all regions. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is showing what can be accomplished with strong leadership and sound management. All Canadians will continue to benefit.

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLY AND SERVICES

RESPECT FOR EMPLOYMENT EQUITY REGULATIONS

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Louis-Hébert): As a woman, Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to congratulate the Minister of Supply and Services (Mrs. Véniza) on her recent decision to cancel a call for tenders because the bidders had failed to respect employment equity regulations. This demonstrates our Government's firm determination to do everything in its power to ensure a better integration of Canadian women in the labour market. This is another promise we had made during the last election campaign and which has been kept.

On behalf of all Canadian women, I congratulate the Hon. Minister on this wise decision.

* * *

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

JAPANESE AND KOREAN ASSEMBLY PLANTS—CANADIAN CONTENT REQUIREMENT ADVOCATED

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Côté) said he and his Conservative Government would not compel the new Japanese and Korean assembly plants in Canada to meet Auto Pact content requirements because to do so would discourage Japanese and Koreans from investing here. He also said he doubted that Canadian parts manufacturers could produce parts of the quality required by these new plants. Those statements shocked and dismayed Canadians because of what they showed about the lack of knowledge and support for this key Canadian industry by the Government.

We must insist that the Government immediately adopt a policy requiring all those who wish to sell cars in the Canadian market to play by the same rules and meet the Canadian content requirements. To do otherwise would put at risk tens of thousands of jobs. That may be the intention of the Government but that is not what Canadians want. We must insist that the Government understand and support the cornerstone of the Canadian economy, the Canadian auto industry, and the hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs connected with it.

S. O. 21

HISTORIC EVENTS

ESTONIA—ANNIVERSARY OF PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Mr. William G. Lesick (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, on February 24, 1918, Estonia was proclaimed an independent democratic Republic. The country worked hard to establish itself under the harshest of post-World War I conditions. However, its freedom was short-lived. In June, 1940, the Soviet Union invaded that young country and shattered the dreams of a freedom-loving nation. Last December the Soviets had the gall to state that the people of Estonia joined voluntarily. That is nothing more than a deception. The democratic nation of Estonia was forced to give up its hard-earned independence and become a Soviet satellite.

Many people had to flee their homes and settle in other countries, including Canada. Every February 24 Canadians of Estonian origin remember their brief freedom as an independent nation. Let us join with them in commemoration of the anniversary and reflect on the importance of individual rights. We must never forget how precious freedom can be, and we must strive to ensure that democracy continues as our way of life.

* * *

THE BUDGET

EFFECT ON ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a dark day for Atlantic Canadians. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) once again totally ignored them in his Budget. He ignored the plight of the unemployed, farmers, fishermen, and stopped the growth of our tourism industry dead in its tracks by adding another 4 1/2 cent-a-gallon tax on gasoline and diesel fuel.

• (1415)

Why is the Government treating Canadians in the poorer regions of the country this way? Is it because the Minister of Finance does not understand Canada? If so, what are Conservative MPs who also represent constituencies in Atlantic Canada doing? Why are they not speaking up in their caucus? Why are they not informing the Minister of Finance that Canada's financial house contains 12 rooms: 10 provinces plus the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, and that every room in the house needs some economic repair, not just the plush recreational room which houses the rich?

If the Conservative back-benchers are not delivering the message to the Minister of Finance, they are derelict in their duties as MPs. It is no wonder that they and the Government have lost the confidence of the Canadian people.