

The Address

In the area of transportation, another concern we have is the absence of air service and VIA rail service. This is of major concern to all rural and city residents of Brandon—Souris. We must try to re-establish the ties that first brought our country together. Also the high cost of western grain transportation is an item of concern.

The state of our postal services and how they affect rural Canadians, specifically senior rural Canadians, is an area which should be investigated before any further cutbacks take place.

I come to this House after completing a 33-year teaching career mainly at the high school level and I have the greatest empathy and respect for the students in this country. I wish to pledge my efforts to them in creating a long term bursary and student loan program which currently is not addressed in government policy.

● (1310)

As a proud father of three wonderful daughters I am and will continue to be sensitive to women's issues relative to employment, health and equity.

As a former educator I still get involved in school visitations. I was at Virden Collegiate on January 6 and met with a wonderful grade nine class. I subsequently received a letter from a student of that class, Leslie Bunn. It somewhat shows how I feel about being an MP and working for the betterment of students:

Dear Mr. McKinnon:

When you came and spoke to my class last Thursday you answered a lot of my questions I had concerning your position as MP. You made me realize some important facts about your position.

I realize that being an MP isn't all that easy. You are away from your family and travelling lots. You are in early meetings and it isn't easy to keep it up. It made me think that if I ever did become involved in politics, it would be a rough road to hold.

You told us the amount of money you make and I thought it was a lot. Then as you explained the sacrifices you make and will have to make I realized it still may be a lot of money, but it didn't seem quite as bad as before. This also made me think that if I became a politician I would be well paid but it would not be too much out of reason.

I think it wouldn't be so bad living close to Ottawa, but it would be horrible living somewhere in British Columbia where I would be doing nothing but flying back and forth.

Even after all the sacrifices I heard you have to make, I don't think I would mind being an MP.

Thank you.

Leslie Bunn, Virden, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the constituents of Brandon—Souris and to work toward bringing about dignity to rural Canada. My constituents have sent me, the first Liberal in 42 years, to represent Brandon—Souris in the House of Commons, to be part of the Liberal team, to help solve the problems caused by eight years of failed economic policy.

My constituents want to be part of the new vision of Canada, a vision which includes all of the wide and diverse mosaic which is Canada today, a vision which includes jobs for Canadians, a vision of equitable regional development, a vision of renewed integrity in government, a vision of economic renewal and social security and finally, a vision of a safe Canada. In short, it is a Liberal vision of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris, in Manitoba, focused on the infrastructure program. I would like to ask him the following: Does he not think that it would be a bit cumbersome if the federal, provincial and municipal governments all sat down to set priorities for an infrastructure project, for roads, sewers and small bridges for example? Does he not think it would make management a bit too cumbersome if civil servants from Ottawa were to meet with their provincial and municipal colleagues to make decisions on such a project? To me, that seems to go against management efficiency.

We all know that our country is faced with an enormous debt, which exceeds the 500-billion mark, and we all realize that if the federal government gets involved in such a project, it will become more difficult to manage and a high percentage of the expenditures will go for management, or should I say mismanagement.

I would like to know, just like Quebec wants to know, how the federal government will manage to hand the money over to the provinces, who consider the municipalities a bit like their equals and work with them to review various projects and set priorities, and refrain from interfering, making the management of the infrastructure project more complicated and boosting cost of the management.

[English]

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for asking the question regarding infrastructure. In my preamble I left out my personal involvement. I did serve as mayor of a community of a town of 3,000. I have had some background in that area.

● (1315)

I would say to my worthy colleague that in many respects in my experience the ability of a municipality to go it alone on some of the projects would be very difficult to start with. If we can get other financial assistance from more senior levels of government, it will make many projects extremely viable.

Second, in terms of administration, those costs are certainly going to be there no matter who does it. I would suggest that there is not the perceived advantaged of simply handing the money to the lower levels of government and allowing them to run with the ball. I think we are best served as a country when we