

*Private Members' Business*

I would like to add that just about everybody is for this. They are in favour of it. For heaven's sake even Matthew Barrett, the president of the Bank of Montreal, said: "Let's reduce the interest rates, let's take those hundreds of millions of dollars from that and invest it in the infrastructure". He is an unlikely individual to come forward and make a statement like that. We salute him, we salute the premiers, we salute the provincial governments and we salute the 1,200 plus municipalities across the country that are saying that we have to address this problem. It would appear that the only people that are not onside is this government.

The previous speaker talked about the deficit. We are for deficit reduction. All studies exaggerate sometimes, but we can cut it off somewhere in the middle. It says: "Tax revenues generated by this public works project would limit the effect on the accumulated national debt to a little more than \$400 million over five years. At the same time, 63,000 jobs would be created for each year of the program". Money well spent.

FCM made a commitment to seven basic principles. I am sure the member for Ottawa—Vanier knows that the first principle was the need for access to clean water for all Canadians. It lists water as number one.

I have a whole series of clippings and I would like to cite a few. Paradise, Newfoundland is a town of 4,000 people, 10 minutes from St. John's. Only 20 per cent of Paradise is serviced with water and sewer: "We require about \$8 million from government to provide full servicing and we received \$50,000". It is the same for towns throughout Newfoundland: Pouch Cove, Portugal Cove, Bell Island, Paradise, Conception Bay South, Conception Harbour, Collier's and Marysvalle. They do not have potable drinking water.

We will go from Newfoundland to the north. We will go from coast to coast. In Yellowknife: "Massive decay is not unique to old cities or to large ones. In the late 1940s in Yellowknife, the federal government installed a corrugated metal sewer system lined with moss for insulation. In the early 1980s work crews dug down to the pipes and found nothing left but a gelatinous tube of moss through which sewage still flowed".

That is another point that we should point out. Much of our infrastructure was built in the 1940s. The life of most infrastructure is 20 to 25 years. It is 50 years later and it is not being replaced. The cost of maintenance is much more costly than replacement. Studies have shown that it will cost us 10 times as much if we ignore the maintenance of our infrastructure system.

In Halifax and Dartmouth raw waste streams through clay and brick sewers straight into the harbour, as it has for 100 years. Winnipeg needs \$145 million to improve preventive maintenance at its sewage facility.

My own community says: "We need \$15 million a year to take care of our infrastructure. Our community invests \$5 million". It cannot afford to do anything else. I think most communities are in the same position. Our major employer cannot pay its taxes.

How could a member get up and say: "It's up to the cities, increase their user-pays. Let us have user-pay for everything including water, our greatest resource". Perhaps this government wants to sell it. I wonder if it will charge them the user-pay fee it might want to charge Canadians and it is our own water. Again I salute the member for Ottawa—Vanier. I think it is a very noteworthy motion and I hope the government is listening.

• (1940)

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, first I want congratulate my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier for his motion. It is extremely timely, especially in light of the fact that health and health issues have been identified by Canadians as priority issues.

The motion deals with the question of water and water quality but I just want to shift a little bit from that to talk about a task force which I co-chaired with my colleague from Nepean. Last year with the help of my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier and other colleagues in our Liberal caucus, we travelled across Canada to meet with people who are at the municipal level and dealing with the issue up close.