

Where does all that money go? Why does it not stay in the west?

We should also be asking, where does the money go which is generated in Canada as a whole? We would find that \$10 billion or more goes annually to the United States which leaves Canadians \$10 billion poorer and some Americans \$10 billion richer. When the Government talks about free trade, I hope it will examine those figures and bring them to the attention of the public as well.

The Speech from the Throne was a great disappointment because it did not address the need of the great majority of the people of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments? Debate.

[Translation]

Debate. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer you my sincere congratulations on your election and wish you the very best. We all appreciate our new Speaker's experience, his fairness and I would even add his reputation as a francophile, and we know that these qualities will serve him well during the proceedings in this Chamber. He has our support and our full co-operation.

The Government of which I am privileged to be a Member has set itself the following priorities: social justice, economic renewal, national reconciliation and constructive internationalism, all of which are in perfect harmony with the aspirations of Canadian society.

The Speech from the Throne read by Her Excellency the Governor General is an accurate reflection of the needs, plans and hopes of our society. I will explain subsequently how it also reflects the specific expectations of Quebec.

The wording of the Government's priorities reminded me of a comment taken from a work by the French historian Edgar Quinet, entitled *La Révolution*, and I quote:

Any philosophy that is limited to the intricacies of economic policy is doomed to fail when faced with the important business of human values.

The Government's plan of action reflects this view which, while considering the demands of the economy, goes on to situate them within the sphere of justice, reconciliation and constructive internationalism. The interdependence between economics and the "grandes affaires humaines", to speak with Quinet, is a concept that is very real to us. We cannot deny the importance of economic factors in connection with culture any more than we can ignore the human dimension in the economy's development.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on to discuss the energy issue, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Canadian men and women who were asked and generously agreed to act

as chairperson or sit as members on the several task forces I had the privilege of setting up as Minister of Communications.

I also wish to thank members of the support teams and those who made a contribution with their presentations. I must say it was a pleasure to receive their excellent reports. Canada's cultural policies must become part of the dynamics of our society. Let us give our creative and performing artists the recognition of a mature and enlightened nation. For too long, these witnesses of our human condition have been relegated to the fringe of society, while they are in fact its very core.

Let us give our cultural industries the place they deserve. As the link between producer and consumer, they are the instruments that transmit to the world the best we have to offer.

The status of the artist, broadcasting, film, the Arts Centre, museums, financing the arts, these are some of the themes and institutions that attracted our attention. The State has a duty to look and listen and review its policies. That is what this Government is doing and will continue to do for the greater benefit of our national identity.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have risen in the House as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and I see this portfolio as a challenge and as having a vast potential. To a country, energy is the lifeblood of its industry, the means of its mobility and the basis of its well-being. It is therefore a fundamental part of our lives.

The great French author François René de Chateaubriand gave us the following thought in Book IX of his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*: "In politics, the result is almost never what we expected."

Who could have predicted the dramatic drop in oil prices, one of the major events of the past year? The price collapse has had a drastic impact on oil and gas exploration throughout the industrialized world, and it has forced us to take a second look at the situation and redefine our priorities. It also demanded action on the part of the Government. And we did act to provide a new stimulus for exploration and research. We had already refunded to the companies the taxes imposed by the National Energy Program, but as a result of the accelerating price drop, we had to reduce the tax burden even further, by cutting the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax, which was withdrawn altogether last month.

• (1430)

The abolition of the PGRT will give the industry a twofold stimulus. From now on, it will be in a position to increase the capital it needs to finance projects, and key energy projects will become more attractive for investors. Two days ago, Chevron announced a major exploration program at Fort Hope in the Northwest Territories, and mentioned that the abolition of the PGRT was one of its reasons for doing so.

Since, in the long term, it is in the interests of both producers and consumers for the Government to take a market-oriented approach, we also intend to meet our commitment to deregulate the natural gas industry, despite the problems created in