

*The Address*

humane. It is not often that we see in this House such a humane approach. But I would like to ask the hon. member a question since she is from a resource based area, the riding of Central Nova. Given the way she talked about her riding, it seems that its economic activity is mainly dominated by fisheries and agriculture.

I would like the hon. member to explain how she can feel comfortable in a party like the Liberal Party of Canada, a party that during the GATT multilateral negotiations abandoned one of the pillars of Canadian agriculture, especially the dairy sector so important in the riding of Central Nova. How can she feel comfortable in a party that has sacrificed a good part of the safety net, at least for the Canadian dairy industry, and which is also known for its negligence and its inability to deal with Atlantic fisheries?

• (1530)

[English]

**Ms. Skoke:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. member that I feel very at ease and very much at home with the Liberal Party. I think the principles and the philosophy of the Liberal Party certainly augurs very well with respect to our principles of justice, fairness and equity for all Canadians. I chose the Liberal Party for those reasons.

With respect to the issues of agriculture and fisheries, I am very confident that our party will do what is best, within its powers and within the limits it has available, to ensure that the dairy farmers, and particularly our fisheries, will be taken care of.

I am also pleased to have the opportunity to work with the hon. ministers in ensuring that my constituents, with respect to those issues, will be taken care of.

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the hon. member for Central Nova. Having been raised in Nova Scotia myself, I have travelled the areas that she was elected in many, many times. It is indeed beautiful.

The member has spoken very earnestly and sincerely about unemployment in her area, but unemployment has been a problem in the maritimes and in her area for decades. I believe that the infrastructure program is once again more taxes—federally, provincially and municipally—on the constituents in that area. The infrastructure alone will not cure the problem of unemployment in that area and training in itself will not help the situation either, or at least will not cure it.

I am wondering if the member would perhaps suggest a new industry that could perhaps turn the tide in that area. Other than infrastructure and training, what new changes would help the people in Central Nova?

**Ms. Skoke:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

Throughout my speech I talked about the oppression of our people. It is correct for the member to say that the people in the maritimes and the Atlantic provinces have been unemployed more so than in other parts of the country. In my opinion there has been a form of oppression.

I think the answer to unemployment is quality education. Although I know education is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, I feel that the federal government has a responsibility under industry, science, technology and trade, and certainly for the common good of all Canadians, to intervene with respect to the issue of education.

Perhaps our youth and those people in the labour force, be it the fishery or whatever, who may have to look for new employment, are not properly educated in the basics of reading, writing and literacy skills.

One way to oppress people is to ensure that they cannot read or write. Then they cannot understand what is going on or that they are going to continue being manipulated and deceived by hidden agendas.

I feel that the answer and what this government should be looking at is education. It does not cost extra money to educate your people. What it takes is ingenuity and the basics. I think it is time we go back to the basics in our education system.

**Jim Abbott (Kootenay East):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to stand as the member for Kootenay East constituency.

In the October 25 election the constituents expressed their confidence in the agenda that I and the Reform Party were to bring to the Parliament of Canada. The topic of my speech today is really directed to my constituents. My topic would be entitled demand less.

It is critical in my constituency, indeed in Canada, that citizens give clear direction to their politicians at all levels of government.

• (1535)

Political decisions are not made in a vacuum. Decisions to spend money and deliver services and social entitlements to citizens are made as ordinary citizens make their demands known to the politicians. Any politician who wants to get elected or re-elected must respond to those demands and so I say to my constituents we must demand less.

Following my election I made two immediate activities my priority. One was to open lines of communication and accessibility to my constituents. The second was to grapple with the issues surrounding mining—especially coal mining—and how it relates to my constituents in the Elk Valley.

The Elk Valley which is east of Cranbrook is a magnificent area of my constituency with beautiful mountains, the Snow Valley ski area in Fernie and the districts of Sparwood and Elkford. There is no area in Canada which has been more