

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 13, 1991

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to affirm that under this government the gap between the rich and the poor is widening at tremendous speed.

While the government plays with the unemployment insurance benefits, employment is suffering its largest drop since 1982 and the economy continues to show no signs of recovery. The Minister of Finance predicted at budget time that the unemployment rate would be 10 per cent, but as I speak today, it is much higher than 10 per cent.

I am afraid for the people of Prince Edward Island and for Canada. The Canadian Jobs Strategy fund has been cut by \$100 million. Between April 1990 and January 1991, Canadians have lost 288,000 jobs. At a time when the people of Prince Edward Island need work to support their families, funds for new social housing have been reduced and Islanders have been forced out into the street.

Since 1984, the people of Prince Edward Island have come to expect economic hardships. How much more will this government ask Islanders to take before it stops catering to the rich and faces the real problems of the average Canadian.

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RED CROSS SOCIETY

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, when we are honouring Canadians for their efforts in the Persian Gulf war, let us not forget one of

Canada's great traditions, the Red Cross Society, leaders in international war relief.

To assist them in the role of the Persian Gulf, the federal government has pledged \$4 million. In addition to this money, the society has launched a \$1 million Persian Gulf appeal. So far individual Canadians, participating banks, provinces and territorial governments have contributed more than \$370,000.

This year, 1991, marks the 95th anniversary of the Canadian Red Cross Society. This volunteer based organization, with over 3,000 volunteers in my city alone, provides emergency relief blood centres to 600 branches in more than 1,000 operating units.

It is particularly fitting at this time, when the original role of the Red Cross is highlighted by the gulf crisis, to invite all Canadians to congratulate the board members and the staff of volunteers of the Red Cross Society. They do a great service for Canada.

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CANADA POST

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, without any consultation with the residents to be affected, Canada Post advised the people of Freetown, Breadalbane and Winsloe that all three post offices would be closing down. This "close them down and ask questions later" policy of Canada Post has got to stop.

Once again, the policies of this government have impacted negatively upon the lives of my constituents in Malpeque. Once again, this government has taken away another pillar of rural life in three communities in my riding. Once again, the only federal presence in these three communities is being removed.

The very fabric of rural life is being threatened, and rather than try to assist rural Canada in its fight for survival, this government's policies are accelerating the process.

I call on the federal government to demand that Canada Post review the damage its policies are causing rural communities. It is obvious the needs of rural