

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 1, 1995

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

SAVE YOUR VISION WEEK

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 5 to 11 is "Save your vision week" in Canada. This is an annual event to foster public awareness sponsored by the Canadian Association of Optometrists.

This year's theme is: "Hope is in sight. Good vision and literacy: There is a clear connection".

Many Canadians are unable to read simply because they do not see well. Children do not learn to read if they cannot focus on the blackboard or on the words in a book. One child in six has a vision problem, which makes it hard for him or her to learn and to read. The key is prevention. Early detection of vision problems really helps improve literacy. It has been established that three quarters of adults with literacy problems also have vision problems.

I join, therefore, with the 2,800 optometrists in Canada to remind Canadians that good vision is a must for good reading.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the president of the Public Service Alliance called upon his members yesterday to make a decision on a work-to-rule action and other pressure tactics to protest the public service cuts.

The Liberal government refuses to enter into a constructive dialogue with the Public Service Alliance. Yet the alliance has stated its willingness to join forces with the government to ensure better management of staff reductions and to maintain services to the public. In deciding against negotiations and partnership, the Liberal government is in essence denying the very principle of collective bargaining.

With a work-to-rule action by civil servants on its hands, the government is now reaping what it has sown. All Canadians and Quebecers will pay for the contempt displayed by the Liberal government.

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[*English*]

FIREARMS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the mayor of Dauphin, Manitoba, Mr. Inky Mark.

This gentleman took upon himself to compile resolutions from approximately 200 municipal governments from all provinces and territories. These resolutions support the principle that all Canadians now and in the future shall continue to enjoy the lawful, responsible and safe use of all firearms.

He took these efforts upon himself because he felt the voice of the tax-paying, law-abiding citizen was seldom heard. He has consistently asked for the establishment of a national firearms advisory council whose members would be made up of a cross-section of non-partisan people.

I would like his message to be heard loud and clear and to pay tribute to his tireless efforts on behalf of responsible recreational firearms users.

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HEALTH CARE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has finally admitted with his budget that his government has no intention of maintaining national standards in our health care system. Today the Prime Minister was quoted as saying: "Social programs such as medicare will revert to meeting more basic needs as they did when they were started half a century ago".

Fifty years ago someone in my family suffered from a major illness. We were fortunate as a family that it only took us 10 years to pay off the bill. Fifty years ago others lost their farms and businesses for reasons of health and health expenses. Because of that they also lost hope for the future.

It is clear now that this government is intent on doing away with national standards with the national health care system. In fact rather than building Canada, the Prime Minister has con-