

Routine Proceedings

to ask the minister what difference he sees between "distinct identity" and "unique character"?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): None, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, if there is no difference, why change the word? Mr. Speaker, I submit that this government—

An hon. member: Ask the question!

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): —needs a good dictionary more than it needs an adviser on constitutional law. I would like to ask the minister, considering the great debate that is imminent, whether he intends to offer Quebec anything else besides this futile play on words?

Mr. Lapierre: Right on!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I didn't play games with words. I didn't change the words, I didn't change my political convictions and I didn't change parties.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In yesterday's Speech from the Throne the government set a target of creating some 2.5 million new jobs. The minister is well aware that one of the main reasons for double digit unemployment in this country at the present time is the slack construction industry.

Will the minister agree to create housing construction jobs by stimulating demand without increasing the debt or the deficit through the introduction of a 5 per cent down payment for first-time home buyers?

• (1500)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member would be pleased about the recent upturn in housing starts and housing resales which have been stimulated in the last little while.

I also know that he will be encouraged by the fact that interest rates have receded by five percentage points in the last 11 months or so. That is all good news. There has been improved confidence expressed by the business community, and I think that is welcome news as well.

That is the best way to stimulate the housing industry. I am pleased to note as well that at yesterday's annual conference of home builders, they indicated they felt things were turning around and getting better.

With respect to the point the hon. member raised about the 95 per cent mortgages, we are examining that very carefully and will report back to the hon. member in due course.

[Translation]

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to ask leave of the House to go back to Routine Proceedings. I have a message from the Governor General, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1991-92

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1992, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.