

The national unemployment rate in January was 11 per cent. For the province of Nova Scotia it was 13.6 per cent while in Cape Breton the unemployment rate is double this amount with no end in sight.

People from all regions of this country are hurting and the government is throwing salt in their wounds. The Unemployment Insurance Program was designed as a safety net, a means to help those temporarily out of work. The Conservative government is destroying that safety net.

I urge the Government of Canada to show compassion in this their time of greatest need.

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EDUCATION

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, Canadians spend millions of dollars on elementary and secondary education. Yet, Canada lags behind other countries in scholastic achievement. We have difficulty measuring our scholastic achievement and in getting a national profile of student performance.

The Council of Ministers of Education has watered down its plan to test selected 13-year and 16-year old students across the country. Canada has no high school leaving exams. Canada has no standardized voluntary testing.

I urge our government to institute a voluntary national test for students leaving high school. This voluntary test would not interfere with provincial jurisdiction over education. It would be entirely voluntary in nature and would give us a national profile of student performance.

National testing is an idea whose time has come.

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CROSSBOWS

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, last week at the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby, B.C., a 22-year old student, Silvia Leung, was killed. Police say the murder weapon was a crossbow.

As both *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* newspapers have pointed out, anyone—minors, convicted criminals, the mentally unstable—can walk into a store and buy a crossbow without a permit. These people by law would not be allowed to own a gun. Crossbows are silent,

tough to trace and for a criminal not allowed by the courts to own a gun, the perfect legal substitute.

In 1991, after the crossbow murder of another woman a few blocks from Parliament Hill, I called on the Minister of Justice to make the crossbow a prohibited weapon restricted to *bona fide* hunters and target shooters. In the light of tragic events at BCIT, I now call on this new Minister of Justice to act before another person is murdered by a crossbow. The president of the Swiss Crossbow Association of Vancouver agrees that crossbows should be regulated like guns. So do I.

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GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, governments have a choice: cut back on services and programs or spend and raise taxes.

Every government in Canada is faced with this dilemma. If services and programs are cut the people receiving them, aided by the opposition and the media, will be angry with the government. On the other hand, continued spending beyond our means will increase the deficit and raise taxes.

The Conservative government's fiscal policy is restraint and expenditure reduction while the position of the Liberals and the NDP is clearly one of spend, spend, spend.

On behalf of the constituents of the St. Albert federal riding, I strongly urge the government to stay the course, slash expenditures and pay no attention to the opposition MPs' call for spend, spend. Come the election, Canadians will make their choice.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, braving the -25C temperature, tens of thousands of Quebecers marched in the street yesterday to protest against Bill C-105. These people have clearly told the Conservative government that this bill will not solve the problem of cheating. It is a smoke-screen. They were told that those who quit their job for just cause will be protected. But who believes that, knowing that this law will become a tool for manipulation by some dishonest employers?