

together with constructive solutions, and that is what this debate is about.

**Mrs. Picard:** The policy that the hon. member has just alluded to is outmoded. The fact of the matter, as I mentioned clearly in my speech, is that Quebec and the provinces are facing a different situation. With respect to health care, I stated that health care costs had increased because of the situations I described earlier. The problem right now is that the government is not channelling back to the provinces the funds that are rightfully theirs.

As a result, the provinces cannot balance their health care budgets. Take, for example, Sainte-Croix Hospital in my constituency. It is experiencing an acute crisis because it is underfunded. This facility serves a population of 80,000 and has a shortage of 100 acute care beds. Hospital equipment is outdated and there is shortage of specialists. The situation is growing more critical by the moment and it is always the less fortunate who suffer.

That is what I wished to say to my hon. colleague.

[English]

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte):** Mr. Speaker, during the presentation of my hon. colleague, the member across the way, there were a couple of points that became very obvious, the first being the reference to programs currently not working in Quebec and also that federalism had failed.

I would suggest that with the minister's tabling of his report and his release on Monday of this week that the exact opposite has occurred. There is no question as the old saying goes, at least in my riding, if it ain't broke don't fix it.

My hon. colleague's statement that in Quebec it is not working quite obviously there appears to be a need to upgrade, to review, reform and make better the programs that we have for all Canadians and that is exactly what the minister stated.

I would like to quote once again from the minister's own words. He said: "I am asking the House, our colleagues in the Senate, our counterparts at the provincial and territorial level, members of business and labour sectors, the leaders of our communities and indeed every Canadian to throw out the old ideas, put aside vested interests", which the hon. member referred to, "and begin thinking of the kind of ground rules we need in Canada to restore fairness, hope and a sense of security".

I would ask the hon. member to refer to those in light of her suggestion that federalism has failed and the programs are not working in Quebec.

### Government Orders

I believe just the opposite with the minister's statement here in the House and she has an opportunity to relate, to provide the input that the minister is asking for.

• (1840)

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for St. Catharines, may I first congratulate my fellow colleagues for being part of the 35th Parliament of Canada.

As this is my first speech in this House, I would particularly like to congratulate the hon. member for Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold on his election as Speaker of the House. I have had the personal privilege of knowing and working with the hon. member for many years and I know that he will continue in the tradition he has set as a parliamentarian in this Chamber.

I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the constituents in the riding of St. Catharines. The city of St. Catharines, better known as the Garden City, is located on the southwest shore of Lake Ontario in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula.

The famous Welland ship canal runs through our community bypassing Niagara Falls and linking Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The riding is surrounded by vineyards, tender fruit orchards and the picturesque view of the Niagara escarpment.

St. Catharines is also home of the great educational and cultural organizations. Brock University has gained recognition not only in education but through its national basketball championship team. The folk arts festival held in May celebrates with 35 local ethnic organizations and is always one of the high points of the year.

The city is also home to the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta and the famous Niagara Grape and Wine Festival. In all modesty I suggest that St. Catharines is a microcosm of Canada. We are proving daily that people can and do live in harmony.

Over the years I have had the pleasure of serving my community as director and chairman of many organizations. My involvement in these organizations will I am sure assist me in serving my constituents more effectively.

Unfortunately the difficult economic times experienced by Canadians in recent years has hit St. Catharines and the Niagara Peninsula particularly hard. Unemployment in St. Catharines has reached record levels. Automotive and small manufacturing businesses, the major employers in the area, have seen major restructuring and downsizing. The St. Catharines private shipyard has been forced to downsize its work base from 1,100 to some 200 employees. "Job loss grows in Niagara" read a recent headline in the St. Catharines *Standard*. Statistics show that joblessness is not only more prevalent today but joblessness also lasts longer.