

Oral Questions

It is ironic that yesterday, while the Ontario voter was rejecting undefined sexual orientation, gold plated pensions and gun registration, this government was introducing closure to ram legislation dealing with each of those through this House.

The Liberals did not win in 1993; the Tories were thrown out. Yesterday this government provided the voters in Ontario with three very good reasons to throw them out in 1997 and elect a government that is listening and responding to their concerns, the Reform Party.

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CHILDREN

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for some time now I have been speaking in the House of the importance of direct parental care for preschool children.

Research done by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and the National Foundation for Family Research and Education has shown clearly that poor quality care means a higher likelihood of problems in the health, social and criminal justice areas.

In 1961, 65 per cent of families with preschool children had one parent in the home. That figure reduced to only 12 per cent in 1991. What is the impact of reduced parental care? One example is that the suicide rate for youth between the ages of 15 and 19 has increased by 600 per cent over the same period of time.

We must invest in our children. An investment in our children today is an investment in the future of all Canadians.

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TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers in my Dauphin—Swan River riding rely on the ribbon of steel that unites our country from east to west to move their high quality commodities to market. Therefore it is crucial that shippers from Dauphin—Swan River and across the prairies have access to a rail system that moves their commodity quickly and at competitive rates.

It is fitting that National Transportation Week comes at a time when the Liberal government is making massive improvements to our national rail system. These measures will increase competition and lead to greater efficiency. It is crucial that these efficiencies are passed along to prairie farmers, the highest volume shippers in Canada.

I strongly encourage the Minister of Transport to ensure that the interests of prairie farmers are at the forefront of all decisions made regarding the future of our rail system.

ONTARIO ELECTION

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last night the Liberals got yet another taste of how quickly they can go from the top of the heap to official opposition. Despite a commanding lead at the beginning of the campaign, Ontario Liberals finished a distant second. That makes three provinces which have provincially stated: "We do not like the example the federal Liberals are giving us".

As for the resurgence of the PCs, look at the federal Tory policies and then look at the Reform policies. Tell me whose platform Ralph Klein and Mike Harris are really following.

On the subject of mergers, the leader of the federal PCs should merge not with Reform but with the Liberals with whom he has much more in common, especially since Liberal cabinet ministers started to follow the corrupt patronage practices of the former Tory government.

I am not one to wish my life away, but I am looking forward to 1997.

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CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday I had the great pleasure of manning the telephones for two hours to raise money for the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. Once again the people of this region proved their generosity as volunteers and hundreds came out.

This year they were helped by a marvellous group of young people. Over half the pages of the House of Commons were out volunteering for the telethon for the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

• (1115)

I had the great pleasure of having one of them bring me a message and as I looked down I saw the message was coming from another two pages down there answering phones and scribbling out pledge forms.

On behalf of all the people of this region, I thank the pages who come to our community, often from far away, and who start fitting right in and making a contribution.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs stated that during the referendum campaign in Quebec, the