

(h) to respond to the economic and social requirements of users of telecommunications services, including the protection of the privacy of individuals.

I do not think anyone in this country would argue with any one of those stated objectives. My concern is that the actual stated objectives will be carried through in every aspect of the bill. I noted that my colleague from Mount Royal has said that in committee we are going to be going over every aspect of the bill to make sure that the various sections meet those objectives.

So often in the past few years this government has dismantled national institutions, dismantled the federal presence in favour of the regional force being a much stronger force. In the exercise of doing that we have decentralized the national government to a point where the regional forces are now causing it to be very difficult to govern this country.

Our telecommunications system, our technology, has been the envy of the world for many years. I think of the Middle East and what the Bell telephone exercise has been in Saudi Arabia and other places there. We have always been on the leading edge. One of the reasons why we have been on the leading edge is that we have had strong centralized, organized control of this sector of our economy. There is great hope for new job creation in this sector, but if the minister does not follow through in every aspect of this bill with the over-all stated objectives, then he will know that Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition—

• (1400)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30, the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has an onerous task ahead of him as he completes his budget. He is to be commended for the

extensive pre-budget consultation that he has held across Canada.

It is a major challenge to reduce and eliminate our deficit. The problem is not just ours within this Chamber, all Canadians must share the challenge of balancing our wants with our needs and both of those with our ability to pay. If we learned nothing else from last year's referendum we should have learned that Canadians think for themselves and want to be involved in decisions that affect them.

With this in mind I invited the people in my constituency to offer suggestions on the budget and they responded. In a random but extensive survey they told me that they want restraint and no tax increase. I was told that transfers for health care, education and seniors' pensions are too important to be reduced, while regional development, special interest groups, unemployment insurance, Crown corporations and even farm aid need to be re-evaluated.

I have a strong message from Red Deer, one that tells me Canadians are ready to accept the tough decisions that must be made.

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[Translation]

MONTREAL ECONOMY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, last week, three separate reports showed how severely the Montreal region has been affected by the recession.

First, according to Statistics Canada, Montreal has now set a new record, with more than 22 per cent of its citizens living below the poverty line. Second, a report by the World Health Organization states that the living conditions of street children in Montreal are similar to those in the Third World. As if that were not enough, a study by a committee that included experts from the city of Montreal indicates that 40 per cent of the city's thousands of homeless people are under 18.

In a statement about the intolerable situation in this country today, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said that society's moral fibre was undermined as a result of the Conservative economic policies of the past 10 years.

No matter who wins at the leadership convention, Canadians will massively reject the Conservatives who are responsible for all this suffering.