

• (1355)

Third, we have to invest in infrastructure. Our transportation and communications networks have got to meet the test and the challenges of the 21st century. It is simply not adequate for us to put off spending in those areas.

Fourth, we have to make the tough decisions to focus our resources strategically. We simply do not have excess resources available to squander on projects that are wasteful and which do not accomplish the goals we set for ourselves as a nation. That will not be easy but it is something we have to be prepared to do in an open, fair and sometimes difficult way.

I think none of this can happen if Canadians are not confident they can buy into a program of renewal, that they cannot accept that sacrifices may have to be made. Yet if they do not believe they will succeed in overcoming the obstacles that confront them, they will not support it.

We need commitments in addition to an economic program that stresses growth and creation of jobs. We need two other commitments.

We need a commitment to maintain and preserve on a sustainable basis the environment which is after all at the root of the creation of the wealth that this great country enjoys. We also we need to restate and to emphasize the commitment that we have to the social contract in this country. Canadians need to believe that when times get bad that we will care for one another. We will ensure that we are committed as a nation, not just to the creation of wealth but to the sustainability of our health and education systems, to the alleviation of poverty and to the building of a clean and healthy environment. These commitments have to exist at the same time and with the same intensity as a commitment to the creation of wealth, to the stimulation of jobs, to the reduction of the debt.

If we as leaders in this country can work together toward those objectives, I believe there may be no limit to the commitment that Canadians will show to achieving those objectives.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague not only for

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the fact that he has recognized so insightfully some of the difficulties we are having in this nation today but the fact that he is putting on the table some constructive and very specific ideas. That is what people are looking for today.

It is not just that we would stand up and point out the fact that this government has really lost its sense of compassion and caring. There is the mere fact that the government continues to sit around for almost three months now from its economic statement and does nothing in relation to small business. Yet, government members stand up and say that this particular bill is not through the House of Commons and that is why they are not going to promote the Small Businesses Loans Act.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to my colleague is related to small business. We on this side of the House have been saying for years now that the greatest hope for new job creation in this country lies with small business. The entrepreneurial spirit is in the men and women of the 1.1 million operating businesses in this country. That is where we believe the great hope lies for job creation.

I wonder if my colleague, who is also one of our former finance critics, could talk for a minute or so to this House and the people of Canada about some of his ideas on how we could help small business.

**Mr. Speaker:** It being two o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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### STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

#### HON. JEAN J. CHAREST

**Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi):** Mr. Speaker, "Jean Charest, a man of reason and a reasonable politician" is the title of an editorial by André Pratte, published last Saturday in *La Presse*, which included the following: "Jean Charest is a politician of reason. . . Delegates will be won by his intelligence, his grasp of the issues, his moderation and his persuasive arguments".