

*The Address*

I would like to inform the government and the members in this House that the people in Calgary North would be all for this. They want and are prepared to contribute to the development of public policy and legislation through me as their elected representative. In fact since the election they have been working with me to set up mechanisms which will genuinely allow me to inform, consult with, and be advised by constituents.

Less than a month following the election over 300 people packed a school gym in my riding for our first constituency meeting to discuss how this could best be done. Out of this meeting and through subsequent consultations have and will come many excellent recommendations. We will hold regular public constituency meetings to discuss key issues and legislation which come before this House.

Constituents have requested regular communications about what is happening here and they want to know how government activities will affect their lives. They want their say on major legislation and that is why we are designing ways to get their input before I come here to vote.

In early March we will discuss the federal budget at a public constituency meeting. The people will tell me which budget initiatives they support, which do not carry their judgment and where this is so what alternatives they would recommend. This is a constructive approach and one which the people of Calgary North believe is consistent with the principles of representative democracy which this House has been entrusted to uphold and to practise.

● (1510)

Calgary North constituents are also able to participate in question period by sending questions they want asked of the government to the fax line and voice mail number installed in our Reform parliamentary office. People are demanding that the parliamentary process must be opened up and made more relevant to the real needs of Canadians.

Believe me, they will be watching. They are watching these proceedings and the highlights of the daily question period on the nightly news to see if the decorum and attitude in this place will truly change.

When Canadians watch television they expect to see the body checking, cheering and jeering left to Hockey Night in Canada, but when they watch Parliament they want to see us put the puck in the net. They want and look to us to work together to find real answers to real problems facing this country.

The decisions taken in this House must reflect the will of the people of Canada expressed through their legitimate representatives and not just the will of a small group of ministers and bureaucrats who advise them. Government proposals must be tested and balanced by the people themselves.

In this 35th Parliament I believe the courage to demonstrate faith in the democratic system by making this possible would prove to be justified. It is clear not only to myself as a new member but to all members that there now exists an unprecedented and genuine desire in this House for new directions and new approaches.

I sincerely believe that we want this Parliament to operate for the people of this country by consulting them meaningfully and by seeking direction from them. I and the Canadians I represent are willing and waiting to see whether the good intentions which have been expressed in the speech from the throne to enhance the credibility of Parliament will be implemented and whether the words will be matched by the deeds.

I would appeal to this government to allow members of Parliament to do the job we came here to do. I hope it will not allow our reports and recommendations to this House and to the government to gather dust on some shelf. I would ask that all members be allowed to vote freely in consultation with the people they were elected to speak for. We want this House to operate in such a way as to provide us with the opportunity to make a real difference and to carry out the wishes of our constituents.

I conclude by affirming to the people of Calgary North my sincere intention to represent to the best of my ability their interests, concerns and aspirations for themselves and for their country.

**Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on her speech. It was very well presented with some very good ideas.

I just wanted to comment that in fact many of the ideas that she suggested certainly have been used by my colleagues in the Liberal Party. I know in talking with many of the members that they have used faxes for a number of years to connect with their constituents. In talking to others they have effectively used householders to communicate new and innovative ideas with members of their ridings.

For myself, I have had a forum on finance already as the member is suggesting she is going to do in her riding. It has been very effective and very useful. I think many of the things that the hon. member is talking about are in fact things that are done by individual members and they do not require specific legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** On a point of order, the hon. member for Richelieu.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a problem. We cannot hear the interpreter.

Oh, it seems to have been solved now. My apologies, Mr. Speaker.