

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons, volume two, dated October 1995.

[Translation]

I remind hon. members that under Standing Order 108(3)(d) this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

[English]

It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are celebrating national family week in Canada. The family is the basic institution of life and the solid foundation upon which our forefathers built this great nation.

The protection of families, family life and family values must be a priority with the government. The conventional terms of debate in matters of political, economic and legal issues tend to focus on individual rights and the rights of the state, not the rights of the family. This is unfortunate and must change, for the family is the most important reality in our lives.

This weekend families celebrate Thanksgiving in Canada and give thanks to God for our great country, for our families and friends. Happy Thanksgiving to my constituents of Central Nova.

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[Translation]

CANADA-QUEBEC ECONOMIC UNION

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if we choose sovereignty, we shall be able to make choices in keeping with our own values and priorities. By offering to associate ourselves with the rest of Canada in a partnership, we shall be able also to make shared decisions with our neighbours. The proposed partnership agreement with the rest of Canada is a winning combination.

It is a good combination of autonomy and co-operation. It enables us to take advantage of the elements we have built together—the Canadian currency, the Canadian economic space—and to finally give up squabbling over areas in which our

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interests are divergent. A vote for change means a vote for ourselves, for the people of Quebec, above and beyond party lines. A Yes vote means finally standing up for our convictions, voting for what we are and what we want to be.

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[English]

AIR DISASTERS

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my deep concern for the nine Canadians whose helicopter crashed yesterday heading home from Kumtor gold mine in Russia, where they were struggling to bring a new mine into production.

Throughout history the lure of gold has prompted prospectors to face incredible hardships, often only with a packhorse, a pick, a shovel, or a gold pan. The helicopter serves as the modern prospector's packhorse, so all of us in the mining industry can readily sympathize when an accident involves these vehicles.

Gold has its own way of calling us, so precious and fundamental in value. Despite the very real hardships involved, the search for gold will continue to beckon Canadian prospectors and mine developers to snowy mountain tops around the world. Meanwhile, our prayers and good wishes go out to all 15 people on board, as well as to their families.

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INTEREST RATES

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General of Canada report reaffirms what New Democrats have been telling Canadians for years, that the high real interest rate policy is the major reason for our massive debt, not social program spending.

High real interest rates hurt the economy, drive up debt and kill jobs. If the federal debt of \$546 billion is a mortgage, Canadians are becoming tenants in their own homes, because 46 per cent of the debt is held by foreigners.

Canada's net foreign indebtedness is by far the highest among major industrialized countries. Even Italy has a foreign debt of less than 12 per cent.

New Democrats have called the Liberal government's high interest rate policy a disaster and the auditor general agrees. High interest rates have created nearly one-third of our debt. More debt should be held by the Bank of Canada. Social program spending has not contributed significantly to Canada's debt.

In view of this evidence, will the Liberals now create a fair economic policy for Canadians, rather than one for foreign investors?