

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 5, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SPACE PROGRAM

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago today Canadians watched with pride and awe as Dr. Marc Garneau blasted into space and into history, becoming the first Canadian to orbit the earth.

[Translation]

This was quite a step forward for Canada. Until then, Canadians had had to content themselves with the role of spectators where space exploration was concerned.

But everything changed when Marc Garneau, a Quebecer and a true Canadian went up in the space shuttle *Challenger*.

[English]

Just recently, following the successful flights of Dr. Roberta Bondar and Dr. Steve MacLean in 1992, another Canadian, Dr. Chris Hadfield, has been selected to participate in a mission which will see the American shuttle using the Canadian robotic arm dock with the Russian space station. This is an example of true collaboration among the nations of the earth and beyond.

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[Translation]

SOUTH AFRICA

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the new President of South Africa visited Washington, where he was not only greeted with all the honours due to him as a head of state but also as a champion of racial equality. President Mandela is living proof that justice, law and democracy can and must triumph over tyranny and oppression.

The Bloc Quebecois is delighted at the progress made by the citizens of South Africa since the first free elections and the end

of apartheid. But the struggle is not over and we must now work with them to build a new South Africa.

Canada must make available its assistance and its support for economic development and for President Mandela's fight against the poverty and destitution afflicting the people of his country.

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[English]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the health care crisis we are currently experiencing in northern and rural Canada.

The government is proud to talk about the sanctity of our universal health care system. However, when one of the towns in my riding advertised to replace a retiring surgeon for over a year it met with no success.

By and large Canadian doctors seem unwilling to settle and work in the north. Consequently northern communities have had to increasingly rely on foreign physicians who must weigh the opportunity of working in Canada against an uncertain future caused by short term work visas.

Our patient to doctor ratio is around 1,700 to 1, compared to about 160 to 1 in Vancouver.

Northern natural resources contribute billions to government coffers, yet our hospitals are being shut down or their services drastically cut back, resulting in northerners travelling hundreds of miles to receive adequate health care.

Is this an example of the accessibility promised by the Canada Health Act?

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POVERTY

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, children are this nation's most valuable resource and it is our responsibility to eliminate the poverty that creates barriers for 1.25 million Canadian children. Lack of food is affecting their growth, health and ability to learn and has led to an increasing number of young people resorting to crime and suicide to escape poor living conditions.