

[Translation]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, the Meech Lake Accord, which provides for Quebec's return to the great Canadian family with respect, honour and dignity, is threatened by the persistent refusal of two provincial premiers to ratify this historic agreement.

By refusing to ratify this accord, the Premiers of Manitoba and New Brunswick are repudiating the signature of their predecessors, who at the time were the legitimate representatives of their people.

Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are deeply disappointed by the attitude of Messrs. Filmon and McKenna who are blocking the process of national reconciliation that was unanimously adopted by the House of Commons and eight (provincial) governments representing 93 per cent of the Canadian people.

[English]

In 1980, 1985 and also last September 25, a majority of the people in my riding of Montmorency—Orléans and also in Quebec said "yes" to Canada. They will not accept another "no" from Canada.

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IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this House the plan by the immigration department to eliminate regional immigration offices in Winnipeg and Saskatoon. It is planned to centralize operations in Edmonton.

These regional offices were first established in each of the western provinces in the early 1970s, after studies indicated that large immigrant populations in each of these regions would warrant a high level of service in the late 1980s. This is perhaps truer today than it was at that time.

Where this misguided notion of amalgamating services comes from, members can only speculate. It certainly does not reflect the needs of those Canadians and

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would-be Canadians in the different and distinct communities of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Removing and distancing the decision-making ability of immigration officials clearly does not provide the kind of sensitivity needed to give force to one of the Immigration Act's highest tenets, that of helping new Canadians adjust into Canadian society.

What it does show is the fecklessness of government members in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in defending the interest of their constituents and provinces, bowing instead to more powerful voices.

I ask the Minister of Immigration to reconsider this insensitive move and to act in the interest of Canadians for a change.

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[Translation]

THE FAMILY

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, since this is National Family Week, I think it is appropriate to talk about the need for a genuine family policy that meets the needs of modern society.

As the Prime Minister pointed out on August 25, for many Canadians, especially single parents, obtaining daycare for their children is not just a matter of lifestyle or personal enrichment but an absolute economic necessity. In this respect, the daycare program we hope to introduce very shortly will be a concrete response to the needs of all Canadian families.

The Labour Force Development Strategy announced by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mrs. McDougall) is also aimed at eliminating certain restrictions regarding parental and maternity leave.

More is needed however. In addition to extending this type of leave to 20 weeks, remuneration during that period should be set at 95 percent, to avoid penalizing couples who want to have children.

Of course, considering the economic situation and the Budget deficit, implementation of these measures may be a problem. But families have their price, and as a Government, we will have to realize that sooner or later.