

S. O. 31

**The Speaker:** It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

[English]

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the last day of Black History Month.

As the member of Parliament for Dartmouth I am proud to say that I represent the largest indigenous black communities in Canada, in Preston, North Preston, Cherrybrook and Lake Loon. The Preston communities have a rich and compelling history. It has contributed greatly to the culture of Nova Scotia and indeed all of Canada. Unfortunately for the rest of the country, much of this cultural heritage has been unwritten, instead being passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Students of Cole Harbour High have sought to change this by using modern communications technologies. As a project for Black History Month students have created a site on the Internet's world wide web to give millions of computer users across Canada and around the world a glimpse of this rich heritage.

I ask the House to join with me in congratulating the students involved in this project for their tremendous efforts to bring Nova Scotia's black history to the world.

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[Translation]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ.):** Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept that, in his budget, the Minister of Finance is once again attacking the poor while leaving untouched the tax privileges enjoyed by the rich in our society.

That approach, which proposes no tax reform, perpetuates inequities. There is nothing in this budget to eliminate the tax treaties signed with countries considered tax havens, thus allowing large corporations to avoid taxes. There is nothing as well about flags of convenience used by Canadian shipowners and the government itself so that they can employ foreign sailors who pay no taxes to Canada.

To top it all off, the Minister proposes to tackle family trusts only in 1999, while rich families use this loophole to avoid paying their fair share to the government. As radio anchorman Joël le Bigot said, if you hit the humble, you are ready for the federal government.

## THE BUDGET

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister delivered his budget and in so doing missed a glorious opportunity.

Canadians want hope. They want truth. They want leadership. But where is the hope when we discover that the compound interest on the deficit the finance minister is projecting, on top of our already huge debt, will cancel out the savings from the cuts announced by the minister? The minister could not even muster the strength to tell us when we will have a balanced budget.

Canadians want the truth. They want to know what will happen to their social programs as compound interest continues to eat up an ever larger share of their tax dollars simply because the government could not make the hard decisions in the budget. On this issue the minister is silent.

Finally, they want leadership. They want a government that will make personal sacrifices. Canadians resent a government that cuts the public service, ups taxes and allows overspending to jeopardize old age security but does not have the character to give up what is the richest, most extravagant pension plan that taxpayers' money can buy.

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## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the headline in the *Regina Leader-Post* this morning says it all in one word: devastated. This budget leaves farmers—

**The Speaker:** I would remind the hon. member not to use any props in the House, please.

**Mr. Solomon:** Mr. Speaker, this budget leaves farmers reeling in western Canada. It has the effect of a hurricane on agriculture. It will leave a trail of destruction and devastation throughout rural Canada.

It will cost rural families one-third of their net income and one-third the value of their land. Farmers work hard to put food on our tables and only ask to be treated fairly. The Liberal government responds by attacking farmers with ruthless cuts.

The minister of agriculture has betrayed rural Canadians by taking away the Crow benefit, reducing dairy subsidies by 30 per cent and abandoning more rail lines.

Farmers are now trapped between dwindling incomes and little prospect of selling their farms. The treatment the government has shown to rural Canada is unforgivable and will cause