

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, within the last week in Toronto and in surrounding areas three violent and horrific crimes have been committed with guns. A student was shot in her own home. Another, who was the daughter of a constituent of mine, was killed while enjoying desserts with her friends at a downtown restaurant. The third, a young father, was shot with a stolen gun at a party.

This painful loss of life must be the beginning of stronger, tougher gun control laws.

As a woman I feel particularly vulnerable. As a female constituent of mine stated, why must I lose my freedom and live in fear?

No longer should we tolerate these violent and senseless crimes.

• (1415)

I urge not only the Minister of Justice but the whole House to unite and move rapidly to adopt stringent gun controls.

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LAW OF THE SEA

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, for the sake of unemployed workers in the fishing industry and the economy of Canada it is urgent that the Government of Canada ratify the Law of the Sea convention. This treaty would serve Canada's interests by enhancing Canadian sovereignty over coastal waters and contributing to a stable and more peaceful legal order for the oceans.

It specifically protects certain fish stocks and enshrines in international law principles contained in the Canadian Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. This treaty would offer a legal framework that would eventually assist Canada's efforts to stop foreign overfishing.

Canada's long term interest is in ratifying and promoting the Law of the Sea convention if we are to bring back this industry at all. I therefore urge the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ratify the Law of the Sea without delay.

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CRIME PREVENTION

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were recently shocked by two senseless killings in Ottawa and Toronto. There is fear that our streets are not safe and that young people are more violent. That fear has focused attention on the Young Offenders Act.

I share the concern of Canadians about violence in our communities. I agree that laws should be reviewed to make sure

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they are effective but that review should be based on facts and not fiction. If we are prepared to change the law we must also be prepared to prevent crime.

Since 1992, RCMP funding has been cut by \$33.4 million. As a direct result of federal underfunding the Yukon crime prevention program for example has been cut. By going directly to the schools I believe the constable in charge there prevented more crimes than the threat of stiff jail sentences.

It costs \$1 for prevention for every \$5 in incarceration. I call on the government to look at this aspect of crime prevention in our society.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

THE BUDGET

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Economists and financial analysts are practically unanimous in saying that the falling dollar and the increased spread between American and Canadian interest rates are mainly due to the federal budget's lack of credibility. The government has failed to convince financial markets that it is determined to fight the deficit and put public finances on a sound footing, and taxpayers are paying for this with increased interest rates.

Does the Prime Minister agree that the rise in interest rates as a result of the Bank of Canada's decision to stop the dollar from sliding further is mainly the result of a negative assessment by financial markets which are disappointed in the deficit reduction measures proposed in the budget?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the hon. member's hypothesis. The budget we brought down in this House in February was well received. I agree there was some movement in the markets last week, but everyone agrees these fluctuations were caused by a very volatile situation on the international scene, and everything seems to be back to normal.

The Minister of Finance and I have made it clear that the government's plan is straightforward: we want to meet our objective to reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of GDP by the end of our third year, and we are convinced that we will meet our objectives.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister forgot to mention that most economists and financial analysts who examined what caused the financial instability of the past few weeks referred to the Budget and the concern shown by financial markets about the govern-