



PM Harper's speech to caucus

March 28, 2006 - 13h25 - Ottawa, ON - 14 minutes

(APPLAUSE)

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Thank you. Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much, Rahim, for that introduction. Mr. Premier, Senators, Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, thank you very much for the opportunity to be here with you today as we prepare for a new Parliament and a new speech from the Throne.

Je sais que vous avez tous travaillé très fort, et vos efforts ne sont pas passés inaperçus. On January 23rd, Canadians voted for change, and they asked our party to lead that change, change that will bring accountability back to Ottawa, change that will deliver real results for ordinary working families, change that will allow us to build a Canada that is strong, united, independent and free. (APPLAUSE) Mes amis, voilà tout un défi, mais les Canadiennes et les Canadiens nous ont fait

confiance, et nous devons nous montrer digne de cette confiance. Et nous allons honorer nos promesses. (APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

Of course, my friends, not everyone is happy about the change that Canadians want. Take, for instance, our new Official Opposition.

(LAUGHTER) To hear the Liberals talk – these are federal Liberals, Premier (LAUGHTER) – to hear the Liberals talk, you'd think they're still entitled to be in power. You'd think that the recent election in which 70 per cent of Canadian voters called for change had never occurred, or if it did occur, people should vote again and get it right. (LAUGHTER) Well, that election did occur. Canadians voted for change. They don't want to vote again. They want us to deliver change and that is what we are going to do. (APPLAUSE) So what's next? That's easy. We're going to keep the promises we made to Canadians during the election. First of all, we're going to clean up the mess in Ottawa. Les Canadiennes et Canadiens ordinaires en étaient horrifiés par les abus commis dans le cadre du scandale des commandites. Ils n'arrivaient tout simplement pas à croire que leurs impôts, l'argent qu'ils ont si durement gagné, était détourné à des fins politiques partisans. Cela ne se reproduire plus, jamais.

This will not happen again. (APPLAUSE) We will introduce a new federal accountability act. This act will toughen rules, govern lobbying. It will give

more power to the independent officers of Parliament. It will provide real protection for whistleblowers. It will end the influence of big money in federal political parties through campaign finance reform. The days of \$5000 lobbying parties with ministers are over, my friends, in this capital city. (APPLAUSE)

En d'autres termes, les Canadiens et les Canadiennes se sont donnés le gouvernement efficace et intègre dont ils rêvaient et auquel ils ont droit, et leurs impôts seront utilisés de manière responsable et respectueuse.

Puis, nous allons suite aider les Canadiens, les Canadiennes ordinaires à joindre les deux bouts en réduisant la TPS de sept à six pour cent, puis éventuellement à cinq pour cent.

We're also going to lower taxes, beginning with the GST, because we want Canadians to keep more of their incomes for the necessities of life, whether it's saving for their children's education, reducing the price of big purchases like a vehicle or an appliance or lowering the cost of everyday items. These cuts will mean hundreds of dollars more in the pockets of Canadians every year. (APPLAUSE) We will bring forth a series of tax measures in our budget. These will mean not just lower taxes, but a change in the way tax reduction is done, because in our government, every single household will experience tax relief; every Canadian will be

better off when we bring in tax relief. (APPLAUSE)

We're also going to make our communities safer by cracking down on crime. Canadians must be able to walk downtown without worrying about a stray bullet fired by a gang member, or a car spinning out of control during a street race. We'll do this. We'll make this happen, not, my friends, the way it was done before, not by picking on farmers and duck hunters. We'll do it by giving police and the legal system the tools to do their job. (APPLAUSE)

Et nous attaquerons à la source le problème de la criminalité juvénile en aidant les jeunes à faire les bons choix. We're also going to strengthen families. We're going to strengthen families by increasing the childcare options available to parents, car nous savons que chaque famille est différente, et qu'il n'y a pas d'approche universelle capable de répondre aux besoins de chacune. C'est pourquoi nous leur donnerons le choix en remettant aux parents 1200 \$ par année par enfant de moins de six ans. Les libéraux, leur offre, un gros zéro. (RIRES, APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

Now, you know, you know...Now, you know the Liberals want Canadians to believe that the choice that faces them is between our program and theirs, but that's a false choice. For their plan is no plan at all. After 13 years, there never actually were any of those free, universally accessible,

readily available Liberal childcare spaces, as they liked to claim, which means that for parents, the choice is clear: our government is offering \$1200 per year; the Liberals are offering zero. (APPLAUSE) Our government has a real plan, a real tax incentive plan to create 125 000 at-work daycare spaces. The Liberal plan consists of nothing more than shifting money from one politician to another. Our plan delivers direct financial assistance; their plan does not. Our plan will create real daycare spaces; their plan did not. Canadians want choice in childcare and that is what this government will deliver. (APPLAUSE)

We're also going to give Canadians the healthcare they paid for by working with the provinces in developing a patient wait times guarantee. Un tel système permettra aux gens de se faire soigner aux frais de l'état dans une autre région s'ils ne peuvent recevoir près de chez-eux les soins médicaux dont ils ont besoin dans des délais raisonnables. The idea here is clear; it's to provide Canadians with more options and greater flexibility. We must work to banish forever the prospect of people dying while they are waiting for medical treatment. The Supreme Court of Canada... (APPLAUSE) The Supreme Court of Canada said access to a Liberal waiting list is not access to healthcare. We will provide, work with our provinces to provide access to healthcare for our citizens. (APPLAUSE)

During the campaign and since then, we clearly indicated that we would act to strengthen our federation, and I can tell you that all premiers share this willingness with us. En grands nombres, les Québécoises et les Québécois veulent tourner la page sur ces débats stériles, et nous allons faire en sorte qu'il y en ait encore davantage qui veulent se joindre à nous en travaillant avec eux, pas contre eux. Dorénavant, le gouvernement ne se conduira plus en patron qui sait tout, et le Québec trouvera chez-nous un véritable partenaire. (APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

Finally, we're going to make Canada stronger and safer. We'll act to prevent criminals smuggling guns and drugs into this country, and terrorists who might try to unleash fear and death in this country. We'll protect Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic, and strengthen our place in the world by means of a Canada-first defence strategy aimed at replacing years of Liberal neglect. We are going to restore this country's ability to defend its borders so that we can keep the country we love strong, united, independent and free. (APPLAUSE)

Et nous allons démontrer le leadership du Canada dans le monde en apportant une contribution appréciable et appréciée sur la scène internationale comme nous le faisons en Afghanistan où nos jeunes hommes et femmes accomplissent un travail admirable, and that's why we

will stand foursquare behind the work, the sacrifice and the efforts of our young men and women in uniform in Afghanistan. (APPLAUSE, CHEERING)

Thank you very much, and I know our troops appreciate that too. In conclusion, my friends, Canadians have seen the past and they're tired of it. So it's up to us to fix the mess and deliver a bright, new future. We know what we have to do. We know what we want to achieve. And friends, make no mistake about it, Canadians are with us. Les Québécoises et les Québécois sont aussi avec nous en grands nombres, et nous de faire en sorte qu'il y en ait encore davantage qu'il veut se joindre à nous. But in a minority Parliament, more than ever, we're going to need your help, the help of all of you. We're going to need the active support and involvement of Canadians, our supporters and all Canadians right across this country. We're going to need all of them writing, e-mailing, faxing and telephoning their MPs to tell them to get on with the plan. C'est-à-dire notre plan pour bâtir un Canada meilleur où un Québec plus fort pourra occuper la place légitime qui lui revient. Thank you all for coming here today. Thank you all for the work you have done to get us this far and the work that I know you're going to do, and thank you so much for this enthusiastic show of support for all that we're trying to

achieve. Thank you. Merci beaucoup. God bless Canada. (APPLAUSE)

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