

Those who follow the proceedings of the public accounts committee know that this is an issue that is regularly the object of some discussion in the committee.

The hon. member is absolutely correct in his assertion that the auditor general is an officer of Parliament. As a servant of parliamentarians and especially of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the auditor general must pay particular attention to whatever difficulties members encounter with his reports in the exercise of their parliamentary responsibilities.

Like any officer of the House, the auditor general should be diligent in responding to the views expressed by members, especially when there is a pattern to their complaints, lest there result an erosion of a very special relationship.

That being said, I must point out that the auditor general's co-operation with the House of Commons and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts is well known.

[Translation]

As the Chair has ruled on a number of occasions, it is not my role as Speaker to interpret the laws of Canada. The Auditor General Act lists a number of matters to be treated by the auditor general in his reports to the House of Commons. I do not feel, however, that it is up to me to interpret whether or not what is contained in the auditor general's report meets the criteria of the law. Therefore, I can neither rule the tabling of the report out of order nor demand that the auditor general submit another report, as the hon. member requested.

[English]

Finally, I must stress the fact that the auditor general is not an agent of the government. If there is to be a review of his performance, I must agree with the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader that the proper place to do so is in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The estimates and the reports of the auditor general are dealt with in this committee on a regular basis. It is within the committee's mandate to bring to the attention of the House, by way of report, any aspect of the auditor general's report and the conduct of the affairs of his office the committee feels the House should be apprised of and should act on.

• (1510)

Should the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona still wish to pursue this matter, he has every opportunity to bring it to the attention of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I thank all hon. members for their contributions to this discussion.

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to eight petitions.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 94th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to the list of members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

With leave of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later today.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 95th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to the business of supply. In this report the committee respectfully requests that its deadline for reporting to the House be extended to March 29, 1996.

Also, if the House gives its consent I intend to move the adoption of this report later today.

HEALTH

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health, which is on Bill C-7, an act respecting the control of certain drugs, their precursors, and other substances, and to amend certain other acts and repeal the Narcotic Control Act in consequence thereof, with amendments.

I acknowledge the excellent work done by my colleague, the hon. member for Mississauga South, and his subcommittee in dealing with this legislation.

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-354, an act to amend the Criminal Code (transmission of HIV).