

*Private Members' Business*

allowing the flexibility to determine how they will refine their codes.

In co-operation with the CSA working group on privacy and other interested parties, the government should study the development of effective oversight and enforcement mechanisms.

The government should establish a working group to co-ordinate the development, demonstration and application of privacy enhancing technologies for the provision of government services and information.

The government should update and harmonize appropriate privacy protection policies, legislation and guidelines applicable to its operations and to the delivery of government services and information.

Industry Canada should establish a working group—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I might indicate to the member for Lincoln that we only have 10 minutes left. Perhaps he would wish to divide his time with his colleague so that both of them could speak.

**Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the issue of the protection of personal privacy. It is an issue with which we are confronted every time we open a newspaper or turn on a television. It is entirely appropriate that our laws be revisited on this subject.

When we brought in the current federal Privacy Act in 1982, it was decided that we should address the issue of personal information held by government first, so the act only applied to federal holdings. When the provinces passed their bills they did the same.

It is now time to revisit the issue. The work is well in progress. When the Minister of Industry set up the Information Highway Advisory Council to advise him, he stipulated that privacy be considered as one of the four operating principles. The council was set up to advise the minister on how Canada should meet the challenge and opportunities ahead of us in the global networks of the future.

Industry Canada released a discussion paper to sound out public opinion to see what the Canadian public and Canadian business wanted to see. The response was overwhelming in its recognition of the problem. Consumers and industry did not necessarily agree on the solution, with business pushing for voluntary codes, with most stressing the good work done on the Canadian Standards Association model code, and with consumers demanding that government act and legislate.

The Information Highway Advisory Council combined these two comments and recommended framework legislation based on the CSA standard. The Canadian Direct Marketing Association has added its voice to the debate, calling on the Minister of Industry to table framework legislation based on the CSA standard, and urged the provinces to do likewise in their jurisdictions.

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This is the kind of flexible compromise position that is good for business and good for consumers. Business wants to be involved in crafting of marketplace rules and so do consumers. We should recognize this and work on the basis of the consensus that has been built around the CSA model privacy code, soon to be published as a national standard by the Standards Council of Canada.

There is no way that Bill C-315 however worthy in its intentions could be confused as a piece of framework legislation. I am afraid that it falls short of what we need. However the debate that we have had here in the House, thanks to the hon. member of the Reform Party who tabled this bill and so ably defended it, has been a very useful introduction to what promises to be an important and complex issue when it comes before the House.

I recommend that we urge the minister to return to us and report on the progress that has been made. I look forward to that and to the opportunity to bring about the kind of broad based protection for personal information that Canadians are expecting of this government.

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take the few minutes that are left in this debate to commend the member for Cariboo—Chilcotin for bringing Bill C-315 forward.

I regret that I am unable to support this bill. The issue is an important one but the approach is far too narrow. I believe that if we send this bill to committee and try to correct it we would lose valuable time trying to redirect an approach which simply does not address the concerns Canadians have in regard to the protection of their privacy.

Every time we open a newspaper we see another story about the abuse of personal information, about the potential that new technology has to invade our privacy and provide surveillance of our every movement.

Even the chairman of Microsoft, Bill Gates, in an article which appeared in the *Ottawa Sun* on September 20 of this year pointed out the need for government action and indeed legislation to protect privacy in the face of new technologies. He used the example of software programs which would replace human travel agents and track customers' tastes and preferences to give the best possible service.

While I applaud the hon. member for bringing the issue of privacy protection to the attention of Parliament, I believe that we could follow Mr. Gates' advice and start the process of unrushed debate leading to intelligent public policies, not by accepting this bill and fixing it, but by building on the work that has been done in Canada. We have among other initiatives the first data protection legislation in North America to cover the private sector. I am referring to Bill 68 in the province of Quebec as an example.