

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that I have seen such a thing and I am somewhat surprised, I admit. I shall try to continue my speech without laughing too much about what just happened.

**An hon. member:** Many things here are out of date.

**Mr. Sauvageau:** So I was saying—Someone whispered that not just the previous amendment was out of date, but I have respect for our traditions.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Sauvageau:** I told you earlier that I would quote some of the 24 promises made in New York about respecting children's rights in the world. I have only three to quote so that you can understand why international conventions should have priority over wording that says "under 16 years". I shall read you commitment 18 made by Canada and about a hundred other countries that signed this international agreement. Article 18 says that children's welfare requires political action at the highest level. I think that means us here. We are determined to take such action. However, it does not say when. But there was no political will to act on it.

Commitment 19 says that this declaration is a solemn commitment to give high priority to children's rights, survival, protection and development. This would also ensure the welfare of all societies. I repeat, it mentions a solemn commitment to give high priority, but it does not say when. It still has not happened today.

Commitment 20 is divided into several points. I will tell you about part of the seventh one, which refers to helping child refugees establish new roots in life. States would also strive to ensure the social protection of children who work and promise to abolish illegal child labour. Efforts would be made to prevent children from falling prey to the scourge of illicit drugs. This part also attaches the greatest importance to children's rights.

Where my text would amend article 38 of the Child Labour Convention is in item 1. You do not have to look very far in the Convention to find where it states that State Parties shall adopt a national policy to effectively abolish child labour and to progressively raise the minimum age for admissions to employment or work at a level that would allow teenagers to reach their full physical and mental potential. Yes, children can work, but only in conditions where they will have hope and be able to physically and mentally develop. They should never be exploited.

Earlier this week, we had some good news. We learned of the creation of the International Children Tribunal, and one of the two co-founders of this Tribunal said that she saw last summer a movie where children in chains were producing goods. We saw an excerpt of this movie on the news when the creation of the Tribunal was announced. We saw children in chains working to produce luxurious goods currently in use in Canada and the

United States. So, we have to ask ourselves: Can our supposedly developed society allow countries to exploit children and make them work in awful conditions to produce goods we will use?

• (1555)

So, I support this bill, with a minor change to the motion, because we should keep our words and fulfil our commitments.

[English]

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak on the motions amending Bill C-57 and in this case, Motion No. 9. We are happy to consent to the change made by the hon. member from the Bloc who spoke thoughtfully in support of not only his amendment but of the motion. I am very pleased to know of the growing support for the idea that has been put forward here.

The purpose of the motion is to ensure that as Canada joins the World Trade Organization, it creatively addresses the problem of child labour, one of the most troubling aspects of the new international trading order.

It amends the Export and Import Permits Act to allow the government to introduce regulations to restrict the importation of goods made in whole or in part by children, contrary to international guidelines.

Many observers of the trend of globalization have noted that the more we leave the multinationals to seek out the lowest labour costs in the unregulated labour markets of developing countries, the more globalization tends to become a race to the bottom. Armies of young children around the developing world already find themselves at the very bottom. They work long hours at punishing work in atrocious conditions for a pittance. They are thereby deprived of an education which is their right under the UN charter.

In many instances, such children are indentured into virtual slavery. The numbers of children involved and the conditions they face are staggering. It is estimated that 300,000 children work at hand knitting carpets in India while two-thirds of the workforce in Nepal's 600 factories producing rugs for export are children under the age of 15.

According to the International Labour Organization half the children in Pakistan's carpet industry die of malnutrition and disease before they reach the age of 12. Girls 10 years of age work in China's special export zones in toy factories for \$10 a month.

In Indonesia, after relaxing its regulations on child labour in 1987, some 2.8 million children are working in factories. The most revealing fact is that child labour has been growing in tandem with the liberalization of world trade.

These children produce rugs, textiles, garments, shoes, toys and other light manufacturing products for export markets. The